

# Ferndale, Michigan residents speak on power outages

Shannon Jones  
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A reporting team from the World Socialist Web Site spoke to residents of Ferndale, Michigan gathered at a cooling center set up by the city to help those who have lost electrical service.

Five thousand were without power in Ferndale, a suburb of Detroit, on Wednesday and about 4,200 were still without power Thursday afternoon. Some 29,000 are without power in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Temperatures in the region were expected to reach 100 degrees on Thursday, with high temperatures expected to continue at least through the weekend.

Local power monopoly DTE Energy has also instituted rolling blackouts, interrupting power to selected areas in order to maintain the stability of its outdated and poorly maintained electrical power grid.

Many resident expressed anger at DTE Energy, which they blamed for the repeated power outages that have hit the city.

Valoria Jennings said, “I lost power yesterday about 5 pm. I am losing my food. I just put it in there too. The power was out last year too.

“All DTE tells us is what time it will get back on, but they never give us any information. We never find out what is really happening until after everything is fixed. Now, they are just telling us we use too much power.

“The transformers are old and they are always blowing up. They need new ones. We’ll never get them. It costs too much.”

Marie Rodman said, “I am 65 and I am on disability and have been for 12 years. I am on Medicaid and Medicare and it is just tough. I had to throw everything out of the fridge and freezer. I had re-bought everything

and here we go again. My insurance has a \$1,000 deductible and it is not going to cover it.

“This is the fourth time in the last few weeks we have lost power. I was talking to the DTE lady out there and she said it was the heat that is overworking the transformers.”

Her friend Marshall Allen added, “You would think by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that wouldn’t be happening. It doesn’t sound like they are maintaining the equipment. It is so antiquated.”

Marie continued, “I have lived here for 20 years and I have never seen anything like this. It went out the last time for three days. And then yesterday it went out at four and then it came back on at three o’clock this morning. I was out for an appointment and came back and it was off again.

“It just gets very, very hot in the house and I get no breeze in there. I have got a heart problem and a respiratory problem and can’t plug my nebulizer in to get my breathing treatment. This is really bad.

“We don’t know when we will get our electricity back. They tell you one thing and it turns into another.

“I honestly believe they are not maintaining the equipment, because in the last 20 years my power has only been out once or twice. And now it is four times in a few weeks. It is ridiculous.”

Marshall continued, “At the end of this our rates are going to go up for something that wasn’t our doing at all. Somebody has to pay for this, and it is going to be us. I don’t think that is fair.”

Dave Wager, a local landscaper, told the WSW “My power went off at 7:45 last night and I got about an hour of sleep. I was hoping the cooling center would

have cots, but I guess I couldn't be that lucky.

"I'm 63 years old and I have never seen heat like this. We are in our fourth or fifth day of temperature in the 90s. The humidity is like it is in Miami.

"I'm not a big fan of DTE. I think they could do better fixing things. DTE told my brother something about the transformers. I always remember what my old gym teacher said 'Believe none of what you hear and only half of what you see'. That's how I feel about what DTE says."

Lisa Blumentritt, a wheelchair-bound resident, said, "It is bad. I live in the Woodington apartment building. When the power went out I was downstairs. I could not use the elevator so I couldn't get up to my room because I'm in a wheelchair.

"Once they got a generator working I went up to my room, on the third floor, but it was so hot I just went back down. I had to sleep in the community room with a couple other people. My neighbor brought me here; I couldn't even get food with the power out.

"The power has gone out in my building several times this year. Sometimes it is only for an hour but once it went out for five days. The fire chief came and said it was unsafe to live there, and they put us up in a hotel.

"The cuts in programs that help people get power would only make things worse. I had a brain stint that put me in this chair. That is why I went on SSI, but when they make cuts it is tough."



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