

Southern California power supply threatened by wildfires

500-kV line from Palo Verde hub still out of service

From various news sources

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) was operating with 60 percent of its normal power supply Tuesday. This is as a result of the wildfires ravaging Southern California, Reuters reported. Among the problems was the shutdown of the Southwest Powerlink, a key transmission corridor that runs from the Palo Verde hub into San Diego. SDG&E said it could not say confidently when the 500-kilovolt (kV) Southwest Powerlink would return to operation. Access to the lines are limited and workers need to get to the 30 miles of lines where the fire came close before SDG&E can say when the power line will be returned to service.

In addition to the Southwest Powerlink outage, SDG&E said it had a significant number of transmission lines out of service around Miguel Mountain and Rancho Santa Fe.

The California Independent System Operator (ISO) declared a transmission emergency and said San Diego has been affected the most with multiple 500-kV, 230-kV and 138-kV lines out of service. The Pacific Direct Current Intertie power line, which connects the Los Angeles area to the Pacific Northwest, was off-line for three hours Monday evening. Then it was back in service at diminished capacity, according to a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

ISO spokesman Gregg Fishman was quoted by Bloomberg as saying: "It's very much a touch-and-go situation. The fire situation still is very, very ugly." He also said the California ISO may call for rolling blackouts if needed.

SDG&E spokeswoman Christy Heiser said the utility was dealing with destroyed power poles, blown transformers and burned distribution lines, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported. Heiser said SDG&E asked for assistance from other Western utility companies, but fires were preventing workers from getting to some problem spots.

SDG&E said about 28,000 customers were without power in its service area of San Diego County and southern Orange County.

Elsewhere in Southern California, Edison International's Southern California Edison (SCE) subsidiary said about 9,250 electric customers were out of service Tuesday afternoon, down from 15,000 earlier Tuesday and even higher figures on Monday. Since the high winds and fires began affecting power lines and transformers, about 560,000 SCE power customers have lost service, most of them only for a few minutes, the utility said.

Editor's note: APS is reaching out to assist SDG&E in its restoration efforts. Logistics still are being worked through, but the company expects to send as many as 50 employees, comprised of crews from around the state, management, mechanics and Blue Hat safety representatives. Current plans call for the APS contingent to depart the Valley this weekend. Newsline will keep employees updated on this effort as information becomes available.