

Lightning damages high school computers, phone system

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OCTOBER 03, 2001

The lightning that occurred in the Washington area early on Sunday, Sept. 23, seemed to cause no damage.

The storm and the noise kept many awake, and a few people wondered if Washington was going to experience a windstorm like the one that damaged buildings in downtown Washington on Sept. 7. However, no damaged buildings, downed trees or fires were reported.

But on Monday, Washington High School officials soon **noticed the signs of lightning damage** throughout the building.

"Our computer system was damaged. We blew all the circuits in the elevator. The telephone system was wiped completely out. The intercom systems we use to talk to the classrooms from the office was ruined. There was damage to our dishwasher," said WHS principal Francis Johnston.

Johnston said the phone system was replaced this week, but the school is waiting for parts for the elevator.

"We will continue to find things that don't operate as time goes by," Johnston said.

The principal referred questions about computer damage to technology coordinator Jeff Brock.

Brock estimated damage to school computers at more than \$10,000. He said that network equipment, which allows the transfer of information between computers, was the most severely damaged, although several computers will have to be replaced.

One of the most noticeable effects of the damage at the high school is that the Internet service at the Washington Public Library was disrupted. The library, Brock explained, gets its Internet via a router at the high school. That router was destroyed; Brock expected it to be replaced by Thursday.