

# TALLAHASSEE BLACKS OUT AS KATE WHIPS THROUGH

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**Written By Penny Chang**

Sustained winds from Hurricane Kate of 60 mph with gusts of up to 86 mph blasted Tallahassee on Thursday night. It left about 108,000 people without power, seriously injured at least one person when a tree fell on her car, downed trees and trapped three police officers in their cars, authorities said.

About 90 percent of Tallahassee's city utilities customers were without power, and the power was expected to stay off until today because city crews were being Thursday night pulled for their safety.

City garbage collection was canceled, and public-works director Rhett Miller said: "It's going to take two or three days to clean up the town just so people can get around."

The roof at the Howard Johnson's and Pizza Hut restaurants on West Tennessee Street were reported to have been seriously damaged or blown off, and power lines were reported to have fallen inside a home on Ridgeway Road, according to reports.

Three Tallahassee police officers were trapped in their cars as high winds spawned by Kate dropped trees on the road in front of them, authorities said. A woman was seriously injured in a separate accident when a tree fell on her car.

No other details were immediately available, but the officers were not hurt, said police spokesman Scott Hunt. One officer was trapped on Stone Road and another on Angel Hollow Road.

One of the officers became trapped as she was going to the scene of an accident at 812 Angel Hollow Road. Details of that accident were not immediately available.

One person was also reported injured in an accident at the corner of Old Bainbridge Road and Tharp Street. The victim's condition was not known as of late Thursday.

Hunt said there were downed power lines reported at Aenon Church Road and State Road 20, Hartsfield Road and at the Paradise Village Trailer Park.

Residents were being urged to stay at home and off the roads Thursday night.

As of 8:00PM Thursday, eight major power circuits were out throughout the city. The circuit out near Thomasville Road and Interstate 10 was also affecting traffic lights, said Hunt.

The high number of power surges was causing false burglar and fire alarms, Hunt said.

Five American Red Cross shelters were open Thursday to house those fleeing Kate's wrath, police reported. Parkway Baptist Church, which holds about 165 people, and First Baptist Church, which holds about 350, were both full as of 7:15PM. Three more shelters, Seminole Baptist Church, Forest Height Baptist Church and East Hill Baptist Church, opened in the early evening to accommodate the growing number of evacuees. Woodville Baptist Church would have opened as well but its power was out.

Both Tallahassee Memorial Regional Medical Center and Tallahassee Community Hospital said they would have medicine, such as insulin and heart medication, on hand for people who may not be able to get theirs.

Hunt also said that the police department was being flooded with callers tying up the 911 emergency line to complain about not having cable TV. The calls subsided by about 6:45PM, he added.

Flights were suspended at the Tallahassee Municipal Airport on Thursday night though the airport remained open.

An Eastern flight with 125 people aboard, destination unknown, didn't get to take off, Leon County civil-defense director Bunky Atkinson said. All 125 people went to the American Red Cross shelter at Forest Heights Baptist Church.