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Squirrel turns off the lights in Millville

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Blame it on a squirrel if you were late to work Wednesday.

More than 5,800 Atlantic City Electric customers on the south, north and east sides of Millville were without power for more than 2 hours, starting around 5:50 a.m., according to spokesman Bill Yingling. Power was fully restored by 8:15 a.m.

The power failure was caused by a fire, which was limited to a circuit breaker within the substation located on North Second Street and Harrison Avenue, Yingling said.

"We believe it was caused by a squirrel, which was found on a nearby aerial transformer," Yingling said.

Firefighter Charles Seiferman said the Fire Department arrived at the Atlantic City Electric power yard at 5:57 a.m. Atlantic City Electric personnel arrived and de-energized the power transformer, and the firefighters applied foam to put out the fire. He said that 21 firefighters were at the scene and returned to the fire hall at 8:07 a.m.

"We held the midnight shift over," said Millville Police Lt. Ed Grennon. They were assigned to direct traffic at the major intersections where the traffic signals were not functioning, including High and Main streets and Second and Main streets.

Grennon said the regular phone line to the police building was not working for a brief time, but the 911 service was not interrupted.

"There was no lapse in the emergency service," Grennon said.

Five school district facilities were without electricity for part of the time - primarily before the start of school. They included Silver Run Elementary School, Lakeside Middle School, Millville Memorial High School, the Child Family Center and the Culver Center, where the district offices are located.

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