

Enchanted Forest aims to open March 19 despite storm damage

By **JAKETHOMAS**
Salem Reporter via AP StoryShare
SALEM — When snow and ice storms were included in last weekend's forecast, Susan Vaslev worried about Enchanted Forest.

Vaslev also recalled thinking how little could be done to protect the amusement park south of Salem, which her family has owned and operated for nearly 50 years.

"If the trees are going to fall, there is no way to keep them from falling," she recalled thinking.

She knew the park had been damaged by the storm on Saturday, Feb. 13, when the fire alarm went off in the Challenge of Mondor ride because the water pipes had depressurized. She drove to the park but didn't go in out of safety concerns. From the parking lot, she could see big Douglas firs

and other trees that had collapsed under the weight of the snow and ice.

On Sunday, she was able to walk through the park to survey the damage.

The kiddie train was crushed under a fallen tree. The covered seating area by the theater also was crushed. Roofs of buildings throughout the park had been tattered by falling branches.

While the park was damaged during a similar storm over a decade ago, Vaslev said this is worse.

"The whole park is a war zone, disaster area," said Vaslev. "There is a ton of cleanup. I've never seen it this bad."

The full picture of the damage to the park still is emerging. Vaslev said rides are covered in fallen trees that will have to be carefully removed to prevent causing further damage.

But Vaslev said it's not all bad news. Some of the more iconic figures in the park, such as Humpty Dumpty and the witch's head, are intact, she said. So is the Challenge of Mondor, despite the fire alarm, she said.

The family also will have some money for repairs. In December, the Tofte family, which owns the park, announced they'd raised enough money to open for another season. In response to a precipitous drop in visitors last year caused by the pandemic, the family began selling park memorabilia and asking for donations to stay open.

In the meantime, the park is hoping to keep its March 19 date to open for another season, Vaslev said. For now, she said, it all depends on how soon the big trees are removed.



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian via AP

A snow plow clears snow off a street Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, in Portland.

More than 150,000 without power in Portland area

Oregon Poison Center took 19 calls about carbon monoxide poisoning during weekend storm

Associated Press

PORTLAND — More than 150,000 remained without power in the greater Portland area Wednesday, Feb. 17, and authorities warned outages caused by a fierce weekend storm could continue for several more days.

The Seattle area saw more than a foot of snow and Western Oregon was hit with snow and ice that toppled more than 5,000 power lines. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency for the greater Portland region.

Portland General Electric's map of power outages listed about 150,000 customers without electricity, while Pacific Power listed about 6,000.

While temperatures have returned to seasonal norms in the Northwest some people in the Portland area have been without electricity for nearly a week.

Steve Corson, a spokesperson with PGE, said, "Right now we need people to be prepared for the fact that it could be several days yet" before power is restored.

Late Tuesday the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office confirmed four deaths over the weekend due to carbon monoxide poisoning. While authorities didn't immediately provide any details about the deaths, they did urge people not to use alternative heat sources such as camp stoves or barbecues to stay warm.

Rob Hendrickson, medical director of the Oregon Poison Center, said the center took 19 calls about carbon monoxide poisoning during the weekend, as opposed to one they receive on a typical weekend.

"It is extremely important not to use outdoor grills or generators inside your home," Hendrickson said in a statement. "These appliances should be used outdoors, well away from windows, doors and ventilation systems."

Also late Tuesday, Brown said because of reports of price gouging at local hotels she declared an "abnormal market disruption" and issued an order empowering the attorney general to investigate.

Earthquake warning system ready to roll out to Oregon, Washington

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The earthquake early warning system known as ShakeAlert will be capable of delivering alerts directly to wireless devices in Oregon on March 11 and to Washington state in May, completing the West Coast rollout, the U.S. Geological Survey said Tuesday, Feb. 16.

The ShakeAlert system, which warns of significant quakes, has been enabled in California since October

2019. The system uses a network of sensors that detect the start of an earthquake and calculates magnitude, location and the expected amount of shaking. It sends the information in real time to distributors that send out alerts to cellphones and the internet.

The information moves so quickly that people may have valuable seconds to protect themselves before shaking arrives, trains can be slowed or industrial processes stopped.

The USGS said that as of Jan. 31, the West Coast network was 70% complete, with 1,132 out of 1,675 seismic stations installed.

The USGS and partners plan a Feb. 18 outreach to Pacific Northwest residents on Reddit and a test message on Feb. 25 to Washington's King, Pierce and Thurston counties, delivered to wireless devices through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Integrated Public Alerting & Warning System.

100 million Americans brace for more cold

By **PAUL J. WEBER** and **JILL BLEED**

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Winter weather that has overwhelmed power grids unprepared for climate change and left millions without electricity in record-breaking cold kept its grip on the nation's mid-section Wednesday, Feb. 17.

At least 20 people have died, some while struggling to find warmth inside their homes. In the Houston area, one family succumbed to carbon monoxide from car exhaust in their garage; another perished as they used a fireplace to keep warm.

Blame the polar vortex, a weather pattern that usually keeps to the Arctic, but is increasingly visiting lower latitudes and staying beyond its welcome. Scientists say global warming caused by humans is partly responsible for making the polar vortex's southward escapes longer and more frequent.

More than 100 million people live in areas covered Wednesday by some type of winter weather warning, watch or advisory, as yet another winter storm hits Texas and other parts of the southern Plains, the National Weather Service said.

Utilities from Minnesota to Texas and Mississippi have implemented rolling blackouts to ease the burden on power grids straining to meet extreme demand for heat and electricity as record low temperatures were reported in city after city. In Mexico, rolling blackouts Tuesday covered more than one-



LM Otero/AP Photo

City of Richardson worker Kaleb Love breaks ice on a frozen fountain Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, in Richardson, Texas. Temperatures dropped into the single digits as snow shut down air travel and grocery stores.

third of the country after the storms in Texas cut the supply of imported natural gas.

Nearly 3 million customers remained without power early Wednesday in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, more than 200,000 more in four Appalachian states, and nearly that many in the Pacific Northwest, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility outage reports.

The latest storm front was predicted to bring snow and ice to East Texas, Arkansas and the Lower Mississippi Valley before moving to the northeast Thursday. Winter storm watches were in effect from Baltimore to Boston, and Texas braced for more icy rain and more snow.

"There's really no letup to some of the misery people are feeling across that area," said Bob Oravec, lead forecaster with the National Weather Service.

The weather has threatened the nation's COVID-19 vaccination effort. President Joe Biden's administration said

delays in vaccine shipments and deliveries were likely.

The worst U.S. power outages by far have been in Texas, where officials requested 60 generators from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and planned to prioritize hospitals and nursing homes. The state opened 35 shelters to more than 1,000 occupants, the agency said.

Texas' power grid manager, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, said electricity had been restored to 600,000 homes and businesses by Tuesday night but that 2.7 million households still were without power. Blackouts lasting more than an hour had begun before dawn Tuesday in and around Oklahoma City, stopping electric-powered space heaters, furnaces and lights just as temperatures hovered around minus 8 degrees. Oklahoma Gas & Electric urged users to set thermostats at 68 degrees Fahrenheit (20 degrees Celsius), avoid using major electric appliances and turn off lights or appliances not in use.

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