

National Grid Crews Restore Power to Victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Dennis

In July, approximately 90 National Grid employees from all divisions across New York and New England traveled to Birmingham, Ala., in response to widespread power outages in the wake of Hurricane Dennis.

Crews spent two days working alongside Alabama Power to restore service to residents of Birmingham where peak outages affected 72,000 homes. In total, Alabama Power experienced 241,000 outages statewide within its service territory.

Each day began at 7 a.m. when crews reported to a staging area in the abandoned Eastview Mall in Birmingham for a safety briefing and received their assignments. Throughout the day, crews endured extremely humid and hot temperatures, making hydration a safety priority. Additionally, they worked in thick vines that were jungle-like in some areas. Other local hazards included poison ivy and sumac, poisonous spiders and snakes. But, at the trip's end, no injuries were reported.



natural disasters. The vehicle, about the size of a city bus, is 55 feet long, 13.5 feet high and eight and a half feet wide.

"While traveling, the MEOC's technology allowed continuous communication with the crew supervisors, hotels for securing accommodations and Alabama Power officials," said Vic Ladd-de Graff of Emergency Planning. "Our objective was to keep the 90 of us reasonably together as we traveled; keeping a mechanic with each group to address any mechanical issues that may arise on the road."

In conversation with an Alabama Power supervisor, one piece of equipment on the MEOC piqued much interest – a pair of snowshoes, which were demonstrated by Transmission and Distribution Supervisor Mark Steffan, based in Olean, N.Y.

While jokes about the differences between the South and the North were natural conversations between the National Grid and Alabama Power crews, everyone came together to work efficiently and effectively. By the end of the second day of working together, power was restored to nearly all residents of Birmingham.



Hurricane Katrina's Wrath Brings Crews to Florida

Just six weeks after helping in Alabama, 29 line crews from New England and New York, along with supervisory and support personnel, were enroute to Florida after Hurricane Katrina crossed the southern part of the state.

When crews arrived on August 26 in West Palm Beach, Fla., more than 800,000 Florida Power and Light customers were without electricity after peak outages had topped 1.2 million. Before the crews left to head home

on Saturday, September 3, they completed all work assigned to National Grid and only about 7,000 customers were still without power.

Working alongside 6,000 employees from 72 utilities, contractors and other companies from 25 states, National Grid crews met each morning at the Miami-Dade Community College for safety briefings and assignments. Most days began at 5 a.m. and ended around 10 p.m.

"This deployment to Florida was a first for National Grid in that everyone, except for the two drivers of the Mobile Emergency Operations Center, flew down by plane," said Ladd-de Graff. "Florida Power and Light's rapid response plan for large scale outages includes the provision of bucket trucks, diggers and some tools for National Grid to use. So, we only brought select tools and safety equipment."



Despite the use of unfamiliar trucks and tools, National Grid crews received kudos from a Florida Power and Light liaison at a morning safety briefing when he said, "The [field] work performed by National Grid crews is fantastic; you've outperformed most others. Everyone has only good things to say about National Grid crew performance."

While no major injuries occurred, some employees experienced illnesses due to the extreme heat and insect bites. Two men from a North and Granite crew, however, did experience a flash while reinstalling a 13.2 KV primary wire connection on vertical construction. The flash left marks on their gloves and sleeves as well as the side of one bucket. Because the workers had utilized all of the required personal protection equipment, no injuries occurred.

Many crews from utilities based in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana that were working in Florida were released to their home states in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's landfall just east of New Orleans. As of this printing, it was unclear whether National Grid's assistance would be needed on the Gulf Coast to restore services to customers affected by the storm.



Support Minority and Women-Owned Businesses Through Purchase of Office Supplies

Want to be environmentally conscious and help support a minority- or women-owned vendor? Now people can do both with the click of a mouse by ordering remanufactured toner cartridges through Staples.

Staples, National Grid's office supplies contractor, has teamed with qualified Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) to offer a variety of products to corporate customers seeking MWBE purchasing opportunities. Staples recently included remanufactured toners from Roxbury Technology Corp. as a standard item available for purchase on the company's office

supplies Web site. Products are now easily identified by WBE and MBE symbols.

Remanufactured cartridges are good for the environment because they reduce waste and save natural resources. The plastic used in cartridges takes more than 10 centuries to decompose and more than three quarts of oil are used to produce each new cartridge. In just seven months, cartridge remanufacturing can save more than 22,000 tons of plastic and metal and 11 million gallons of oil – more than that which was spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989.

Through the National Grid's MWBE program, minority and women-owned businesses are provided with equitable opportunities to participate competitively in the company's purchasing activities. Procurement has reaffirmed its individual support for MWBE by becoming a member of regional supplier diversity purchasing councils.

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