

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS



Luke and Alex vanDuyvendyk have won a local competition for Christmas lights on their home at 167 Sinclair Cres. RICHARD MARIAN/The StarPhoenix

Drugs 10 people ill

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Saskatoon Police Service spokeswoman Alyson Edwards did not know the age or gender of the other eight.

Saturday morning, Saskatoon police held a news conference and posted information on social media warning the public about the tainted drugs.

"It's very preliminary, so we do not know what the chemical is, exactly. We do know it is life-threatening, and it can cause serious injury or even death," Edwards said at the news conference Saturday.

There have not been any known deaths from the drugs, Edwards said.

It is still unclear whether it was cocaine or ecstasy that caused the problems.

"When you're dealing with someone who is in a medical emergency, you don't know how solid that information is. At this point, we want to make sure we're covering both with the alert, because we don't know for sure," Edwards said.

The alert appears to have worked. Dreaver said there have been no reports of anyone consuming tainted drugs or displaying similar symptoms.

He said it's unclear why. "Someone who's using tainted drugs isn't necessarily following the news, but we put it all out on Facebook and Twitter, and hope it spreads like wildfire," he said.

There's also a chance only a small amount of tainted drugs were in circulation and there isn't any more out there.

"Let's hope so and keep our fingers crossed," he said.

Police continue to investigate. They have not obtained any of the suspected tainted drugs.

Police continue to ask anyone with information to come forward.

"Someone who has consumed drugs, we're concerned first and foremost about their safety. If they're not in possession of drugs, if they're not trafficking in drugs, we're most interested to hear about the public safety aspect," Edwards said.

She added that anyone can give information anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers.

This is not the first case of bad drugs hurting people in Saskatoon this year. In September, two Saskatoon men died after taking what they thought was OxyContin. The pills contained fentanyl, a powerful opiate.

Friendly competition lights up area

Neighbours get into holiday spirit

EVAN RADFORD
THE STARPHOENIX

Look up. It's Santa shooting off fireworks from Jody Minakakis' roof, strobe light and all.

Underneath the red hat and fake white beard is Minakakis; he stands on his own roof, proudly shooting off fireworks, arms spread open under the night sky.

He's trying to catch the eyes of the decoration judges.

"I knew there was no way I was going to have as many lights as (my neighbour)," Minakakis said.

This was the predicament the Rosewood-area homeowner and his wife found themselves in late Thursday night.

The pair were in a heated

battle with rival homeowners Luke and Alex vanDuyvendyk.

"I knew I had to put a splash together — he welded the Christmas tree on his front lawn," Minakakis said.

He planned his spectacle just so: Start lighting the fireworks as soon as the judges pulled onto his street, steal their attention away from vanDuyvendyk's structural masterpiece and claim the \$1,500 prize.

"We always wanted to decorate with lights. This was kind of an excuse to go all out," said Luke, who aimed to best his competitor.

What Luke and Alex lacked in spontaneity, they made up for in tact.

"I'd basically come home and work on it every evening," said Luke, who started on his decorations right from the beginning, Dec. 11.

"Jody jumped on the bandwagon a bit later."

The competition was put on by Arbutus Properties, one of the main develop-



The Rosewood area is all alight this Christmas, thanks to some friendly competition.

ers in the Rosewood area. The goal was to encourage community and Christmas spirit.

The second-place prize was a fully paid SaskPower bill for December.

When the smoke cleared and the judges finished deliberating, vanDuyvendyk's careful, strategic planning won the day, er, night.

"Leading up to the final

day, we both saw each other working on it. One day he'd have more (lights), then I'd add some more. It went back and forth," Luke said of the rivalry with a laugh.

The tactician said he was careful not to play all his cards at once.

Three giant red stars above his garage were late additions.

"I didn't want to give ev-

erything away," Luke said. "Alex helped me a lot too. I did all the structural stuff with the welding, and she planned the details."

Despite his second-place finish, Minakakis left his rival with this message: "You better buy more lights, 'cause the fireworks show is gonna be even bigger next year." eradford@thestarphoenix.com

SaskPower 'This is very dangerous work'

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SaskPower workers had been repairing a high-voltage transmission line when a 45-year-old crew member was electrocuted. The man's name was not released.

According to RCMP and SaskPower, the man was injured but did not die at the scene. He was rushed to hospital in nearby Rosthern where he was pronounced dead shortly after.

"Any accident is always difficult, but it's even tougher at this time of the year. It's unfortunate for the family to have to deal with something like this," Wakaw RCMP Sgt. Deon Marquis said.

Collins agreed.

"It's never a good time, but this is unbelievable," he said.

Collins said his union will be in touch with the Saskatoon family of the man, of-

fering to help financially or in any other way needed.

Collins said it's been a very long time since any of the Crown corporation's 3,000 full-time employees died on the job, and said "even one death is too many."

He said safety is always the first priority for workers.

A SaskPower official said statistics on company workplace injuries and fatalities was not available Sunday.

According to Sask Pow-

er's latest annual report, the company recently adopted a new Safety Management System (SMS). The overall number of workplace injuries has decreased, including 3.5 million person-hours worked this year without a lost time injury at the Boundary Dam carbon capture project.

However, the report also stated there has been an increase in the number of "critical incidents."

SaskPower issued a statement Sunday.

"Our thoughts are with the family, close friends and co-workers at this difficult time," read the statement.

Provincial Occupational Health and Safety officers as well as SaskPower safety officers are investigating the incident and were at the scene. RCMP say they don't suspect foul play and have concluded their portion of the investigation.

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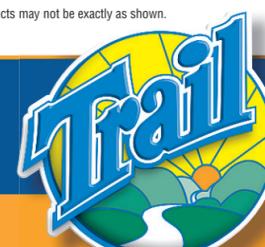
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