

## ***Hamilton Journal News***

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### **Problems plenty, but it could've been worse**

**Trees crashed into houses and thousands of residents went days without power, but emergency responders say a windstorm that pummeled Butler County on Sept. 14 could have been worse.**

**In fact, it almost was.**

**As of Saturday evening, Sept. 20, fewer than 25 homes were without power in Hamilton; 9,900 in Butler County and 6,000 in Warren County.**

**In the hours after the unexpected storm, emergency responders fought the weather and attrition. Fuel became a commodity. As residents clogged gas stations, Butler County officials rushed to find a generator for the county fuel station.**

**That gas was needed to run other generators that were keeping dispatch centers, police departments and hospitals running.**

**Not all facilities had generators; five of Hamilton's six fire stations went dark. Emergency Management Agency staff met at the county's Government Services Center only to find that generators there only kept part of the office lit and computer servers were down.**

**At roughly the same time, Butler County Sheriff Richard K. Jones announced a Level 3 emergency, making it illegal for people to be on the streets except in an emergency. But nearly no one knew about it because of the power outage.**

**The only local AM station that could issue alerts was playing pre-recorded programs, Jones said.**

**Sheriff's office staff began planning on what to do if generators at the dispatch center and county jail lost power or died. There is no backup to the backup, Jones said, and no one anticipated running on generators for so long.**

**Butler County Water and Sewer kept its supply flowing while Fairfield and parts of Hamilton struggled to do so, but "it appeared that we were going to run out," said Commissioner Donald Dixon.**

**Agency Director Sue Vance said the county burned through 18,500 gallons of diesel fuel keeping just a portion of their water treatment and lift stations running. Meanwhile, their supply was dwindling as Hamilton and Cincinnati struggled to restore their grids.**

**"Without two water suppliers, we very well would have not had a supply ... for our customers," she said.**

**If it had rained, widespread roof damage would have been multiplied by water damage. If it were a hot day or blizzard the power outage would've been complicated by heat strokes or hypothermia.**

**"That would have been a whole different twist," said County Administrator Tim Williams.  
"We're lucky we had good weather, despite the wind."**