

WEC CO-OP CURRENTS

WEC And Irene Vermont's Disastrous Storm Largely Spares Washington Electric

Hurricane Irene made a mess of Vermont on the last Sunday in August, dumping up to 11 inches of rain in some places and washing away people's farms, homes, businesses, and livelihoods. More than 700 homes were lost or rendered uninhabitable by the storm, and there was severe damage and destruction to some 260 state roads and an uncounted number of town roads. More than 30 bridges were ruined or destroyed, among them a few of Vermont's landmark covered bridges.

Viewed from a national perspective, the *New York Times* reported that Hurricane Irene and its "tropical storm" derivative "will most likely prove to be one of the 10 costliest catastrophes in the nation's history." That was, in part, the *Times* said, because "much of the damage . . . was caused not by winds but by flooding, which is excluded from many standard [insurance] policies." In rural Vermont – but also in other places in Irene's pathway, which covered much of the East Coast from North Carolina up, and the

landlocked Northeast, including New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York State – communities became, in the words of State Rep. Maxine Grad of Moretown (quoted in the Vermont

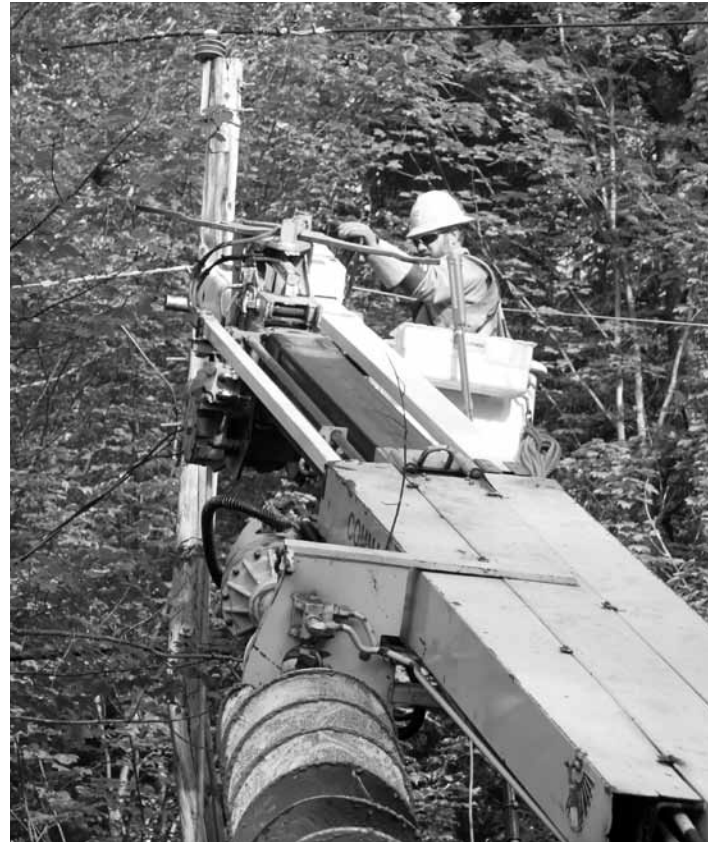
The New York Times reported that Hurricane Irene and its tropical-storm derivative "will most likely prove to be one of the 10 costliest catastrophes in the nation's history."

Digger), "island villages," isolated by washed-out and impassable roads and bridges.

Inevitably in such a storm, electric utilities suffered extensive damages. In Vermont, that was particularly the case in the southern two-thirds of the state – although Vermont Electric Co-op, which operates across the northern tier, suffered outages to some 10,000 members. VEC's outages tended to be of shorter duration than those afflicting Green Mountain Power Inc. (GMP) and Central Vermont Public Service Corp. (CVPS), which lost power to approximately 40,000 and 73,000 customers, respectively.

In this, Vermont had a lot of company. Electricity outages affected millions of people in Irene's path – according to some sources, 64 percent of electricity customers in Rhode Island (274,000 homes and

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WEC Foreman Rich Hallstrom rigs a temporary fix, which allowed the Co-op to restore power to the Hampshire Hill area of Worcester two days after Irene struck Vermont. However, this pole was broken (note how it's bent near the bottom of the photo) and needed to be replaced.

WEC And DPS Agree To A Lower Rate Increase; Proposal Awaits A Public Service Board Decision

Washington Electric Cooperative and the Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) have reached an agreement that, if approved by the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB), would result in the Co-op instituting a 19.44-percent rate increase for its members, replacing the 23.81-percent increase the Co-op put into effect, provisionally, on January 1, 2011.

"It's important for our members to understand that this agreement cannot take effect without the Public Service Board's approval," said WEC General Manager Avram Patt. "We

would expect that the Board will rule sometime in the fall, but that's up to the Board's schedule."

WEC and the DPS finalized their agreement with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 25. The Department, following usual procedure, had opened up an investigation of WEC's proposed rate increase shortly after it was filed in November 2010. Also following customary procedure and Vermont law as applied to electric cooperatives, the Co-op put its increase

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Washington Electric Cooperative

East Montpelier, VT 05651

Inside

Paying tribute to Vermonters. WEC President Barry Bernstein on what Tropical Storm Irene revealed about our state and its people. Page 2.

WEC Community Meetings coming to Moretown, Williamstown. Home-cooked meals and "smart meter" discussions are on the menu. Page 3.

Capital credits time again. WEC will soon be issuing capital credit distributions to some Co-op members, and would like your help finding former members who could benefit. Page 4.

The old winter window dilemma. With cold weather around the corner, WEC's Energy Coach offers a solution for tightening up your windows without breaking the bank. Page 6.



Wind power is becoming a reality in Vermont. Shown here is the completed and restored access road at the Sheffield Wind site, with Turbine #4 in the foreground and Turbine #6 in the rear. The turbines will turn for real in Sheffield next month. Story, page 3.

President's Message

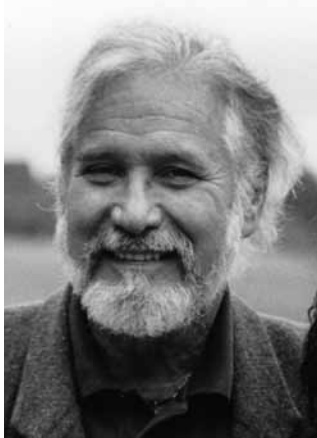
Pulling Together After The Storm, And A Glance At The Road Ahead

By Barry Bernstein

What can I say except how proud I am of our fellow Vermonters and their amazing resilience after the worst storm damage in nearly a century.

Hearing Vermonters share their stories, and seeing the responses from their neighbors and communities, has been heartwarming and also brought tears and hope in our ability to rebound from this devastating natural disaster. Special thanks go to the incredible

storm-coverage reporting from WDEV and their team, who stayed focus 24/7 focused on the events as they unfolded. VPR's coverage on a daily basis, talking with Vermonters and state and local officials and responders in the aftermath, was spectacular. We truly live in a special place where our differences



Tropical Storm Irene proved that we truly live in a special place where our differences remain small when we need to pull together.

remain small when we need to pull together.

Much of WEC's service territory, fortunately, was not hit as badly as the rest of the state and even towns in our region, such as Waterbury. Much thanks to our great WEC crews and all of the staff, who worked for long, hard hours to be able to get everyone back on by late Tuesday afternoon. Also thanks for crews from Morrisville Water & Light and the Hardwick Electric Department who came to our assistance.

Some folks around the state may still be without electricity, in addition to the several hundred homes that were destroyed or made uninhabitable. I toured Waterbury and drove down to Rochester and Granville the following Sunday, a week after the storm, and talked with folks who were still unable to go to work as there

was no way "to get there from here."

When we asked at the general store in Rochester if we could get to Bethel over the Bethel Mountain Road, they jokingly asked if we had an airplane.

As noted on page five of this issue, WEC has donated \$3,000 from the WEC Community Fund to three organizations who are giving support to flood-relief efforts. It's a good use of your capital credit refund money, if you haven't made that move yet.

Office renovation

It has been quite a year for dramatic, destructive weather, and WEC is still trying to recover from the May 26 damage to our office building in East Montpelier. We are finally hopeful that we will be able to start gutting the entire first floor on the inside, which needs to be done by certified abatement specialists due to asbestos in the walls.

At our September meeting, the WEC Board voted to completely renovate the space, including bringing it up to current energy-efficiency standards. This was a project WEC did not have planned; however, the Board felt strongly that we needed to take the unfortunate situation and make it into a positive opportunity to provide a viable workspace that would support our Co-op into the future, and which also reflects our commitment to energy conservation and efficiency.

The building remake will be the first comprehensive effort to improve our headquarters since the building was constructed in 1939, with various add-ons over the following few decades. Unfortunately the work is taking longer than we would have liked and will not be complete until February or March 2012, so we will have to make do with temporary quarters for a while longer. We know this is not easy on our

Co-op employees as we move into the winter, and appreciate their patience. We ask our members to please give them support when you call in, and to understand that the circumstances make their work, especially during storms, more difficult.

Community Meetings in October

WEC will be holding two community dinners again this year, in Moretown on Thursday, October 13, at the Town Hall, and in Williamstown, Tuesday, October 18, at the high school/middle school. (See page 3 for more information.) "Smart meters" will be the main topic of discussion. The Co-op will be installing these starting in 2012. Half of the cost for the new meters will be paid by a federal grant awarded to the State of Vermont. In the end it will improve our ability to have more-accurate information during storms and regular outages so we can get folks back on line sooner.

We will also be discussing the need to file for another rate increase for 2012, somewhere 4- percent to 5-percent range, though we are only now getting a chance to look at the numbers as we complete the 2012 budget. Your WEC Board and management will attempt to do all we can to keep the rate increase as low as possible. We urge members to come to the meeting to discuss these issues, and to support the Moretown Fire Department Auxiliary and the Class of 2013 in Williamstown, who will be putting on the dinners for us.

As we move into fall and prepare for winter, I know that after Tropical Storm Irene we will be more appreciative of how fortunate we are, and hope we can all continue to give support to our fellow Vermonters who have not fared as well.

Co-op Currents

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WEC is part of the alliance working to advance and support the principles of cooperatives in Vermont.

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The Board of Directors' regularly scheduled meetings are on the last Wednesday of each month, in the evening. Members are welcome to attend. Members who wish to discuss a matter with the Board should contact the president through WEC's office. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. For information about times and/or agenda, or to receive a copy of the minutes of past meetings, contact Administrative Assistant Deborah Brown, 802-223-5245.

The Co-op is saddened by the loss of Cornelia Swayze, a former member of WEC's Board of Directors, who died on September 10, 2011, at the age of 71. A resident of Tunbridge, Cornelia was appointed to fill a vacant position on the Board in 1996, and served until 2002. Gifted in music, writing, and culinary pursuits, Cornelia and her husband, Henry, owned a sheep farm and an agricultural fence business. She wrote primarily in the fields of education and sustainable agriculture, and served on a number of local, state, and national councils and boards. We extend our sympathies and best wishes to Cornelia's family.



Cornelia Swayze

Winds of Change Blowing in Vermont



First Wind's Sheffield Wind Project, seen from Square Road in Sheffield, approximately 3.5 miles southeast of the 40-MW, 16-turbine development.

Significant progress has been made over the past few months on wind electric-generation projects in Vermont, making it virtually certain that the state will have a second wind farm – First Wind's 40-megawatt (MW) "Sheffield Wind" project – in productive operation this fall. (The first commercial wind project in Vermont was Green Mountain Power Corp.'s 6-MW Searsburg project, which debuted in 1997 and is still in production).

In addition, a vote by Vermont Electric Cooperative members on July 26 helped move the Kingdom Community Wind project forward as well. Voting 5,340 to 1,379, the cooperative's owner/members approved a \$12-million upgrade to VEC-owned transmission lines stretching 16.9 miles, from Lowell to Jay. The transmission-line project is a key component of the planned construction of a 63-MW, 21-turbine wind farm on Lowell Mountain, to be owned by Green

Mountain Power (GMP). GMP will pay \$7 million of the transmission-line upgrade. VEC will receive a portion of the electricity the project generates. While VEC was planning to upgrade the line in any event, the member vote was seen by many as a referendum on the wind project.

Kingdom Community Wind received a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) last May from the Vermont Public Service Board. There is active opposition to the project, organized by a group called Energize Vermont. GMP and VEC had hoped to begin construction by August 1, but review of various state permits has taken longer than the companies anticipated.

In the aftermath of the VEC vote, CEO David Hallquist said that the high voter turnout "reflects the importance of energy issues to VEC members. As an electric cooperative, our members have a voice in making important decisions about our energy future. The

level of involvement in this election is unprecedented, and we view this as a very positive sign for the future of our democratic organization."


Washington Electric Cooperative General Manager Avram Patt says the arguments against Kingdom Community Wind strike a familiar chord.

"We heard some of the same concerns from opponents of the Sheffield project," said Patt. "The difference was that Washington Electric Co-op was not directly involved in the development at Sheffield. But we did contribute funds through a federal grant to assist First Wind in assessing the suitability of the site, and we went to a lot of community meetings that were held in Sheffield and neighboring towns. Also, the project has come up in our own membership meetings – the Annual Meeting and the community meetings we hold each year in October – so we've had these kinds of discussions, too.

"But with the July vote, strongly in

favor of the transmission-line upgrade, I think the members of Vermont Electric Co-op have spoken."

For First Wind, the final legal hurdle was cleared in August 2010, when the Vermont Environmental Court rejected appeals by opponents and instead amended and approved the project's construction storm water permit. It was then just a matter of time before construction actually began in Sheffield.

And now it is complete. Before the power generated at the 16-turbine facility can be sold, First Wind must conduct tests of the system. Testing began on Tuesday, September 20. The company expects to start commercial operation of Sheffield Wind in October. Once it is operational 100 percent of the power generated there will be sold to Vermont utilities – 10 percent of it to Washington Electric Co-op, and the remaining 90 percent to VEC and the Burlington Electric Department. 

2011 Community Meetings To Begin WEC's 'Smart Meter' Discussion

October Meetings Planned for Moretown, Williamstown

It's an October tradition – the time of the year when Washington Electric Cooperative "takes its show on the road," as members of the staff and Board of Directors join WEC members for dinner and discussions in two towns in the Co-op's service territory. This year WEC's community meetings will be held on Thursday, October 13, at the Town Hall in Moretown, and on Tuesday, October 18, at the Williamstown Middle/High School in Williamstown.

At both locations dinner will be served at 6 p.m., and will require a reservation (reservation forms were enclosed in members' September electric bills; reservations can also be made by calling Debbie Brown at Washington Electric Co-op). Dinner will cost \$6 per person. The informational meetings and discussions will begin at 7 p.m. For that part of the meeting reservations are not required, so you could skip dinner and show up at 7:00 – but why would you? The menus look great, and the dinners at WEC's community meetings always are prepared by local groups, with proceeds benefitting local organizations and/

or causes. This year, the Moretown meeting will be sponsored by the Moretown Fire Department Auxiliary, and the Williamstown meeting will be put on by, and will benefit, the school's Class of 2013.

At the Co-op's community meetings, the discussion portion of the evening is always free-ranging; members are encouraged to raise any utility- or energy-related subject they wish, to ask any questions, and to make


Moretown:

In Moretown, it is important to note that the meeting will be held at the Town Hall, as planned, despite the extensive damage caused to the village and the building by Tropical Storm Irene. In part, this is a salute to Moretown and its recovery from that devastating storm. However, people planning to attend the meeting should be forewarned that the basement of the Town Hall will not have been fully restored, which means that the bathrooms will not be functioning. There will be portable toilets outside the building.

the board and staff aware of their opinions or concerns. That said, this year WEC's leadership does have an agenda: the Directors and General Manager Avram Patt plan to use the community meetings to introduce the subject of AMI – automated metering infrastructure, also known as "smart meters." Like the majority of Vermont's electric utilities, WEC will be moving toward an AMI system in the coming months and years, partly facilitated by a federal grant under the 2009 American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, or "the stimulus bill").

WEC staff will provide information about the service improvements smart meters will offer, in improving reliability and outage response, controlling costs, and in providing members with far more detailed information about their own electricity usage than they have now. The community meetings will kick off the Co-op's efforts at informing and educating members about this important project.

AMI represents an extensive and significant change in the way Vermont's electric utilities will operate, and the 2011 WEC community meetings in Moretown and Williamstown will start the conversation. We look forward to seeing you there. 



Everyone knows that you can't talk energy on an empty stomach. A locally sponsored dinner starts off WEC's community meetings, as in this photo from East Corinth last year.

WEC 2011 Equity Distribution Plan

Co-op Seeks Former Members For Capital Credit Refunds

Washington Electric Cooperative is preparing to issue capital credit refunds to current and former members, as authorized by WEC's Board of Directors. Under the 2011 Equity Distribution Plan, capital credits will be returned to eligible people who bought power from the consumer-owned electric utility during the years 1991, 1992, and 2010. Safeguarding the Co-op's financial stability, the Board of Directors has targeted a total amount of approximately \$275,000 for distributions in 2011, a slight increase from the \$273,000 allocated in 2010.

Capital credits are returned to Co-op members (customers) for years in which WEC's revenues exceed its operating expenses. Capital credits are a way of dividing those surplus revenues – called margins – among the member-owners. The amount of a member's refund is based on the size of the Co-op's margins in the years in question, and how much electricity that member purchased. Each co-op member has a capital credit account in his/her name, which is a bookkeeping entry managed on an annual basis by the Cooperative.

WEC's practice has been to divide its capital credit distributions between FIFO (first in, first out) and LIFO (last in, first out) plans – the former meaning plans that pay earlier (or "first") members first, and the latter applying to plans that pay the most recent (or "last") members first. FIFO distribution plans reach back to pay off historical capital credit accounts, and since WEC initiated capital credit distributions in 1998 it will, when the 2011 distributions are complete, have retired all distributions from 1939 to 1991. LIFO distribution plans pay the most recent distributions, providing the benefits of a cooperative to current or very recent members.

This year \$75,327 of the money earmarked under the 2011 Equity Distribution Plan will go to Co-op members from 1991. The Co-op began addressing the 1991 capital credits last year; the \$75,327 allocated this year will retire the outstanding balance from 1991 (when WEC's margins totaled \$273,327). Another \$122,673 will be allocated to members from 1992. This will leave a balance of \$552,004 in capital credits from that year. The remaining \$75,000 in the plan will address capital credits for 2010. WEC's margins in 2010 totaled \$583,071. (When the Co-op retires only a portion of the capital credits from a given year it does not mean that some people are paid and others are not. Rather, each person who qualifies for an equity-distribution payment is paid proportionally.)

For former Co-op members, refunds of \$20 or more will be paid by check. Those checks will be issued once the Co-op has received a properly executed authorization form (contact WEC for details). Current members who are eligible for refunds based on their 1991, 1992, and/or their 2010 electric payments will receive their refund as a credit on their electric bill, regardless of the amount.

WEC members (both current and former) can choose to contribute their 2011 capital credit refund to the Community Fund administered by Washington Electric Cooperative. Funds contributed by members in 2011 will be combined with any remaining 2010 contributions and with the contributions from people who have elected to always donate their capital credit refunds to the WEC Community Fund. The Fund makes financial contributions to qualifying community causes, per WEC Policy 6. A year-end report on the 2011 Community Fund donations will be published in *Co-op Currents* early in 2012.

All individual retirements will be reduced by any uncollectible or delinquent amount(s) owed to the Cooperative, as permitted by the WEC Bylaws. No early retirements will be made to the estates of deceased members. No distribution will be made in 2011 for construction capital investments credited to patrons' accounts from contributions-in-aid-of-construction for new power line extensions. No distribution will be made to patrons who purchased and paid for renewable energy credits (RECs) in 2010.

WEC may impose a \$10 annual service charge on all patronage (capital credit) accounts for years in which the credits have been retired and went unclaimed. This service charge can be applied to unclaimed accounts annually, until the balance in those accounts is \$0.

Earlier this summer WEC sent out Capital Credit Patronage Refund Authorizations to eligible former members, using the person's last-known address. Listed below are the names of people or accounts whose authorizations were returned as undeliverable. WEC is asking friends, acquaintances, and relatives of the people listed here to contact those potential recipients or their rightful heirs, and have the former member or beneficiary contact Washington Electric Cooperative directly at 802-223-5245, or toll-free at 1-800-932-5245.

WEC will issue this year's capital credit refunds in November 2011.

Adams, Steven	Bergeron, Laurie A.	Cano, Victor	Craw, Robert W.	Dunbar, Duane	French, Beverly	Guy, Stuart
Ahearn, III Donald R.	Bernier, Judy	Cantlin, Timothy & Gail	Crawford, John R.	Duncklee, Norman	French, Colleen	Hackmann, Jeff
Aiken, Kenneth J.	Berry, Alan R.	Cantwell, Richard J.	Cressey, Earl	Dunican, Douglas A.	French, Jr. Bert	Haggett, Clifton E.
Albertson, Stephen	Betit, Michael	Caplan, Karen & Patrick	Crowther, Irene M.	Dunn, Monique	French, Steven	Haggett, Lori & Thomas W.
Aldrich, Georgia	Beyerle, Mary J. & George	McCulloch	Cullen, Joan M.	Dunster, Gary C.	Friedman, Penni	Haggett, Phoebe R.
Allen, Charlotte A.	Bielecki, Mark	Carey, Brett	Curran, Jonathan R.	Dupont, Roxann	Fuller, Gail	Hagopian, G.
American Tel & Tel Co.	Biggar, Margaret A.	Carignan, James A.	Curtis, Gary L.	Dutcher, Marguerite	Gable, James	Haile, Dennis R.
Anderson, Lou Ann	Billado, Regina M.	Carlson, Katherine M.	Curtiss, Robert	Dwinell, Joanna R.	Gadapee, Edward C.	Hamelin, Charles E.
Anderson, Roland V.	Billado, Robert W.	Carroll, Wayne M.	Czajkowski, Frances T.	Dworkin, David	Gahagen, Jacqueline	Hance, Jr. Borden
Andrews, Kathleen	Blair, Pamela	Carter, Dudley T. &		Dwyer, David C.	Gallucci, Anthony J.	Haney, Shirley J.
Argent, Jr. Parker L.	Blair, Richard	Connie L.	Daino, Robert	Eastman, David B.	Garcia, Florentio	Hanley, Robert
Arndt, Jr., Walter T.	Blair, Robert J.	Casey, George	Danforth, Ike	Edson, Theresa	Gardella, Sandy E.	Hansen, Winifred C.
Arruda, Mary A.	Blais, Raymond A.	Cavalier, Marie	D'Antonio, Louis A. &	Edwards, Jane M.	Gardner, Ross	Harrington, Dean A.
Ashley, Charles	Blau, William	Cavender, Peter J.	Carol A.	Eiriksson, Karl J. & Susan	Garfield, April	Harrington, John
Asquith, Laura	Blay, Donna A.	Ceplikas, Alison P.	Darling, Charlene	Eldred, Allan	Garneau, Traci	Harrington, Timothy J.
Atkinson, Trevor R.	Blodgett, Arthur D.	Cepetelli, Ronald P.	Davidson, Mark & Jeanne	Eldridge, Laura	Gauthier, Frederick J.	Harris, Frederick J.
Atwood, Renee	Blow, Paul J.	Chaffee, Michael	Davidson, Nick &	Elkin, Milton	Harris, Steve	Harris, Steve
Audette, James R.	Boisvert, Robert	Chaloux, Sandra	Catherine Goodard	Emerson, Charles A.	Hart, John R.	Hart, Lillian M.
Austin, Norma O.	Bolton, William	Chamberlin, Debbie	Davis, Charles	Emerson, Russell	Hart, Lynn A.	Hartwig, Pam
Ayer, Patrick	Bonney, Cynthia	(Norton)	Davis, Diane	Emery, C.	Hatch, Margaret	Hatch, Marguerite
Bacon, John E.	Bosma, Mikel	Chamberlin, Shirley	Davis, Lorena	Eniti, Anita T.	Hatch, Ralph J.	Hathaway, Lynn M.
Badeau, Cynthia M.	Boutin, Sandra	Champany, Sydney	Davis, Sr. Clayton	Entriken, Jane S.	Hatch, Margaret	Hawkins, Joanne D.
Bailey, Steven	Bowell, Erlene M.	Chartier, Robert A.	Davulis, James J.	Estes, Brian	Hatch, Marguerite	Hawthorne, Jarrett N.
Bair, Estate of Samuel	Bower, Steven	Chase, Andrew	Day, Jamie P.	Everett, Sue A.	Hatch, Ralph J.	Hayes, Kathleen
Baker, Joseph	Boyles, Estate of Gertrude	Chase, Candis C.	Delaney, George O.	Fadden, Linda	Hathaway, Lynn M.	Hawthorne, Jarrett
Baker, Jr. Leonard J.	Braunlich, William E.	Cherington, Davis	Demingware, Cora	Fagant, Carol L.	Hawthorne, Jarrett N.	Heald, Lester R.
Baker, Kevin E.	Breer, Jr. Wilbur	Chipman, Stanley J.	Depalo, Caroline	Fairbrother, Lawrence W.	Hayes, Kathleen	Healey, Robert
Bales, David	Brennan, Marty	Choena, David & Gertrude	Deuso, Lisa M. & Timothy	Farland, Eugene W.	Heath, Donald	Heath, Estate of Richard
Barch, J. Ralph	Brey Mayer, Geraldine	Cholewa, Raymond J.	Deuso, Todd A.	Farnham, Conrad	Heath, Jr. Parker	Hebebrand, William E.
Barfield, Coy L.	Bridges, Lucy L.	Clancy, David W.	Deutsch, Irving	Farnsworth, Gary F.	Heffernan, Michael	Heffernan, Pamela
Barfield, Coy L.	Briggs, David H.	Clark, Daniel H.	Devenger, Glen	Farr, Sr. Gary M.	Helburn, Margaret	Helgesen, Bernice F.
Barnard, Leon	Brissette, Robert R.	Clark, Harry	Dezotelle, Lyman &	Fenner, Ernest	Hemenway, Nancy	Henderson, Gary L.
Barnett, Anna F.	Brock, Bernard J.	Clark, Thelma E.	Fern Reid	Fenner, Sandra	Henning, Robert H.	Henry, Tom
Barnett, Dorothy K.	Brolin, Ruth	Clarke, Robert A.	Dickinson, C. F.	Fletcher, Floyd	Herrick, Jr. James E.	Herrington, Cynthia
Barnocky, May A.	Brooks, James D.	Cleland, William	Dilts, William C.	Ferno, Herbert W.	Hetzler, Gregory J.	Hierons, Robert
Barral, Robert	Brooks, Karen	Clifton, Glenn S.	Dinnell, Janine R.	Feuerstein, Robert G.	Hill, Arthur	Hill, William G.
Barrett, Rita	Brown, H. Webb	Clifton, Jr. Ernest F.	Dinsdale, Janice M.	Felder, Carl H. &	Hilliker, Leonard	Hiner, James D. &
Bartlett, Robert N.	Brown, James E.	Coffin, Barry A.	Doane, Stanley F.	Deborah M.	Hodgdon, Clara T.	
Bartlett, Wayne	Brown, Philip F.	Colburn, Judith P.	Dolan, Robert E.	Dunbar, Duane		
Bash, John F.	Brown, Walter F.	Cole, Susan	Dolinsky, Ann M.	Duncklee, Norman		
Bassett, Paula P.	Bryant & Dailey	Collins, Darlene	Donahue, Theresa B.	Dunster, Gary C.		
Bates, Bess	Buck, Arthur D.	Collins, Estate of Nortbert	Donahue, Timothy A.	Dupont, Roxann		
Beadle, Rubie A.	Buckley, Michael	Colombo, Robert	Donahue, Cynthia	Dutcher, Marguerite		
Beardsley, John D.	Burdick, Louise S.	Coltey, George J.	Dorr, John L.	Dwinell, Joanna R.		
Beardsworth, Rhonda	Burgielwicz, Seila	Connolly, Dorothy A.	Doubleday, Elsa	Dworkin, David		
Beck, Florence L.	Burnham, Ellen	Converse, Joseph	Dowd, Blanche M.	Dwyer, David C.		
Beck, Suann	Bussino, Darrell	Conway, Katherine	Drew, Dennis J.	Edson, Theresa		
Beckler, Minnie W.	Buswell, Gordon	Cook, Christopher C.	Drew, Marie A.	Edwards, Jane M.		
Beier, Deborah J.	Butler, Daniel E.	Cooper, Jon J.	Drinkwater, Gene	Eiriksson, Karl J. & Susan		
Belisle, Sandra W.	Butler, Jr. Walter R.	Costa, Jr. William T.	Driscoll, Peter	Eldred, Allan		
Bell, Richard	Buttitta, Mary E.	Coughlin, David A.	Driscoll, Peter M.	Eldridge, Laura		
Bellemare, Susan A.	Buxton, William	Counter, Dorothy B.	Duchaine, Jr. Morris	Elkin, Milton		
Bennett, Patrick L.		Coutu, David R.	Dudley, Michae D.	Emerson, Charles A.		
Bent, Robert	Cadorette, Dorothy	Couture, Laurent P.	Duggan, Rita C.	Emerson, Russell		
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		Coxon, Cynthia C.		Eniti, Anita T.		

Hodgeman, Irma T.	Lezer, Doris E.	Morse, Peter J.	Purcell, Timothy	Smith, Stuart J.	Thompson, John D.	Welker, Glenn E.
Hodgkins, Sr. John R.	Livingston, Estate of Elizabeth A.	Moses, Jessie	Pyrik, Walter	Smith, Trent	Thompson, Thomas B.	Wentworth, Roderick S>
Holder, Steven G.	Locke, Norman	Mosher, Gregory	Pytte, Anders	Smith, Wayne G.	Thorne, Philip	West, Clarence
Holmes, June E.	Long, Eugene M.	Moulton, Carolyn E.	Randall, Russell	Smith, William S.	Thorstensen, Thomas	Westover, Sr. Dean B.
Holmstrom, Raymond & Robert G. Lister	Longchamp, Mildred	Mowery, Mary I.	Rapp, Dorrie	Snyder, Marvin W.	Thurston, Andrew S.	Whalen, Thomas
Holtermann, Hildegard	Lord, Charles D.	Moz, Jane M.	Rasco, Sharlene M.	Somers, Steven M.	Tibolt, William	Wheeler, Estate of Leona
Holtslag, Joseph P.	Lord, Marian B.	Mudge, George C.	Ratte, Alan	Soshnick, Jeffrey	Tierney, Patricia	Whidden, Kim
Hood, Terrance	Lorentzen, Doreen	Mugford, Don G.	Raymond, Tracy	Spann, Randall	Tierney, Robert G.	White, Edward
Hooper, Curtis J.	Lori, Michael	Mulholland, Thomas C.	Rector, Russell H. & Mary F.	Sparrow, Dorothy J.	Tilotson, Estate of Shirley	White, Kathleen D.
Hopkins, Theresa	Loring, William L.	Mullen, Estate of Jeremiah S.	Reed, Barbara P.	Spaulding, Robert W.	Tim's Repair	White, Roderick
Horst, John	Loura, Nora	Multon, Evelyn S.	Reed, William	Spaulding, Ruth M.	Tomaszewicz, Dave	White, Sherry
Houle, Jr. Wm, Gloria	Lovelette, Lisa	Munger, Ellen	Regan, Kathleen A.	Spencer, Carolyn	Tomaszewicz, David A.	White, Wayne M.
Miller, & Linda Gordon	Lowell, Neil	Murphy, Harold A.	Reid, William	Squires, Jeffrey	Towle, Susan L.	Whitehill, Norman F.
Howard, Jeffrey S.	Lyman, Rodney H.	Murphy, James P.	Relation Jr., Ralph & Melissa Wheeler	St. Germain, Norman R.	Towne, Carol	Whitman, Emil F.
Howe, Mandeville	Lyn, Vincent	Murray, Nancy A.	Reynolds, Charles R.	Stanton, Robert E. & Joyce S.	Towne, John P.	Whitmore, Charles L.
Howell, Gail A.	Lynch, Douglas W.	Murray, Scott R.	Richardson, Elizabeth	Staples, Charlotte E.	Townsend, Vicky O.	Wild, David
Howland, Estate of Susan	Lynn, John C.	Murray, Vincent	Richardson, Joseph	Starr, Estate of William H.	Townsend, Zada	Wild, Hazel
Hoyt, Jr. Gordon C.	Lyons, Prescott M. & Barbara Towne	Myers, Charles L.	Richardson, William H.	Stephens, Alan T.	Tripp, Yvonne L.	Williams, Douglas
Hudson, Alma K.	Lyons, Robert P.	Nadeau, Gregory P.	Ricker, Julie	Stetson, Harvey B.	Trombly, Joanne	Williams, Steven T.
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Hunt, Miles D.	Magoon, Sr. Edgar S.	Newton, Grant	Roberstron, Dale R.	Stratton, Robert L.	Vail, Edith	Williams, Roy
Hunt, Thomas G.	Magoon, Stanton R.	Nichols Trust	Robertson Jr., Walter J.	Strayhorn, Alvin	Valler, Amy C.	Willis, Kendall
Hurt, Charles	Mahon, Patricia	Nickerson, Benjamin	Robinson, Marilyn	Stridsberg, Joseph G.	Van Eerde, John R.	Willis, Susan
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Jamele, Peter	Manning, Kelly L.	Nye, Karl	Ronner, Arthur F.	Sweet, Rheagene	Vreeland, Kurt A.	Wojcik, Walter P.
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Jewell, Marilyn R.	Marsh, Harold N.	Orchino, Sherri	Roux, Robert F.	Tabor, Sherrie	Walton, William M.	Woody's Power Products/ Gordon Woodbury
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Jones, Robert W.	Martin, Lawrence & Elizabeth L.	Overstrom, Brenda	Ruiz, Constance	Tellier, Raymond R.	Watson, Christopher A.	Wright, Robert
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Jones, William B.	Masi, Victor	Page, Howard E.	Russell, Alex	Teschler, Donald B. & Margaret E.	Weir, James R.	Yeager, Peter & Jodi
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Kokoszka, Lawrence A.	Meaney, Barbara	Perreault, Amanda	Schiffert, George A.			
Kottman, Barbara	Mears, Shellie L.	Perry III, Couritand L.	Schneider, Eleanor H.			
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Kraus, Raymond	Meeks, Charles	Perry, Sherman	Schibuk, Norman			
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Lamp, Michael A. & Jael L.	Metayer, Christopher	Pierce, Linda R.	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
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Landino, Henry A.	Miller, Iva	Pike Hill Auto Serv Inc.	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
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Lang, Jon	Montgomery, Robert E.	Pilette, Susan	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Langone, Robert J.	Moody, Susan L.	Pilz, Matthew	Schiffert, George A.			
Lanphear, Doris H.	Mooney, Eleanor P.	Plante, Kathy	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lapan, James E. & Alan	Moore, Helen K.	Plante, Renee	Schiffert, George A.			
Laperle, Alan	Moore, Pearl F.	Pope, Arthur	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lapierre, Margaret T.	Morande, Mary Ann T.	Pope, Ruth	Schiffert, George A.			
Larivee, Estate of Annie	Morey, Roger L.	Poplawski, David J.	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Larkin, Edwin	Morgan, Ruth M.	Post, Wendy	Schiffert, George A.			
Larow, Gary	Morris, Estate of Richard	Potvin, John	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lash, Jonathan	Morris, Karen	Powell, David L.	Schiffert, George A.			
Laundry, Reginald	Morris, Robert	Powers, Sr. Roger J.	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lauterman, Roy R. & Mary	Morrison, David L.	Powers, Wilfred H.	Schiffert, George A.			
Lawrence, Frank R.	Morrison, June K.	Pratt, Rebecca & Bruce R.	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
LeBlanc, George	Morrisette, Michae P. & Jody A.	Pregent, Elizabeth	Schiffert, George A.			
Leclerc, Michael	Morrissey, Jean C.	Preston, Larry	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lefevre, Kevin S.	Morse, Lucille L.	Price, Martha	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Leland, Peter H.		Procopio, Walter	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lemay, Juliette		Prosser, Robert	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Leonard, Mark R.		Protas, Alan	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lessig, Robert A.		Proulx, Annie	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
Lewis, Brian L. & Stephanie A. Schmitz		Pryce, Steve	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			
		Pulsifer, Elizabeth	Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.			

WEC Community Fund Responds To Irene

Every year a large number of WEC members forego their capital credit distributions and instead donate them to Washington Electric Cooperative's Community Fund.

The Community Fund makes contributions to organizations and programs that benefit communities in the Co-op's service territory. There are guidelines (WEC Policy 6) that govern what kinds of causes can receive Community Fund contributions. The Community Fund is funded solely by members who voluntarily contribute their capital credit refunds – so it's an important consideration for members at this time of year.

WEC has taken the unusual step this year of designating three funds that will receive donations from the Community Fund totaling \$3,000. All three are involved in addressing the damages and hardships caused by Tropical Storm Irene in August. Those funds are:

The Vermont Disaster Relief Fund. This fund is being coordinated by the state's United Way agencies. The Disaster Relief Fund is a long-term relief fund targeted to individuals needing assistance to recover from a disaster. (WEC contribution: \$1,500)

The Vermont Irene Flood Relief Fund. This fund helps small businesses harmed by the storm, extending modest grants to businesses for which the only other financial assistance is loans. It is administered by Central Vermont Community Action Council. (WEC contribution: \$750)

The Vermont Farm Disaster Relief Fund. Damage to farms in Vermont has been extensively reported. This fund is a partnership of the state Agency of Agriculture and the Vermont Community Foundation. (WEC contribution: \$750)

It's always a good time to contribute to the Washington Electric Cooperative Community Fund, but this year people need our aid more than ever. If you haven't designated your capital credit refund to the Community Fund already, please consider doing so.



Tyz-All: An Economical Approach To Improving Your Windows For Winter

The “Energy Coach” is back, hoping to grab your attention as you make plans to tighten up your home before cold weather arrives. This time he has his eye on your windows – quite often the object, the Energy Coach says, of a lot of misdirected effort and expense.

Everybody’s got windows – and sure, they have a bad habit of letting warm air out and cold air in, particularly if they’re the old-style windows found in many Vermont homes. There are things you can and should do to minimize that exchange, such as caulking around the outside, replacing cracked panes, and re-glazing where the old putty has fallen out. And of course you can go all the way and purchase the most modern double-or triple-paned “low-E” window systems, for, say, \$500 a pop. But the Energy Coach points out that even after you’ve done that, you’ve still got a window, not a wall, which means that in terms of energy it’s going to be a net loser.

If you want to be economically efficient, as well as energy efficient, spending a lot of money to replace windows is one of the worst investments you can make. The Energy Coach realizes there are a lot of people out there who will tell you that window replacement is the way to go, but in fact it provides a relatively poor return on your investment. Because houses function like chimneys – with the air primarily moving vertically within them – tightening up and reducing air infiltration into the home, insulating basements and sills at the bottom and ceilings and attics at the top, is the most effective way to spend your money.

So what about windows, then? They do lose heat, and they can be drafty. Are we supposed to ignore them?

Definitely not, the Energy Coach says. But you can get very nearly the same R-value performance improvement by mounting a good-quality plastic film on the inside

of your windows as you would by purchasing costly window systems and having them installed by a contractor – but for a sliver of the price. Not only that, the Energy Coach has a specific recommendation for you, a product he’s been using in his own home, literally for decades (the Energy Coach is no spring chicken).

It’s called Tyz-All. And one of the main things the Energy Coach likes about it is that it’s reusable. You can buy vinyl products in the hardware store that do essentially the same thing – create an interior “storm” window that reduces air infiltration and traps much of the sun-heated air between itself and your window. However, those are heat-shrink products, good for only one year. When you take them apart in the spring, you have to throw them away.

When the Energy Coach takes his vinyl “windows” down, he folds them carefully, labels them, and stores them for use the following winter. It saves money, and once the tracks are in place (which are permanent) it saves time, because it takes only 10 minutes per window to reinstall the vinyl coverings in the fall.

But here’s the best part. The installed cost of the Tyz-All product is about 22 cents per square foot. To replace an existing window with a decent new double-pane wood window will cost hundreds of dollars and will likely improve the performance of the window only incrementally – taking it from R-2 to R-3. An interior film product achieves virtually the same benefit, but instead of paying \$500 per window you’ve spent



If you want to be economically efficient as well as energy efficient, spending a lot of money to replace windows is one of the worst investments you can make.

less than \$5 per window.

The Energy Coach likes the term “return on investment” (ROI). In this case it refers to how long it takes for your reduced energy costs to equal the amount of money you spent making the improvement. Comparing the \$500 improvement to the \$5 improvement (using approximate the costs), it takes 100 times longer to

repay yourself with the costlier window. Both approaches can work, but the lower cost of Tyz-All is “paid back” much sooner. The Energy Coach really likes that.

Plus the additional comfort from reducing the draftiness of any treated window is significant.

Do it yourself


There is some work involved in installing Tyz-All windows the first time, perhaps a half-hour per window to affix the permanent track (it has a sticky backing that attaches to the window frame) and cut the 8-mil vinyl sheet to the right size. The vinyl fits into the track and is held there by a removable gasket. In subsequent years, the Energy Coach says, it’s smooth sailing. The vinyl itself is not as clearly transparent as a glass window, but the

Energy Coach says it’s pretty good; you can see out quite well, and of course light does come in.

He admits there are certain drawbacks. The three-quarter-inch tracks around the window frame stay there year-round, and they come only in white so they’ll very likely be visible. And if your cat, Socrates, likes to warm himself on the window sill he’ll have to develop a new habit, at least in winter. The Energy Coach thinks these are small sacrifices for the energy and money that are saved. And there could well be some windows that you never open so you may choose to leave your Tyz-All product up even during the summer.

You don’t have to do it the way the Energy Coach does it – installing the permanent Tyz-All product. The company makes a heat-shrink product as well (good for only one year), and you can buy a comparable product locally. Either way, you’ll be spending far less to improve the thermal efficiency of your windows than you would by replacing them with high-end, contractor-installed windows. And maybe you can take the money you save and put it toward an insulation project that will make a real difference for your home.

Tyz-All window film is sold in kits (which work well if all windows are similar sized) or in bulk (which means the gasket strips are boxed in lots of 75, and the vinyl film in 54-inch-wide rolls).

To inquire about Tyz-All products, contact the company at 800-645-6334. If you’d like more information before doing so, call Bill Powell at Washington Electric Co-op. 



The Tyz-All system incorporates tracks and gaskets that hold the 8-mil vinyl covering in place – a sort of interior storm window that is effective and inexpensive.

DPS Invites Public Comments on Draft Energy Plan

WEC members will recall that Public Service Commissioner Elizabeth Miller referred to work on a revised Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) when she spoke at WEC’s Annual Membership Meeting last May. The Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) now has announced that the Public Review Draft of the 2011 CEP is available for review and comment. The Plan may be read and downloaded from the CEP web site (www.vtenergyplan.vermont.gov), or may be viewed at the Department of Public Service, 112 State Street, Montpelier, during regular business hours.

The release of the Public Review Draft 2011 CEP marks the beginning of the formal public comment period, which extends until 5 p.m. on October 10, 2011. There are to be five public hearings on the draft. The closest to WEC’s service territory will be at Danville school (148 Peacham Road) on Thursday, October 6, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (The others are scheduled for Middlebury, Brattleboro, Rutland, and Colchester. For information, see website.) Through October 10 at 5 p.m., written comments on the draft CEP can be provided in these ways:

- **Open Comment Forum** on www.vtenergyplan.vermont.gov (preferred)
- **By mail**, at 2011 Comprehensive Energy Plan Comment; c/o Edward Delhagen, Energy Program Specialist; Department of Public Service; 112 State Street; Montpelier, VT 05602-2601
- **E-mail** at PSD.energyplan2011comments@state.vt.us.

The final Draft 2011 CEP will be submitted to Gov. Peter Shumlin in mid-October, and will incorporate comments received during the public comment period. The Final 2011 Comprehensive Energy Plan is expected by mid-November.

Rate Increase

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into effect while awaiting the Board's ultimate decision – a process that commonly takes more than half a year to complete.

The WEC/DPS agreement was submitted to the PSB on August 26. If the Public Service Board approves the agreement in its entirety, Washington Electric will credit its members with the extra money they will have paid – the monthly difference on their electric bills between charges collected since January at the 23.81-percent increase and the lesser, 19.44-percent increase – at the next billing cycle. The MOU stipulates that if the PSB approves the agreement only in part, not in full, both parties have a right to withdraw.

"The reduction we've agreed on with the Department is due to a number of factors," said Patt. "Both parties agreed on a correction in the cost calculations for one of the Co-op's wholesale power-supply contracts – figures that both we and the DPS had been using. We brought this error to the Public

If the Public Service Board approves the agreement in its entirety, WEC will credit members with the extra money they will have paid between charges collected at the 23.81-percent increase and the 19.44-percent increase, at the next billing cycle.

Service Board's attention as soon as we became aware of it; and actually, this correction accounted for about half of the rate-increase reduction that's reflected in the new agreement."


There were other factors, too – areas in which the Department drew conclusions about WEC's costs and revenues that were different from the Co-op's. But Patt said that a significant factor for both parties was their desire to bring the case to a conclusion.

It's too soon to say whether the lower rates WEC has agreed to will cover Washington Electric's costs and its obligations to its creditors for the long run – in combination with other sources of revenue, such as the sale of renewable energy credits (RECs), and with ongoing changes in power-supply costs. The provisional January 2011 rate increase was the first for the

Co-op since 2000, an 11-year period in which rates for other Vermont electric utility customers rose by more than 27 percent on average.

"We can't say yet whether we will need another small rate increase in

2012 as a result of this settlement, assuming it goes through," said Patt. "But, we will keep our members well-informed of our situation and our plans, just as we did with the January 2011 increase.

"For now, what's important is waiting to see what the PSB rules on our agreement with the Department. As soon as we have news on that, we'll let our members know, with a press release, a bill insert, and further notice in *Co-op Currents*." 

Open House At WEC's Coventry Plant

Washington Electric Cooperative will hold an Open House at its electric-generation facility in Coventry, Vermont, on Saturday, October 22, 2011, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The facility opened in 2005 and has held several open-house events for the public. Constructed adjacent to the NEWS Landfill in Coventry, the facility generates electricity using engines fueled by landfill methane. It produces more than half of WEC's power supply for some 10,500 homes, schools, and businesses. Reservations for the Open House are not necessary. You're welcome to just show up, but for more information you can call the Co-op.

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Irene

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business), 44 percent (693,000) in Connecticut, and 19 percent (567,000) in Massachusetts.

And yet, somehow, Washington Electric Co-op and its 10,500 members got off relatively unscathed.

“It was a serious storm for us, to be sure,” said WEC General Manager Avram Patt. “All in all, about 1,600 of our members suffered outages, though not all at the same time. That’s about 15 percent of our membership, which is a lot, and at one point on Sunday we reached a peak of 1,200 members without power. Nevertheless, in terms of the numbers of people affected and the duration of the outages, it was much less destructive for our system than some of the record storms we’ve experienced in the past.”

The storm struck central Vermont around mid-day on Sunday, August 28, and increased in intensity in the evening hours and into the night, when the winds picked up. Yet by early afternoon on Tuesday, August 30, WEC’s repair crews made their final reconnections and the Co-op’s operations were largely back to normal. The Co-op was aided on the final day by crews from Hardwick Electric Department and Morrisville Water & Light; their assistance was deeply appreciated.

WEC prepares

“Back on May 26 our service territory, and particularly our headquarters in East Montpelier, was hit by a microburst and multiple inches of rain,” said WEC Engineering & Operations Director Dan Weston.

He was referring to the storm just before the Memorial Day weekend that caused major flooding and property destruction in several central Vermont communities, including Barre, Montpelier, East Montpelier (which became virtually an “island village” in that storm), Plainfield, and Cabot. The storm flooded out WEC’s office building, forcing the Co-op to import temporary office trailers. Stationed in the parking lot, those trailer-offices are still in service, pending reconstruction of the headquarters building, a project that is now getting underway.

“Having experienced what we did in May, we knew, as the warnings about Hurricane Irene were broadcast in the days leading up to the storm, what it had the potential to do,” Weston said. “As we went into the storm and prepared for it, outages due to washouts – like what happened on the Brook Road in Plainfield in May – and outages due to high winds, were our primary concerns, along with delays associated with getting to impacted areas because of washed-out roads.”

Those were the very conditions that struck much of Vermont, from Waterbury, Moretown, Waitsfield, and Roxbury in the central part of the state, through Hancock, Rochester and Mendon farther south, to Brattleboro, Wilmington, and Bennington near the southern border. WEC was prepared, or at least as prepared as it could be

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— General Manager Avram Patt

for a battle against nature that nature was sure to win; but devastation on that scale never materialized for the Co-op and its members.

“We opened our storm center on Sunday at around noon,” said Weston. “We had our office staff ready to receive outage calls and plot them on our computerized outage-management system, and we brought our line-repair crews in to be ready. We also put on nine right-of-way [ROW] crews to work with the line crews, clearing downed trees and debris so our line workers could focus on climbing poles and repairing wire, or replacing poles where need be. We nearly doubled our workforce, teaming two-man ROW crews with two-man line crews. It was a well-coordinated, cooperative effort.”

Fortunately, however, the worst didn’t happen for Washington Electric.

“The winds in our particular areas never reached the force we were afraid they would,” said Weston. “We may have just been in the right spots for this one. Whatever it is, I’m not complaining.”

WEC did experience flooding and washouts, but on a far more limited scale than CVPS and GMP. “Our crews witnessed high water on Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening,” Weston said, “but other than having a truck or two get stuck there was no damage to our vehicles.”

Still, outages were widespread, with members calling to report problems in such places as Vershire, Cabot, Greensboro, Peacham, Groton, and Calais. The worst-struck areas for Washington Electric were Crossett Hill in Duxbury, the Jones Brook in Moretown, and Ward Brook in Berlin. At Crossett Hill WEC’s workers found the road washed away; at Ward Hill, the Town of Berlin had hired Dubois Construction before the storm, and the company moved rapidly to replace

damaged culverts and rebuild roads, so WEC was not long detained getting its service trucks in place to repair damages and reconnect members. In total, WEC experienced only five broken poles – remarkable for a storm of this magnitude.

By Monday afternoon the Co-op had completed its overall damage assessment and determined it would be possible to re-connect the final 250 or so homes by early afternoon on Tuesday. Patt issued a service announcement to that effect, hoping to reassure members that their outages would not last as long as the extended outages that other Vermonters were facing.

On schedule, the final repairs were completed in the Hampshire Hill area of Worcester by early afternoon on Tuesday. WEC then contacted CVPS and New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, offering to assist those hard-hit companies, but NHEC no longer needed help; as for CVPS, even though its situation remained dire, the company declined the Co-op’s offer.

“CVPS had brought in outside contractor crews from all over the country,” Patt explained. “But their problem was that there was so much road damage they couldn’t get their crews to their outage sites, so they actually had no use for additional crews.”

No problem at Wrightsville

An interesting phenomenon – a barometer, of sorts, of the random, almost illogical effects of Tropical Storm Irene – was Washington Electric’s 1-megawatt power station at the Wrightsville Reservoir in Middlesex. The Wrightsville Dam is a flood-control dam, and as Weston said, “It did its job.”

What was surprising, considering what was happening elsewhere, was that the facility on the North Branch

of the Winooski River actually wasn’t even challenged. The water level needs to reach 633 feet above sea level for the hydroelectric station to begin generating; at 635 feet the water also enters a concrete spillway, at which point both the hydro station and the spillway are in use. (For extreme situations there’s also a larger spillway some 20 feet below the top of the dam.) On the day before the storm, WEC reduced the water level as low as possible in conformance with its federal operating license, then kept its eye on the situation as the rains came on.

“Twelve hours in, we started seeing what turned out to be the peak level for this storm,” said Weston. “The reservoir water level came up about 30 or 40 feet, and I think it got up to 666 feet [above sea level]. We shut down the generators because the ‘head pressure’ from that level of water could damage them. But we never came close to the high water levels we see in the spring runoff, although of course this was in a very short period of time.”

You could say the Co-op dodged a bullet in this storm. Yet some of the communities it serves, such as the towns in the Mad River Valley, did not. WEC has a substation on the Moretown Commons Road, but the substation is sufficiently elevated above the river that it was not affected, nor were the feeder lines that extend from it to provide power to members in Moretown, Middlesex, Duxbury, Fayston, and Waitsfield. General Manager Patt issued e-mail bulletins to members during the course of the storm, and in a final bulletin, on Wednesday, August 31, he acknowledged the need for Vermonters who escaped tragedy to help those who had not. A month later, his reminder still applies:

“If you can help by donating money or volunteering your time, there is contact information available at Governor Shumlin’s website – <http://governor.vermont.gov/> – as well as at other locations.”

It’s going to be a long time before Vermont recovers from Tropical Storm Irene. 🐛



Photo courtesy of Lars Gange & Mansfield Heliflight

Route 100B between Middlesex and Moretown looks fine from this aerial photo taken shortly after the floodwaters subsided, but if you look closely at the bottom you can see that the Mad River took out a bridge that led to a farm. Upriver the damage was even worse, knocking out the bridges on both sides of Moretown Village.