

Ameren Illinois working toward replacing as many as 50 poles and restoring power to nearly 3,000 customers

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SOUTH ROXANA - Following Sunday morning's squall line of severe thunderstorms, as many as 43,000 Ameren Illinois customers across the state were without power.

While working on replacing a fallen pole in the 1300 block of Herbert in South Roxana, an Ameren representative said as many as 17,000 of those customers were in the Riverbend or Edwardsville area. As of late Monday morning, an estimated 2,800 customers were still suffering outages. That representative said crews were brought to the area from all the way in Chattanooga, Tennessee to help with the storm damage efforts. He estimated all work should be done by the end of the day Tuesday, including replacing 50 poles and doing other line maintenance.

Most of the damage was caused by gusts of more than 70 m.p.h. as reported by the National Weather Service (NWS) of St. Louis.

The pole Ameren Illinois was replacing on Herbert in South Roxana was near the home of Terry Simms. Simms said the pole fell at approximately 3:30 a.m. Sunday morning, during the height of the severe thunderstorms. He was still without power as of noon Monday as he watched crews hired by Ameren Illinois replacing the fallen pole.

"We didn't know it happened," Simms said. "My son-in-law pulled up and said there was a line down."

Simms currently has a generator keeping his food from spoiling.

"It keeps the food cool, but not the rest of us," he said from an outdoor chair in front of his garage.

Besides work being done by Ameren Illinois and their crews, Sunday morning's storms left a lot of damage in its wake for homeowners. Fallen trees have complicated the cleanup effort drastically. One Godfrey resident who did not give permission to be named said a fallen tree in his yard disconnected the power box from his home.

"I have to wait here for the electrician to reconnect the power box the tree ripped off my house," he said. "Then I have to call Ameren to make sure my power returns safely."

A representative from Ameren Illinois confirmed many without power may have to contact electricians due to the localized damage to their power supplies caused by falling lines, limbs and entire trees.