

A Windfall After the Storm

Tuesday, 30 December 2008

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/081230.treeaftermath.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Dozens of spruce trees were blown over on Friday during a day-long northwesterly windstorm. Several trees, from Mill Bay Road to Otmeloi fell into transmission lines, causing scattered and sometimes repeated power outages for some residents.

Quite possibly the most popular man in town right now is tree surgeon Dennis Symmons, who has been busy since Friday morning. First it was trying to secure trees from causing property damage during the storm, and since then helping property owners cope with trees that could pose future problems.

He said relatively warm temperatures and heavy rain in the month prior to the storm kept the ground from freezing as much as usual, leaving exposed trees susceptible to the winter storm.

He says the conditions were a rare enough combination that some trees were not capable of handling it.

-- (Trees 1 34 sec "Basically the unusually ... went onto a house.")

Because

Kodiak Island has very little top soil, Simmons says the Sitka spruce trees depend on each other to stay standing:

-- (Trees 2 34 sec "Typically
most evergreens ... a vortex is created.")

Symmons

says homeowners can head off disaster by keeping an eye on their trees and seeing if they've move after a strong blow:

-- (Trees 3 49 sec "Trees
that came down ...the storm before that.")

Symmons

says he's worked on more than a dozen of the more dangerously unstable trees in the last couple days, either tying them off or making plans to keep them from coming down on homes. But he praises what he calls "gung-ho" residents who've taken it upon themselves to anchor trees to protect their homes or their neighbors'.

###