

Attack on two substations leaves nearly all 100,000 residents of Moore County, North Carolina without power

Jacob Crosse
5 December 2022

On Monday, the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced that it was joining local officials in investigating the deliberate sabotage of two separate electric substations in rural Moore County, North Carolina, about an hour south of the capital city of Raleigh, Saturday night.

Police have confirmed that the perpetrator or perpetrators of the attack drove onto the property and used firearms to cause millions of dollars in damage to critical infrastructure equipment that has left thousands of people without power more than 48 hours later.

Officials with the power company, Duke Energy, estimate it could be as late as Thursday until an estimated 33,000 households who still do not have power gain access. As many as 45,000 households and businesses, representing virtually all of Duke Energy's customers in the county, home to some 100,000 people, initially lost power Saturday night as temperatures dipped below freezing for several hours.

On Monday, Fire Chief Mike Cameron of the Town of Southern Pines confirmed that the entire town, home to 16,000 people, is without power.

On Sunday, few more than 10,000 households had their power restored as crews work around the clock at both stations to replace heavily damaged equipment. Despite the efforts of the workers, officials with the power company stressed in a press conference Monday alongside North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper (Democrat), that required repairs to the substations were significant and would last several days, as equipment and parts would need to be transported from outside the region.

At Monday's press conference, neither the police nor Cooper were willing to state a motive for the attack or elaborate on the weapons used.

Following the attack Saturday night, a state of emergency was declared in Moore County, along with an emergency curfew. The curfew is in effect from 9 p.m. through 5 a.m. and will continue until power is restored. Schools throughout the county were canceled on Monday and will be again on Tuesday. Residents were encouraged to stay off the road because street lights were not operable. Meanwhile, a single emergency Red Cross shelter is operating in Carthage.

On Monday, an FBI spokesperson confirmed to the *Washington Post* that the agency is investigating the "willful damage" to the power stations in Moore County. While no motive, as of this writing, has been released, earlier this year, three neo-Nazis pleaded guilty on federal charges of conspiring to blow up electrical substations throughout the US prior to the November 2020 election.

The purpose of the plot, the Nazis admitted, was to keep Trump in power by causing mass blackouts which they hoped to exploit to foment a race war followed by the creation a fascist ethnostate with Trump at its head.

At a press conference Sunday, Moore County Sheriff Ronnie Fields confirmed that the attack occurred at two separate substations shortly after 7 p.m. Saturday night, and that at both substations a person, or persons, broke into the station and used a gun to inflict substantial damage to critical infrastructure.

"It was targeted, intentional attack and was not random,"

Fields said.

While police have yet to identify a suspect or a motive, the attack occurred at virtually the same time the Sunrise Theater, located in Southern Pines, was hosting a drag show performance by the Downtown Divas. In an article published on December 2, the night before the attack, the *Fayetteville Observer* reported that organizers of the show had received violent death threats from “far-right activists,” prompting them to increase security by hiring private guards and enlisting the Southern Pines Police Department.

Even with the increased security measures, far-right protesters, heavily outnumbered by supporters, still showed up outside the venue to protest the sold-out show. As the performance began shortly after 7 p.m., the power went out in the theater and throughout the rest of the county.

Despite the lack of power, Naomi Dix, a Durham-based drag artist, and host of the drag show, carried on her performance with the crowd using their cell phones to illuminate the theater. “It was a beautiful moment,” Dix told the *Observer*.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Saturday night, Emily Rainey, a former US Army Captain who was investigated, but never charged, for coordinating the transport of some 100 Trump supporters to the Capitol on January 6, 2021, bragged on her personal Facebook page, “The power is out in Moore County and I know why.”

Rainey, who left the military after she was arrested protesting limited COVID-19 mitigation measures earlier this year, followed up her post with a photo of the Sunrise Theater captioned “God will not be mocked.” The former Army psychological operations officer claimed, and the police confirmed, that she was questioned by Moore County Sheriffs after making her posts, however no charges have been filed and she is not listed as a suspect at this time.

While no suspects or groups have been identified or claimed responsibility for Saturday’s attack, it comes less than a week after the Department of Homeland Security warned in an intelligence briefing leaked to NBC News that “violent ideologies,” that is, fascist ideologies fostered by the ruling class and their pawns in the

Republican Party, pose a “persistent and lethal threat” to LGBTQ, Jewish people and immigrants throughout the United States.

The bulletin, which was issued some two weeks after the grandson of a California Republican assembly-member massacred five people and injured over a dozen more at an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado, warned that “Targets of potential violence include public gatherings, faith-based institutions, the LGBTQI+ community, schools, racial and religious minorities, government facilities and personnel, U.S. critical infrastructure, the media and perceived ideological opponents.”

Despite the warnings, police departments around the country, riddled with reactionaries, made little effort to dissuade fascists, neo-Nazis and Proud Boys from harassing and menacing drag shows, LGBTQ events and passers-by this past weekend.

In Columbus, Ohio, on Saturday, a church was forced to cancel a Drag Queen Story Hour event after Proud Boys, members of Patriot Front and other neo-Nazis showed up outside the event, some carrying semi-automatic rifles.

At least three LGBTQ events in New York City over the weekend were targeted by fascists, including members of the Goyim Defense League, one of the largest spreaders of antisemitic propaganda in the United States.

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Saturday, Proud Boys joined forces with Republican-aligned groups such as “Gays against Groomers” and “Moms for Liberty” for a rally titled “Protect the Children,” itself an ode to the QAnon conspiracy.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact