

Winds wreak havoc, destroy one South Lake Tahoe house

By Kathryn Reed

This particular Christmas tree will not have any presents under it next month. No children will fill the four twin beds upstairs.

That's because this house on Anita Avenue in South Lake Tahoe has been condemned.

Greg Falkner got a call from a neighbor at 6am Friday saying a tree had gone through the house. He drove up from Alameda and this afternoon was moving belongings to more secure areas of the home.

It's so bad he doesn't plan to show his wife any pictures.



No one was home when a tree crashed into a bedroom of a house on Anita Avenue. Photos/Kathryn Reed

"Last weekend people were sleeping in there," Falkner says of the room with the twin beds. Three beds are next to the wall

and below the roof where much of the damage occurred.

Someone easily could have been impaled had they been sleeping there. Tree limbs are on the floor. The beds are sunken into the garage below.

The house has been in Falkner's family for 36 years. Last summer he bought it from his parents. He spent six months fixing it up. It may take longer than that this time around.

General contractor Tony Piscitelli was on site helping clean up the mess. Next step was to take the dormer off and seal the holes on the house with plywood for the winter.



The house has been condemned.

Piscitelli estimates the Jeffery pine was 80-feet tall and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter. Ed Cook was at the house about 8am taking away the tree that was rotten on the inside.

Houses on both sides of the Falkner's also sustained damage, but are livable.

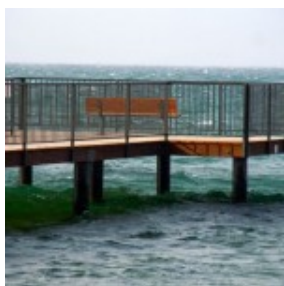
The National Weather Service said the highest wind gust clocked at Lake Tahoe Airport was 56 mph early Friday morning. Ridge tops had gusts of more than 100 mph.

The U.S. Coast Guard reported swells on the lake at 4 feet. Lake Tahoe continues to be a sea of white caps. The wind advisory is in effect until 4pm Nov. 18.

“It’s mainly a cold and windy storm,” said Jessica Kielhorn, meteorology technician with the National Weather Service in Reno. “It’s a very quick moving storm.”

Snow started falling on the North Shore in the late morning, with flurries being spit out on the South Shore by the afternoon. Snow totals aren’t expected to be much – 1-3 inches at lake level by Saturday morning, 4-6 inches at the higher elevations.

Winds were strong enough to prevent Heavenly Mountain Resort from opening Friday. This is the third consecutive year Mother Nature has delayed the opening. The gondola is slated to open Nov. 19 at 8:30am.



White caps on Lake Tahoe, with 4-foot waves spotted on the North Shore.

Liberty Energy said the storm has kept crews busy, but not with major problems. Branches on power lines and sporadic outages have affected customers.

NV Energy did not return a call, though they are working with significant power issues related to the devastating Reno fire.

Sgt. Shannon Laney with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department said a tree on Chonokis fell in the street and was cleared, a power line fell on Apache, wires were hanging on Seneca and

part of the traffic signal at Al Tahoe was damaged.

Mostly it was burglar alarms that kept officers busy. Winds trigger them.

Kielhorn said most of the snow would come overnight. The cold will stay through Saturday with a high on both ends of the lake expected to be in the low 30s and the overnight low for Friday and Saturday in the teens.