

Illinois battered by storms, high winds

by UPI

CHICAGO -- The Chicago area was soaked Wednesday night by a series of thunderstorms that caused delays at airports and left tens of thousands without power. As of 5 a.m. Thursday, 16,000 Commonwealth Edison customers still had no electricity, The Chicago Tribune reported, and it was unclear when power would be completely restored. Wednesday night's storms developed over northwest Illinois in the afternoon, ahead of a cold front trailing a low-pressure system over Michigan, National Weather Service meteorologist Casey Sullivan told The Tribune. With driving rains, lightning, some hail and winds moving up to 70 m.p.h., the weather meant inconvenient flight delays averaging 90 minutes at O'Hare International Airport and up to an hour at Midway Airport. Fire officials were also investigating whether a bolt of lightning caused a house fire in Wilmette. The family who lived there was home, but escaped before crews arrived, officials said. Also hit hard was DuPage County, which suffered outages as small trees and limbs were blown onto power lines. The weather forecast Thursday morning said there was a 60 percent chance of more showers and thunderstorms.

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