

Runaway Mylar Balloons Cause Lunchtime Power Outage In Metro East

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GRANITE CITY/MADISON - Some Mylar balloons were released into the air and caused approximately 1,000 Ameren Illinois Granite City/Madison customers to eat lunch in the dark on Saturday, June 19, when the balloons floated and attached to nearby power poles.

Customers contacted Ameren Illinois to report seeing the balloons arcing in the power lines before the power went out. A crew patrolled the lines and found the melted balloons entangled in the power lines.

Ameren was called out to the Granite City and Madison scenes at 11:40 a.m. Saturday, June 19. The balloons were safely removed and power was restored at 1:05 p.m. that day.

Ameren Illinois spokesperson Brian Bretsch said mylar balloons are metallic and conduct electricity. He said this can lead to surges and shorts that can knock out power, start fires and significantly damage the electric grid.

“We realize our customers are looking forward to the opportunity to safely spend some time with family and friends this summer,” Bretsch said. “Many of those outings include Mylar balloons to celebrate new graduates, newlyweds, birthdays, and holidays. Keeping the balloons tethered and weighted while in use and then properly puncturing and disposing of after the fact can help to ensure they do not get loose and end up in our power lines and substations.”

Bretsch said if you notice a balloon or anything else entangled in electric infrastructure, never attempt to remove the object yourself, instead call Ameren Illinois at 1-800-755-5000 and a crew will be dispatched to handle it.

