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Iowa's Electric Cooperatives Send Crews to Nebraska for Restoration Efforts

Cooperatives will assist in Central and Northeast Nebraska – hit by winter storm

Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 3, 2007 — The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives announced today that crews from Iowa's electric cooperatives are headed to Nebraska to assist with power restoration efforts following a major winter storm that hit the area earlier this week. It has been more than 30 years since Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) has incurred damage from a winter storm of this magnitude. At least 28 counties throughout a wide geographic area in central and northeast Nebraska suffered damage leading to a disruption of electrical service. Initial estimates indicate it will take weeks, or even months, to completely rebuild the electrical systems.

Currently, about 30 linemen, 13 trucks and five pole trailers – from 10 Iowa cooperatives – are assisting the Nebraska electric cooperatives impacted by the storm. Iowa was contacted by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association for assistance on Tuesday and all the crews were on the road within hours. They are expected to work through the week and longer if needed. Many Iowa cooperatives have offered assistance at this time and will probably be utilized as crews are rotated or more help is needed. Because the storm also impacted a transmission cooperative, even some consumers who have underground power lines are currently without power. Some electric cooperatives in the area report that 90-100 percent of their consumers are without power. In total, about 80 linemen will assist in the restoration efforts, the others coming from South Dakota.

Iowa cooperatives currently participating in the restoration efforts include Farmers Electric Cooperative, Greenfield; Glidden REC, Glidden; Guthrie County REC, Guthrie Center; Harrison County REC, Woodbine; Midland Power Cooperative, Jefferson; Nishnabotna Valley REC, Harlan; North West REC, Le Mars/Orange City; Southwest Iowa REC, Stanton/Corning/Mt. Ayr; Western Iowa Power Cooperative, Denison; and Woodbury County REC, Merville.

The massive storm impacted NPPD's electric transmission infrastructure running from Lexington north to Broken Bow, extending northeast through Neligh and Norfolk, south through Aurora, and down to the Kansas border. NPPD's electric system is comprised of infrastructure that carries electricity at various voltage levels. NPPD's high-voltage transmission system is comprised of 4,240 miles of lines with voltage

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levels ranging from 345 kilovolt to 115kV, and 215 transmission substations. More than 600 miles of high-voltage power lines remain out of service due to wires down, structures down and damaged conductors. Of this total, about 130 miles of these lines are on the ground or severely damaged.

Presently, 28 high-voltage lines are out of service. Thousands of poles, hundreds of transformers, and close to 100 substations in NPPD's service area were impacted by the storm. NPPD is continuing to compile its assessment of system damage from a second day of aerial flyovers. This information will be used to help the utility firm up its long-term restoration strategy.

More than a dozen public power districts and municipalities in central Nebraska are combining their own resources with the mutual aid provided by a plethora of other utilities including crews from Iowa's electric cooperatives, and companies that support the power industry.

"This type of restoration effort is similar to what would happen in Iowa after a massive ice storm," says Dennis Corcoran, director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC). Corcoran, who, along with his staff, are coordinating the logistics with each of the cooperative crews. "These out-of-state situations are different as far as getting help to the cooperative. The Department of Transportation, Homeland Security, and Iowa / Nebraska Highway Patrol all need to be aware of the utility trucks crossing over the state lines. Waivers for Commercial Driving Regulations are necessary due to the fact the trucks are crossing state lines. It's not just as easy as finding help and sending them on their way. We need to make sure our drivers are in compliance with state and federal rules."

"A cooperative principle, which guides our daily business efforts, is cooperation among cooperatives," Corcoran says. "Whether that cooperative is 10 miles away, or in a neighboring state, our goal is work with each other to ensure member-consumers have power that is safe and reliable."

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, formed in 1942, is the Des Moines-based statewide association representing 37 distribution cooperatives in Iowa and six generation and transmission cooperatives serving more than 210,000 rural homes, farms and industries in all 99 counties. The IAEC provides legislative, regulatory, safety, communications and education and training programs and services to its members. The IAEC is also a Touchstone Energy partner – a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. More than 600 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 44 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to more than 17 million customers every day.