

HEAT KILLS MAN; STORMS HIT AREA

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Heat and storms together have whipsawed St. Louis this week. On Monday night, Dimon Shaw, 54, of Pine Lawn was found dead on his bedroom floor, apparently the summer's first heat fatality. His body temperature was about 107 degrees, authorities said. He was pronounced dead at 8:45 p.m. Monday; a friend told police she had seen Shaw alive an hour earlier in the living room. Then a thunderstorm Tuesday night flooded many streets and knocked out telephone and electrical service to thousands of residents. The storm was at its worst about 8 p.m., took a breather, then resumed its pounding after 11 p.m. At its height, 20,000 residents, mostly in West County, lost electrical power, said a spokeswoman for Union Electric Co. About 5, 000 of those customers were back on line later Tuesday. The National Weather Service reported gusts up to 60 mph in some areas. Trees were reported down in Webster Groves and Chesterfield. Power lines were reported down in Richmond Heights and Maplewood. The weather service said the storm had dropped about 1.72 inches of rain as of 12:20 a.m. today in Weldon Spring. Other parts of the area may have received more. Dan Ferry, a meteorologist for the weather service, said, "From what I've seen on radar, the heaviest rain fell in the southern and western parts of the area." Cpl. John Romanus of the Missouri Highway Patrol's office in West County said: "For a while there, we couldn't see past our parking lot, it got so dark." Showers and thunderstorms are possible today and Thursday, according to the weather service. At Kirkham and Elm avenues in Webster Groves, water was blocking traffic. "There's been flooding all over town," said Lou Harken of the Webster Groves police department. "The sewers can't hold the water." Later, a police spokeswoman in Webster Groves said, "I came on at 11 o'clock, and there has been pandemonium ever since: flooding, power outages, lightning." Non-emergency telephone service at the St. Louis County Police Department was knocked out for 1 1/2 hours, but emergency lines were unaffected. In south St. Louis and St. Louis County, police said they received many reports of trees down and burglar alarms sounding. David Martin, a spokesman for Southwestern Bell Telephone, said, "We're getting a fair number of phone calls from the Creve Coeur and the Kirkwood areas for ineffective telephone service." The storm also knocked out power lines outside of Curryville in southern Pike County - about 70 miles north of St. Louis. In the heat fatality, authorities said the furnace may have been turned on accidentally in the house where Dimon Shaw was found. The house, in the 6000 block of Margaretta Avenue, lacked air conditioning. Two small, box-style fans whirred in the bedroom and living room, said Pine Lawn police Sgt. Dennis Epps. "But from the reading on the thermostat, the heat was on in the house," Epps said. "It had to be the furnace. I was surprised . . . but it was so hot in that house." The temperature in the house was "100 degrees plus," Epps said. Alcohol may have contributed to Shaw's death, Epps said. Lillie Owens, the woman who found Shaw, was incoherent when police arrived and had to be taken to the front porch to cool off, Epps said. Owens told police that Shaw went into his bedroom about 7:30 p.m. complaining of the heat. She had tried to persuade him to stay in the living room, where windows were open. "The windows were just barely open," said Dr. Mary Case of the St. Louis County Medical Examiner's office. "There was no way (air could circulate)." Case ruled the case a heat-related death. Dr. Linda Fisher, chief medical officer for the St. Louis County

Department of Community Health and Medical Care, said Shaw's death is believed to be the year's first heat-related fatality in St. Louis or St. Louis County.

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