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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO DIRECTS INVESTIGATION INTO ROCHESTER GAS & ELECTRIC'S PREPARATION FOR AND RESPONSE TO WINDSTORM

Immediate Investigation Will Determine Whether RG&E Adhered to Their PSC-Approved Emergency Response Plan

At the Governor's Direction, More than 1,000 Additional Utility Workers Deployed to Restore Power to Residents More Quickly

200 Members of the National Guard Available to Monroe County to Assist With Local Efforts

24/7 Finger Lakes Region Emergency Hotline Is Fully Staffed to Provide Latest Information at 866-244-3839

State Agency Personnel and DOT Crews Continue to Work Around the Clock Across Affected Regions

State Emergency Operations Center Currently Operating in Enhanced Monitoring Mode

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today directed the New York State Department of Public Service to conduct an immediate investigation into the Rochester Gas & Electric's preparation and response to the recent severe windstorms that swept parts of Western New York and the Finger Lakes. In the storm's aftermath, more than 100,000 RG&E customers lost power, and three days after the storm more than 50,000 customers remain without power.

At the Governor's direction, the state has facilitated more than 1,000 additional workers for RG&E to help restore power more quickly. The crews are from NYPA, Con Edison, PSEG Long Island, New York municipal utilities, and other utilities from states including Canada, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia.

In addition, 200 National Guardsmen are available to Monroe County to assist with local recovery efforts. The state has also launched a 24/7 Finger Lakes Region Emergency

Hotline to provide the latest information to residents affected in their community at 866-244-3839.

"By law, after Superstorm Sandy, the utilities are expected to be prepared and have plans on how to handle emergencies and quickly restore power to residents following storm-related outages," **said Governor Cuomo**. "More than 50,000 Rochester Gas & Electric customers still remain without power following Wednesday's windstorm, and I have directed the New York State Department of Public Service to review the company's operation and conduct a full investigation into their response to widespread power outages. The state has also deployed more than 1,000 additional utility workers to come to the region to support RG&E and ensure that they are working aggressively and around-the-clock to fully restore power to all New Yorkers affected by this storm."

Following widespread power outages across the state after Superstorm Sandy, Governor Cuomo directed the Department of Public Service and the Public Service Commission to strengthen their oversight of utilities under a new law that took effect in 2013. Utilities are now required to develop comprehensive storm response plans that are approved annually by PSC. The PSC approved RG&E's plan last year, and it approved updates at its March 9 session.

To promote effective emergency preparation and response, the new rules hold utilities accountable for timely power restorations after a significant outage using an assessment of electric utility performance. PSC can review the response of utility companies to ensure they are adhering to approved emergency response plans, and determine the proper penalties, if any, based on the investigation.

PSC Chairman Gregg Sayre said, "It is critically important that a utility adheres to our rules and regulations. We will immediately commence with a thorough and detailed investigation as directed by Governor Cuomo and we will hold RG&E fully accountable if it has violated our rigorous standards that are designed to ensure public safety and the reliability of the electric system."

In addition to the investigation, the New York State Division of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Management, State Department of Transportation, and State Police are staffing the State Emergency Operations Center and are currently in the regions to assist localities with storm response. The Monroe County Emergency Operations Center remains open with representatives from NYS Office of Emergency Management, State Police and the Department of Transportation on site. Additional OEM staff are deployed to support any activities necessary and to visit shelters and warming centers.

State Actions in Response to Storm:

New York National Guard

The New York National Guard has initial response forces staged in Rochester with a liaison officer coordinating with the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management.

The New York National Guard has 200 personnel available to respond to any requests from the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management.

Department of Transportation

The New York State Department of Transportation has more than 300 workers from around the region and across the state serving around the clock to clear trees, repair and replace damaged traffic signals, and reopen roads quickly and safely, including clearing any snow that falls today. In the immediate aftermath of the windstorm, 54 sections of state highway were closed. This morning that number is down to three, all impacted by downed trees and power lines. Motorists are reminded to treat dark traffic signals as all-way stops.

DOT crews will remain on the ground through the weekend working in coordination with state and local officials until all roads are reopened and all signals reactivated. Senior staff from DOT have been at the EOC for the duration monitoring the storm closely and working with other state agencies to coordinate response.

Department of Public Service

The Department of Public Service has been in regular contact with utility senior executives, and it is closely monitoring utility storm restoration efforts to ensure that utilities are minimizing outages and speeding outage restorations. In light of the significant outages, the Department will extend its Call Center Helpline hours to be open this weekend, Saturday, March 11 and Sunday, March 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to assist consumers in storm response and restoration efforts. The Department's Call Center Helpline can be reached by calling (800) 342-3377. Residents can also call the Finger Lakes Region Emergency Hotline 24 hours a day at 866-244-3839.

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

In addition to regional deployments to the State Emergency Operations Center and Monroe County Emergency operations Center, the New York State Watch Center, the State's 27/7 monitoring point is in an enhanced monitoring posture. Recovery teams from the Division have also been in communication with the Western New York Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD's) to identify possible unmet needs and to provide situational awareness to the VOAD members regarding the ongoing state and local responses to the recent weather event.

State Police

The State Police directed extra Troopers to respond to the emergency throughout affected regions, working around the clock to assist with road closures and answer calls for service for other law enforcement agencies. The State Police are also present at the Monroe County Emergency Operations Centers, helping coordinate emergency response.

Shelters and Warming Stations

At the request of Monroe County, The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency

Services has supplied 500 cots, 500 pillows, and 1000 blankets from the State Stockpile location in Chili. Additional assets available include 491 cots, 1,158 pillows, 36,000 cans of water, 168 towels, 28 light towers, 121 generators, and 1,368 wool blankets from the State Stockpile location in Chili, Monroe County.

Shelters are open 24 hours a day and residents should call ahead to their county for the hours of operation for all warming stations.

Genesee County Shelters

Batavia Veterans Administration Hospital, Building 4
222 Richmond Ave.
Batavia, NY

Monroe County Shelters

David F. Gantt Recreation Center
700 North St.
Rochester, NY 14605

Gates Town Hall Annex
1605 Buffalo Road
Gates, NY

Greece Community Center
3 Vince Tofany Boulevard
Greece, NY

West Irondequoit High School
260 Cooper Road
Irondequoit, NY

Wayne County Shelters

Cross Creek Church
3259 Canandaigua Rd.
Macedon, NY

Genesee County (Warming Stations)

Batavia Veterans Administration Hospital
222 Richmond Ave.
Batavia, NY

Erie County (Warming Stations)

Newstead Senior Center
6691 Cummings Rd.
Newstead, NY

Orleans County (Warming Stations)

Kendall Town Hall (open until 6 p.m., March 11)
1873 Kendall Rd
Kendall, NY

Lyndonville Fire Department
148 North Main Street
Lyndonville, NY

If you are without power

- Call your utility first to determine area repair schedules or call the 24/7 Finger Lakes Region Emergency Hotline at 866-244-3839 for updates. Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate power has been restored. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.
- If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, fill plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one. This will help keep food cold.

If you need to use a generator:

- Before installing a generator, be sure to properly disconnect from your utility electrical service. If possible, have your generator installed by a qualified electrician. Run generators outside, downwind of structures. Never run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.
- Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most small, home-use portable generators produce 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator can damage it and appliances connected to it, and may cause a fire. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep children away from generators at all times.

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Do not operate generators indoors; the motor emits deadly carbon monoxide gas. Do not use charcoal to cook indoors. It, too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas.
- Do not use your gas oven to heat your home -- prolonged use of an open oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm.

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New York State | Executive Chamber | press.office@exec.ny.gov | 518.474.8418