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OUTAGE LOSSES MAY TOTAL \$100M

By PAT MAIO
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The electrical grid collapse that cut off power to 2 million customers of San Diego Gas & Electric Co. may have resulted in \$97 million to \$118 million in losses, according to an independent analysis of the economic impact.

W. Erik Bruvold, president of National University System Institute for Policy Research, said his “back of the envelope” analysis of Thursday’s power outage and the economic fallout shows that the biggest areas affected locally were overtime pay, loss of productivity, and perishable food and medicine.

“Deriving an estimate is difficult because those areas you’d think would have high economic losses may have had backup generators. So it’s really hit and miss to find which ones didn’t have generators kick on in time,” Bruvold said.

Perishable food and medicine losses totaled \$12 million to \$18 million because of the 12-hour power outage that began at 3:38 p.m. Thursday, he said.

Overtime pay affected police, firefighters, emergency response workers, water agencies and others who scaled up workers tremendously to deal with the outage. Bruvold estimated that agencies paid workers \$10 million to \$30 million extra. An additional \$70 million was added for lost productivity.

Bruvold said that he based his estimates of this week’s losses on previous estimates that came out of a 2003 power outage that swept across the U.S. Northeast in 2003, and economic studies issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency examining losses from fires in 2003 and 2007 in the San Diego region.

The October 2007 California wildfires were a series of blazes that began burning across Southern California, destroying nearly 1,500 homes, burning more

See **Losses, A6**

Few answers in blackout



Oceanside Unified School District employees Les Koehn, right, and Ruben Rivera throw away milk, juice and other perishable food items Friday near the Oceanside office. The food was dumped just to be safe after the blackout. JAMIE SCOTT LYTLE | jlytle@nctimes.com

Officials want to know why power system failed

By ERIC WOLFF
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A massive power failure across all of San Diego County on Thursday began when an Arizona utility worker pulled a monitor off one of San Diego’s two high-capacity transmission lines, causing the line to disconnect from the grid.



Mike Niggli

The disconnect set off a chain reaction that left millions in the dark. But although the power line, called the Southwest Powerlink, is a necessary part of San Diego County’s electrical supply, safety systems should have isolated the problem before it became such a large problem, utility officials and outside observers said. State and federal officials will join with utility employees to investigate why the systems failed to function correctly.

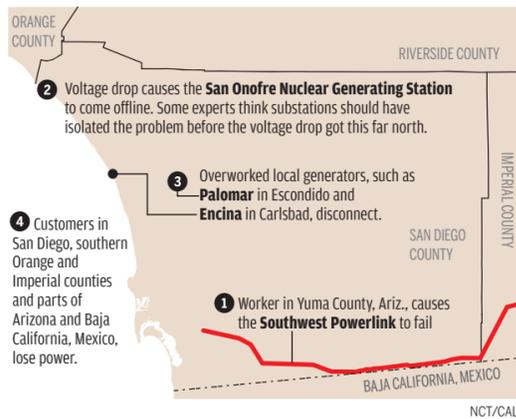
The worker for Arizona Public Service, the state’s largest utility, was doing routine maintenance at the North Gila substation, north of Yuma, Ariz.,

which provides a crucial way station for the Southwest Powerlink. The work interrupted the flow of electricity along the power line, and the line disconnected itself from the grid.

Almost immediately after safety systems caused the Southwest Power Link to disconnect, voltage across San Diego’s grid fell precipitously. Sensors at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station north of Oceanside detected the

See **Blackout, A5**

HOW THE BLACKOUT HAPPENED



INSIDE:

- Hospitals managed loss of power well. **A4**
- After a day off, school will be back in session Monday. **A4**
- All bets were on as casinos stayed open Thursday. **A4**
- Residents reflect on the outage and its aftermath. **A5**
- No major crimes are reported during blackout. **A6**

Residents coping with spoiled food, closed schools

By TERI FIGUEROA
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Grocers, cafeteria staff and parents emptied refrigerators of spoiled food, kids enjoyed a surprise day off from school, stores counted their losses, and questions lingered Friday as the lights came back on and life returned to normal in the hours after a 12-hour blackout that left 5 million people in the dark.

The flow of power was still tenuous Friday, as officials were asked to explain how a mistake by a utility employee in Arizona could take down power in San Diego and Imperial counties, southern Orange County and northern Mexico.

“The question becomes, ‘How did that ripple throughout the system?’ And that is really what is going to be part of the investigation that all of us will do jointly to examine that issue for the power grid in the U.S.,” said

See **Coping, A4**

ESCONDIDO

Man witnessed Sept. 11 attacks

By CHRIS NICHOLS
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Paul Walton, owner of the Castle Creek Inn north of Escondido, was on the subway in lower Manhattan 10 years ago when hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center.

His subway car was headed for what’s now ground zero when the charismatic 55-year-old, in the Big Apple for vacation, got off the train — one stop short of the burning towers.



Paul Walton shows pictures that he took near ground zero in New York after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. JAMIE SCOTT LYTLE | jlytle@nctimes.com

The subway car’s flickering lights and unexpected stops signaled to Walton that something wasn’t right.

Other passengers continued on, their fate unknown.

See **Witnessed, A7**

REGION

Gore, ex-FBI boss, recalls 9/11 role

By TERI FIGUEROA
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It was just after 6 a.m. Sept. 11, 2001, and then-Special Agent in Charge Bill Gore was at home shaving when his phone rang.

His sister-in-law was on the line. She told him to turn on the TV; a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center in New York.

“My first reaction, because the second plane hadn’t yet hit, I was still thinking it was an accident,” said Gore, who at the time was head of San Diego’s FBI offices. “But

then the second one hit, and my mind went right to an act of terrorism.”

And then he thought: “Game on.”

Now San Diego County sheriff, Gore was at the helm of one of the FBI offices that would soon come to play a significant role in the investigation into two of the hijackers and any potential terrorism sleeper cells in San Diego.

Ten years later, Gore sat down with the North County Times to talk about his recollections,

See **Gore, A11**

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