

MEDIA ADVISORY

Minnesota Power crews making steady progress on power restoration in Brainerd Lakes Area

Minnesota Power crews have restored power to 1,000 customers originally impacted by Sunday's severe storms. The company currently reports about 4,200 remaining customers without electric service in the Brainerd Lakes area, down from around 5,200 reported twenty-four hours ago. Crews restored power to the communities of Bertha and Royalton today. Service was returned to Crosby, Pillager and the town of Park Rapids by midnight last night. Work continues to focus on the heavily storm-damaged areas of Gull Lake, Round Lake, Pine Beach, Sylvan, Hewitt, rural Nisswa, rural Park Rapids and Motley. Today crews were able to clear Highway 371 of trees and begin removal of broken power poles and downed lines. The current estimate for the majority of customers listed in the communities above remains at noon on Thursday, July 16.

More than 100 personnel from Minnesota Power and mutual aid utilities such as Xcel Energy and Brainerd Public Utilities, as well as multiple contractors are helping tackle this restoration effort. The biggest obstacle continues to be the removal of thousands of large trees that have fallen and broken well over 100 power poles and 100 transformers. New poles and transformers are at the removal sites and are being replaced as clearing progress is made.

Power restoration in this situation is a phased approach. Public safety and critical infrastructure is the first priority. Larger transmission lines are repaired first, then the restoration moves to primary distribution lines and then into neighborhoods to repair individual electric services.

Minnesota Power also reminds everyone to please stay clear of downed power poles, lines and wires as they could still be energized. The public's continued patience is appreciated as workers restore power safely and quickly.

Residents and media in affected communities are encouraged to visit their online outage center at <http://www.mnpower.com/OutageCenter/OutageMap> for updates as well as to follow their Twitter and Facebook pages for updates as new information is known.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 144,000 customers, 16 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

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