

Jewett City DPU
Tropical Storm Irene Hearing Questions

Utility Companies

- Preparation
 - What are the best practices for readiness? Response?

Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Gas up all utility related vehicles. Make certain all machinery (chain saws and special utility related tools (and vehicles) are in working order). Make all appropriate utility personnel aware of their respective schedule during the storm. Make all mutual aid arrangements well in advance (make the appropriate people aware that our utility may require mutual aid so that the company responding can plan in advance).

- How did you fare for readiness? Response?

The plan for readiness was carried out perfectly without any negative incidents. In the Jewett City service territory we did not experience our worst expectations (ie we did not have any poles come down).

- What was the damage from Tropical Storm Irene? How many lines were affected? How many customers were affected?

In Jewett City we experienced wind damage from winds blowing approximately 60 mph. We had some trees come down which took down wires. We have three central circuits in the Jewett City service territory and all three had some line damage associated with them. Distribution lines were down at various locations (approximately 8-10 locations) and multiple service wires came down. At the peak of the storm, we had approximately 400 of our 2300 electric customers without power. Eventually (at approximately 3:30 P.M. on Sunday afternoon) the feeds (that feed Jewett City) went down and that left the entire community without power for approximately 30 hours.

- What was the extent of your disaster preparedness plan? Please provide details.
 - Were we prepared for a category 1 hurricane?

Although our disaster plan is somewhat generic in nature, yes, we were planning and prepared for a category 1 hurricane. Mutual aid contacts had already been established.

- What damage could have been done?

We must remember that this was tropical storm force winds, had the winds been blowing 110 mph instead of 60 mph, the damage would have been significantly

greater and the time to restore would have been many days. In addition to the damage that actually took place (which was primarily downed wires caused by tree limbs falling), we could have experienced poles and transformers down which did not happen in the Jewett City service territory. We believe that our tree trimming program played a significant role in the prevention of poles and transformers coming down.

- Where/how could we have done better?

We did the best we could with the staff we had and the situations we encountered and it all worked out quite nicely in Jewett City. Communications with outside media could have been improved.

- What lessons did you learn?

We learned that the dedication to significant amounts of time spent on tree trimming paid big dividends.

- What are your standards in regards to tree trimming? Have these standards changed over the past 10 years?

We tree trim year round (as we find problems) with a significant amount of time being dedicated to tree trimming in the Fall. Tree trimming efforts have not changed over time.

- Staffing/Labor

- How many line crews were deployed during peak restoration?

One crew of three – two linemen and a ground man.

- How many line crews were brought in from other places, if any?
None

- How many line crews are employed by your company now vs. 2000?

In 2000, three linemen and a working superintendent were employed, as of now we have two linemen and a working Director of Utilities.

- What are your policies/standards regarding hours of work (hours/shift)?

Typically, no more than 16 hours straight in any given day for any given lineman.

- Communication

- How was the communication between your company and municipalities?

- What worked? What didn't?
- How could this communication be improved?

N/A – our company is a municipality.

- How was the communication between your company and your customers?
 - What worked? What didn't?
 - How could this communication be improved?

In our case, word was put out by our local government officials and our phone was staffed and functional throughout the storm. To improve this going forward, we might use local media outlets to help keep the public up-to-date on estimates of time to complete.