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First wind, then dark: storm damage at \$30M

BY NEVIL HUNT

South Kanata was among the worst-hit areas of Ottawa when a band of strong windstorms hit on the afternoon of Saturday, May 21.

Glen Cairn and Bridlewood saw $many\,trees\,snapped\,or\,torn\,from$ the soil, and some of those trees fell on homes and cars. There were no serious injuries reported across Kanata or West Carleton, although a 59-year-old man was killed on a golf course just west of Stittsville when a branch fell on him.

Kanata North Coun. Cathy Curry said the first damage estimate city-wide is \$30 million.

In Glen Cairn, a man in a pickup truck watched as a tree fell across the vehicle at Rankin Terrace, but he was unhurt.

The man, who gave his name as Tyler, was filming the storm with his cellphone when the tree fell.

"It was terrifying," he said, addexperience about an hour later.

Tyler works for the manage-



Nevil Hunt photo

Both sides of a semi-detached home on Rothesay Drive in Glen Cairn ended up with trees atop their roofs after the May 21 windstorm. Thousands were without power for days and many had to dispose of spolied food.

ing he was still shaking from the as the storm arrived. One town-the other fallen tree. home – facing Abbyhill Drive – ing development, and was in the would take precedence over the of fridges and freezers due to an

area in a company pickup truck recovery of the pickup from under extended power outage.

Houses and vehicles were damhad a tree balanced against its aged by falling branches and trees, ment of the Rankin Terrace hous-roof, and Tyler said at that time it and many more lost the contents

Beaverbrook and Kanata Lakes saw limbs shorn from trees and plenty of debris on the streets

PLEASE SEE STORM, PAGE 12

Riding, province go blue times two

BY NEVIL HUNT

It was over in a flash.

It took less than 10 minutes for some media outlets to declare the Progressive Conservatives the winner of a majority in the June 2 Ontario election, and it didn't take a lot longer to see that Merrilee Fullerton would be returned as the MPP for Kanata-Carleton for a second term.

Fullerton garnered roughly 43 per cent of the votes for the PCs, about the same percentage as she earned in the 2018 election.

Across the province, the PCs increased their seat

PLEASE SEE ELECTION, PAGE 2



JENNA SUDDS

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but appeared to suffer less damage than southern parts of Kanata.

Hydro Ottawa crews were assisted by many out-oftown power workers as they replaced hydro poles, wires and transformers.

Still in Glen Cairn, on Rothesay Drive, a semidetached home had the worst luck – two trees fell in the yard, with one on the eastern half of the structure and another on the

western half.

On Castlefrank Road another tree was leaning against a single-family home.

"My wife was home," said Anil Chopra. "She was a bit scared."

Only the smaller branches hit the Chopras' house, and the structure appeared to avoid any serious damage.

A few doors down Castlefrank, another tree was lifted by its roots, tearing up soil and half the width of the sidewalk as

it fell. The large tree was laying on the house but missed two cars by just a few paces.

Bridlewood took a lot of wind too, and two SUV's were under a tree in one driveway on Equestrian Drive. One was a Lexus and the other was impossible to identify through all the branches and leaves.

Mark Kozlowski, president of the Bridlewood Community Association, said there was "significant damage" in Bridlewood, with the Pine Hill Estates area among the worst-hit neighbourhoods.

"So many big trees just snapped at the base there," he said. "There are other pockets too, and along the trails. It seemed very random."

Kozlowski said many were without power for about 72 hours, making Internet access impossible, while cell phone service was sporadic.

"It was scary and frustrating," he said of the lack of information and connections with other people.

The following days included lineups for coffee, food and gasoline, prompting Ottawa bylaw officers



Nevil Hunt photo

Two SUVs lie beneath a fallen tree on Equestrian Drive just a few hours after the May 21 windstorm swept through Kanata.

to arrive to try and control the lines of cars that took up a lane on Eagleson Road near gas stations.

Kozlowski said the city acted quickly to begin picking up storm debris.

"Thank goodness for the warning (on cell phones and TV)," he said. "I think

PLEASE SEE POWER, PAGE 14

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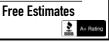
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>> **POWER** FROM PAGE 12

what people will learn is that if we know a storm is coming, we need to secure things outside, like gazebos."

Kanata South Coun. Allan Hubley said: "All the power was back (in the ward) by Wednesday (May 25), except for possibly some small areas."

He said the worst property damage in the ward appeared to be along Castlefrank.

"Thankfully we didn't have any heavy rain afterwards because with all those holes in roofs there would have been a lot more damage."

Hubley said the city and Hydro Ottawa will learn from the storm.

"Communications is probably number one," he said. "My power was out so I had no Internet and cellphone service was spotty,



The driver of an SUV decides to turn around after strong winds toppled two fir trees on Castlefrank Road near Hazeldean Road, closing the northbound lane.

so I had to drive to Bells North, power was still out Corners on the Saturday night to go on the radio (CFRA) to let people know what was going on."

"Whether it was a shower, a coffee or a hot meal, people were helping complete strangers."

Curry said that in Kanata

on June 1 for a handful of offices on March Road and Terry Fox Drive, as well as some homes on Herzberg Road that are on well water Curry said that, without power, the homeowners

PLEASE SEE WAKEUP, PAGE 15



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>> WAKEUP FROM PAGE 14

who rely on well water are unable to draw water for drinking, washing or even flushing toilets. Some have been using outhouses on a nearby golf course. "And some without generators had to move out," she said.

Some trees were downed in North Kanata but "no one has reported to my office any damage to houses, but there must have been some," Curry said.

Curry sits on the Hydro Ottawa board and said the board members have already discussed the storm briefly and "lessons learned will be acted on."

"There are questions about what happened with the outage map, and how reconnecting neighbourhoods was prioritized," Curry said. "People understand that places like hospitals will be worked on first, but in my opinion it needs to be a more open process.

"We also need to ask the province what they can do differently – how the provincial grid can work better."

Some good news for Ottawa property taxpayers – Curry said the city asked Queen's Park for financial assistance with storm-related expenses and got a positive reply.

"We asked the province to help with the cost of recovery and Premier Ford has committed to cover all the repairs and cleanup," she said.

"It's miraculous that no one was killed in Kanata, especially with the electrical risks and the carbon monoxide risks from generators (if used indoors). We have to be thankful this didn't happen in a deep freeze or a heatwave."

Christine Moulaison is vice-president of the Briarbrook Brookside Morgan's Grant Community Association. She said that it appeared that all homes in the community had power by May 31.

"There was damage to fences and shingles," she said. "One neighbour's shed ended up in their next door neighbour's pool. When you add up all the damage, it's a lot."

She said she's concerned about the added expenses for families.

"A lot of people lost food and the prices are already high. Some families were already struggling even before this."

Moulaison said neighbours pulled together to help each other with clean up and with generator power.

BEAVERBROOK SPARED

In Beaverbrook, community association president Neil Thomson said his neighbours "got offlightly" considering the damage close by. "It was the luck of the draw."

"It's a bit of a wakeup call," he added. "We have a mature tree canopy—it's been here 65 years—and some trees are reaching their end of life. It's time for many people to bring in forestry experts and make sure their trees are safe."

He said the provincial hydro system doesn't keep its wires clear of trees as effectively as Hydro Ottawa, and that means the provincial system may fail and cut power to Ottawa residents.

"You have to be very careful how you manage the trees and (in the provincial grid) the trees are almost kissing the wires. This is something we have to change across the province."

Thomson also said Ottawa Hydro needs a better outage reporting system and the ability to estimate how long power will be out.

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