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WAPA Struggles to Maintain Power Generation as Major, All-Day Power Outage Continues to Affect St. Thomas-St. John District

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Update: The power outage that has been affecting the St. Thomas-St. John district for most of Sunday continues into the night, WAPA has announced, as the up sometimes, down again situation that the authority said is caused by the loss of power generation at the Randolph Harley Power Plant had yet to be remedied.

As an example of the power authority's struggle to maintain generation, at 7:53 p.m. WAPA said, "Electrical service has been restored to a significant portion of the St. Thomas St. John district. Efforts are underway to restore all customers. The following feeders have been reenergized: 5A, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 7E, 8A, 9B, 9C, 9E, and 10B. A portion of Feeders 7C and 9C have been restored as well."

But just moments later at 8:14 p.m., WAPA issued another alert: "The Randolph Harley Power Plant continues to experience generation capacity issues. These challenges are at the heart of a major service interruption and subsequent smaller scale outages throughout the day today. Efforts are continuing to not only rebuild capacity to meet the public's demand for electrical service but to stabilize the power plant and restore service to all customers."

The Consortium asked WAPA communications head Jean P. Greaux whether this meant the power outage was again affecting the entire district, he said yes.

In yet another followup, the authority stated, "The Randolph Harley Power Plant continues to experience generation capacity issues. These challenges are at the heart of a major service interruption and subsequent smaller scale outages throughout the day today. Efforts are continuing to not only rebuild capacity to meet the public's demand for electrical service but to stabilize the power plant and restore service to all customers."

Earlier: A major electrical service interruption is affecting all customers in the St. Thomas - St. John district following the loss of generation capacity at the Randolph Harley Power Plant, WAPA announced at 1:12 p.m. Sunday.

The authority said efforts were underway to rebuild generation capacity ahead of restoring service to all customers.

The major power outage comes one week after [a previous blackout](#) affected the same district on June 17, which left residents without power for 12 hours. At the time, WAPA said Unit 23 failed at 11:35 p.m. and caused all other units to trip, resulting in the blackout.

During a board meeting Thursday, WAPA Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge told board members a review of data continues to determine the circumstances leading up to the inability of the authority's largest generator to sustain the fault and remain online. He said once the power plant lost all generation capacity, personnel were faced with a perfect storm of sorts, "several of our other ordinarily available units were simply not available to us last Thursday night and Friday morning." Units 14 and 15 were sidelined by various mechanical issues from days prior and were being worked on. A leased unit, Unit 27, also failed to "black start" meaning there must be some other generation dispatching power already to the grid for that unit to be brought online.

"Personnel spent hours working on Unit 14, one of two units at the Harley Power Plant, that can not only black start but can synchronize to a dead buss," Hodge explained. He said just as important as understanding the fault on Feeder 7E, we want to fully understand why Unit 23 failed once the electrical fault worked its way to the plant. "We are also looking at some short-term measures to provide us more flexibility to recover the power plant more efficiently once we have lost all generation and station service."

WAPA hasn't given a timeline relative to when the latest major power outage is expected to be restored.