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Fermi restart planned next week

DTE Energy said it **expects to begin restarting its Fermi 2 nuclear power plant early next week** after it repairs tornado-damaged buildings and cooling towers at the facility.

The plant near Newport suffered damage from a second tornado that touched down in Monroe County early Sunday. It cut electricity to the plant, forcing the reactor to shut down automatically.

The storm also tore a 20-by-30-foot hole in the roof of the building housing the steam turbines, ripped siding from the auxiliary building, and damaged cooling fins at the base of the plant's twin cooling towers. The reactor building itself was undamaged.

More than 400 outside personnel have been working on restoration, ranging from tree removal companies to skilled trades workers and other contractors.

"We've removed hundreds of truckloads of debris related to the storm," said Guy Cerullo, a DTE spokesman. He said debris from numerous fallen trees and damaged structures have been hauled away. "Just from the cooling towers alone there were about 150 truckloads of debris," he said. "Work is progressing and we decided to replace the entire turbine building roof," he said. "We're confident we'll be ready for plant restart by early next week."

The utility isn't estimating the cost of damages. "We won't be releasing any cost estimates, we're just concerned with restoring the plant right now," Mr. Cerullo said. "There's not a definite total at this point."

The siding ripped off the plant's auxiliary building was affixed to the building using bolts designed to shear off when stressed by high winds to minimize the pressure differential on the building, Mr. Cerullo said, so they performed as designed when the high winds hit.

Operators had the reactor running at 100 percent power when the storm hit early Sunday. The plant, which was put into operation in 1988, supplies about 11 percent of the utility's generating capacity in southeast Michigan.

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