

PPL Restores Electric Service in Many Communities

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PPL Electric Utilities has restored service completely in many communities in its 29-county service territory and is cleaning up the remaining outages caused by the snow and ice storm that hit central and eastern Pennsylvania on Christmas.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

Service has been fully restored in these communities: Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Carbondale, Honesdale, White Haven, Bethlehem, the Buxmont area, Harrisburg and the West Shore, Sunbury, Lock Haven and Williamsport.

"By early evening, service will be back to 95 percent of all customers whose service was interrupted by the storm," said Robert Gombos, vice president-Field Services for PPL Electric Utilities.

PPL crews, with assistance from contractors and neighboring utilities, have restored service to nearly 145,000 customers over the past 48 hours. More than 164,000 customers were affected by the storm.

"We are very pleased with the amount of work the crews were able to accomplish yesterday and last night," Gombos said. "This response is even better than the last major winter storm that hit the region."

As of 8 a.m. today, work was continuing on restoring service to about 19,000 customers in the Poconos, Panther Valley, Lancaster, Sinking Spring, Cocalico, Marion Heights, Frackville, Orwigsburg and Bloomsburg.

"Customers in these areas should have their power back by midnight tonight. In many cases, service will be restored even sooner," Gombos said. "If you don't have power by then, please call our toll-free number at 1-800-342-DIAL PPL."

PPL recalled line crews, electricians and other essential personnel from their scheduled holidays and vacation time. Every available PPL crew has worked extra hours ever since the storm began. In addition, contractors or other utilities have provided assistance to speed the recovery.

"As damage is repaired in one area, we are moving crews to locations where customers are still without power," Gombos said.

Crews include personnel from Niagara Mohawk in New York; Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. in Maryland; PECO in King of Prussia, Pa.; PSE&G in New Jersey; Allegheny Power in Maryland; Citizens Electric Co. in Lewisburg, Pa.; Pittsburgh-based Duquesne Electric; and contract crews from PEPCO in Washington, D.C. and Connectiv in New Jersey.

"The line crews -- ours and those who have come to our aid -- did an incredible amount of work to repair such extensive damage," Gombos said. "Many of them gave up time with their family and friends to work under extremely adverse weather conditions during the height of the storm. They continued to work through the night, and they won't stop until all customers have their power restored."

"PPL Electric Utilities thanks its customers for their patience," Gombos said. "We know that being without electricity is a major hardship. All of our efforts over the past two days were done with one objective in mind: Restoring service to every PPL customer as quickly and safely as possible." PPL's customer service center will remain fully staffed for the duration of the storm emergency. PPL representatives will continue to call customers whose power has been out for extended periods. They will provide customers with estimates of when their power will be restored so they can plan accordingly.

The Christmas Day storm was among the most serious in the company's history. By comparison, it took PPL three days to restore service completely to the 152,000 customers who were affected by a snow and wind storm that occurred on March 4, 1993. The most severe outages in the company's history were caused by

Hurricane Floyd, which interrupted service to 350,000 customers in September 1999.

PPL Electric Utilities is a subsidiary of PPL Corporation. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation controls about 11,500 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

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