



June 6, 2014

Ms. Kirsten Walli
Board Secretary
Ontario Energy Board
27th Floor/ P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

**Re: Z-Factor Application for Recovery of December 2013 Ice Storm Related Restoration Costs,
Halton Hills Hydro Inc.,
OEB Licence Number: ED-2002-0552**

Halton Hills Hydro Inc. ("HHHI") hereby submitted its Z-Factor Application to the Ontario Energy Board ("the Board") for recovery of restoration costs related to the December 2013 Ice Storm.

HHHI submits that the province wide ice storm and the extensive damage to HHHI's distribution system meets the Z-Factor Eligibility Criteria as set out in Section 2.6 of the Board's Report on 3rd Generation Incentive Regulation for Ontario's Electricity Distributors issued July 14, 2008 and Chapter 3 of the Filing Requirements for Electricity Distribution Rate Applications, Section 3.2.2, issued July 17, 2013.

HHHI is requesting a twenty-four (24) month fixed rate rider for all customers with an effective date of November 1, 2014.

A copy of the Application has also been electronically mailed to Board Secretary.

In the event of any additional information, questions or concerns, please contact David Smelsky, Chief Financial Officer, at dsmelsky@haltonhillshydro.com or (519) 853-3700 extension 208, or Tracy Rehberg-Rawlingson, Regulatory Affairs Officer, at tracyr@haltonhillshydro.com or (519) 853-3700 extension 257.

Sincerely,

(Original Signed)

Arthur A. Skidmore, CPA, CMA
President & CEO

Cc: David J. Smelsky, CFO, HHHI

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IN THE MATTER OF the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, being Schedule B to the *Energy Competition Act, 1998*, S.O. 1998, c.15;

AND IN THE MATTER OF an Application by Halton Hills Hydro Inc. to the Ontario Energy Board for an Order or Orders approving the recovery of amounts related to the restoration of electricity service in the Town of Halton Hills due to the December 2013 Southern and Eastern Ontario Ice Storm.

HALTON HILLS HYDRO INC. (“HHHI”)

ED-2002-0552

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A Z-FACTOR RATE RIDER FOR RECOVERY OF ICE STORM
RELATED RESTORATION COSTS**

Filed: June 6, 2014

Arthur A. Skidmore, CPA, CMA
President & CEO
Halton Hills Hydro Inc.
43 Alice St
Halton Hills (Acton), Ontario
L7J 2A9

Tel: (519) 853-3700 extension 225
askidmore@haltonhillshydro.com

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1 Regulation for Ontario's Electricity Distributors issued July 14, 2008 and Chapter 3 of the Filing Requirements for
2 Electricity Distribution Rate Applications, Section 3.2.2, issued July 17, 2013.

3 1.9 Furthermore, HHHI's materiality threshold is \$50,000 based on HHHI's distribution revenue requirement of
4 \$8,821,486 as approved in HHHI's 2012 Electricity Distribution Cost of Service Rate Application, EB-2011-0271,
5 and as defined by the OEB for an applicant with a distribution revenue requirement under \$10,000,000.

6 1.10 HHHI submits that all costs are verifiable in the form of invoices from external parties and the payroll register of
7 HHHI.
8

9 **2. Factual Basis for this Application:**

10 2.1 On Thursday, December 19th, 2013, Environment Canada issued a Freezing Rain Warning. It re-issued the
11 warning on Friday, December 20th, 2013, updating the expected severity of the storm. In Halton Hills, the
12 freezing rain began on the evening of December 20th, 2013 and continued through the next day, Saturday
13 December 21st and Sunday December 22nd, 2013.

14 2.2 One hundred percent (100%) of HHHI's customers were without power at the height of the ice storm. Appendix
15 A illustrates the degree of damage and restoration efforts required and Appendix B is a letter from Environment
16 Canada detailing the ice accretion levels and temperatures in Halton Hills. While HHHI expects and plans for a
17 certain level of weather-related damage, the damage caused by the 2013 Ice Storm was far beyond anything that
18 HHHI had previously experienced.

19 2.3 By Monday, December 29th, with the assistance of external line crews and tree clearing contractors, all services
20 were restored with the exception of customers with damage or continued tree contact to customer owned private
21 equipment and lines. Specialized tree clearing contractors who were certified for climbing, were required to clear
22 tree limbs from overhead backyard lines.

23 2.4 Over the period of December 29, 2013 to January 1, 2014, HHHI line crews, external line crews and tree clearing
24 contractors continued to patrol and clear branches from hundreds of kilometers of overhead lines and restore
25 power to individual customers still without electricity in HHHI's rural service areas.

26 2.5 HHHI's line crews and field staff were augmented by assistance from eleven (11) additional electricity distributors,
27 three (3) power line contractor companies and five (5) tree clearing contractors. At the height of the restoration
28 efforts, HHHI had one hundred forty-eight (148) persons (staff and external crews) working directly on
29 distribution system infrastructure. HHHI's typical FTEE (full-time equivalent employee) count is normally in the
30 range of 50 FTEEs. These numbers are indicative of the scale of the storm damage.

1 2.6 HHHI office staff handled over six thousand six hundred (6,600) phone calls between December 23rd and
2 December 31st, 2013. In addition to phone calls, HHHI staff posted over seven hundred (700) tweets on Twitter
3 and responded to over four hundred (400) direct conversations on Twitter, Facebook and HHHI's website.
4 Further customer contact statistics are shown in HHHI's President and CEO presentation to the HHHI Board of
5 Directors and the Town of Halton Hills Council. The entire presentation has been included in Appendix C.
6 Additionally, articles from local media are included in Appendix D.

7 2.7 The total incremental restoration cost, not including carrying charges, incurred by HHHI to restore electricity
8 service to its customers, is \$1,542,229 and includes the invoiced costs from the assisting external crews and
9 contractors, the costs of hotel and meals to house and feed the assisting crews and contractors, and incremental
10 overtime hours only for HHHI staff. Of the costs claimed, approximately 84% are third party costs. Table 3 in
11 section 4.3 shows a breakdown of the costs.

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13 3. Filing Guidelines and Eligibility Criteria

14 3.1 A Z-Factor Adjustment has been incorporated into the Board's rate setting process as a mechanism to address
15 unforeseen or extraordinary events outside of management's control. In general, the unforeseen event must be
16 material and the causation clear. The Third Generation Incentive Rate Mechanism ("3GIRM") Report and
17 Supplemental 3GIRM Report required that the distributor must report Z-factor events promptly to the OEB, and
18 such events must meet three criteria, causation, materiality and prudence, in order to be eligible for a Z-Factor
19 Adjustment. These requirements are discussed in further detail below.

20

21 Notice of Z-Factor Application

22 3.2 HHHI provided a notice to the OEB on March 18, 2014, advising of HHHI's intention to file a Z-Factor
23 Application for the recovery of costs incurred to restore electricity service to customers in the Town of Halton
24 Hills during and after the 2013 ice storm.

25 3.3 In particular, the notice stated that:

26 *“Beginning on December 21st, an ice storm affected hydro service within HHHI's distribution service territory. On*
27 *December 22nd, one hundred percent (100%) of HHHI's customers were without hydro services due to downed*
28 *trees and power lines. Customers of HHHI experienced power outage of varying lengths.*

29

1 *At the height of the restoration efforts, HHHI had one hundred forty-eight (148) staff and external crews*
 2 *working directly on distribution system infrastructure. HHHI's distribution system was fully restored on December*
 3 *29, 2013. The restoration cost resulting from this catastrophic ice storm is expected to exceed \$1.6 Million and is*
 4 *tantamount to approximately nineteen percent (19%) of HHHI's annualized distribution revenue”*

5
6 **Eligibility Criteria**

7 3.4 Section 2.6 of the Board’s Report on 3rd Generation Incentive Regulation for Ontario’s Electricity Distributors
 8 issued July 14, 2008 and Chapter 3 of the Filing Requirements for Electricity Distribution Rate Applications,
 9 Section 3.2.2, issued July 17, 2013 sets out the Z-Factor Eligibility Criteria as follows:

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Criteria	Description
Causation	Amounts should be directly related to the Z-factor event. The amount must be clearly outside of the base upon which rates were derived.
Materiality	The amounts must exceed the Board-defined materiality threshold and have a significant influence on the operation of the distributor; otherwise they should be expensed in the normal course and addressed through organizational productivity improvements.
Prudence	The amount must have been prudently incurred. This means that the distributor’s decision to incur the amount must represent the most cost-effective option (not necessarily least initial cost) for ratepayers.

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17 3.5 HHHI addresses these three (3) criteria as follows:

18 • **Causation:**

19 3.6 On the evening of December 20th, freezing rain began to accumulate on hydro lines and trees in Halton Hills.
 20 The first outages were reported at 3:45 am on the morning of December 21, 2013. Realizing the severity of the
 21 storm, additional HHHI operations staff were called in throughout the day and by 6:00 pm on the evening of the
 22 21st, all but one staff member were working on the restoration. In addition to all operations staff, a local tree
 23 clearing company was contacted on December 21st and six (6) staff from the tree clearing company had also begun
 24 assisting with restoration efforts. At 10:00 pm, over fifty percent (50%) of HHHI customers were without power;
 25 by 11:00 pm, one hundred percent (100%) of HHHI customers were without power. At this time, the Operations
 26 Manager declared a Major Emergency. After receiving a briefing, the President and CEO declared a Disaster and

1 enacted HHHI's Emergency Preparedness Plan. At 4:00 pm on the afternoon of December 22nd, 2013, HHHI
2 issued a media release on its website, social media and over the telephones, indicating that customers should plan
3 for a lengthy outage. Warming centers were opened in Georgetown and Acton and an evacuation center was
4 opened on December 23rd, 2013. Extreme cold temperatures and icy and impassable roads continued to hamper
5 restoration efforts in addition to the continued danger of falling trees and branches, layered in ice.

6 3.7 Customers of HHHI experienced power outages of varying lengths. By Monday, December 29th, with the
7 assistance of external line crews and tree clearing contractors, all services were restored, excluding customers with
8 damage or continued tree contact to customer owned private equipment and lines.

9 3.8 The total incremental costs directly caused by the 2013 Ice Storm were \$1,542,229. The majority of these costs
10 were related to the clearing of trees from hydro lines. The total cost is clearly outside of the base upon which rates
11 were derived based on HHHI's OEB-Approved 2012 Cost of Service Rates.

12 • **Materiality**

13 3.9 HHHI's materiality threshold is \$50,000 based on HHHI's distribution revenue requirement of \$8,621,486 as
14 approved in HHHI's 2012 Electricity Distribution Cost of Service Rate Application, EB-2011-0271, and as
15 defined by the OEB for an applicant with a distribution revenue requirement under \$10,000,000. HHHI's costs of
16 restoring electricity service after the 2013 Ice Storm was \$1,542,229 or more than 30 times materiality. This is a
17 material cost for HHHI, amounting to approximately nineteen percent (19%) of HHHI's annualized distribution
18 revenue.

19 • **Prudence**

20 3.10 As described in section 3.6, HHHI had recalled all HHHI line staff within fourteen (14) hours of the first reported
21 outage. One hundred percent (100%) of operations personnel were on-site within thirty-six (36) hours. HHHI
22 declared a Disaster and enacted its Emergency Preparedness Plan on the morning of December 22, 2013. Calls
23 for external assistance continued on December 22nd and included other Local Distribution Companies ("LDCs")
24 and contractors who were certified to clear trees and limbs from hydro lines. On December 23rd, 2013 the
25 Regional Municipality of Halton issued an Extreme Cold Alert. At the time of the alert, approximately seven-
26 thousand (7,000) HHHI customers were still without power. HHHI continued to notify customers of the
27 warming and evacuation center locations while continuing to contact other external sources for assistance.

28 3.11 On December 24th, 2013 approximately three-thousand five hundred (3,500) customers were still without power.
29 On December 25th, 2013, Christmas Day, more external crews arrived to aid in the restoration efforts. A local
30 community groups provided a hot Christmas dinner and a hot Boxing Day dinner to all personnel working on the
31 restoration of power. On December 26th, more external assistance was welcomed.

1 3.12 In emergency situations, HHHI's first priority is to restore power in a timely manner. The need to restore power
2 was even more acute in the 2013 Ice Storm given: (a) the wide-scale nature of the outage (i.e., a starting point of
3 100% of HHHI's customers being without power); (b) the immediate appreciation that some HHHI customers
4 would be without power for an extended period of time; and (c) the extreme cold conditions that existed at the
5 time.

6 3.13 HHHI's ability to prepare for a storm as damaging as the 2013 Ice Storm was limited. As noted in paragraph 2.1,
7 Environment Canada updated their warning with respect to the 2013 Ice Storm's severity virtually right up to the
8 commencement of the 2013 Ice Storm on December 20, 2013.

9 3.14 HHHI began to draw on external assistance after calling in all staff, and when the extent of the damage made it
10 clear that external resources would be required. The approach taken was to draw on local LDCs and local tree
11 cutting services that could provide immediate assistance. In HHHI's view, this was the most reasonable approach
12 to mobilizing its internal and external resources. At all times, HHHI's approach was consistent with its
13 Emergency Preparedness Plan.

14 3.15 A chronological summary of restoration numbers can be seen in **Table 1**.

15 **Table 1**

16 **Chronological Summary of Restoration Numbers**

Date	Number of customers without power (approximate numbers)
December 21, 2013, 11:00 pm	100%
December 22, 2013	9,500
December 23, 2013	7,000
December 24, 2013	3,000
December 25, 2013	1,700
December 26, 2013	1,000
December 27, 2013	400
December 28, 2013	450
December 29, 2013	All lines restored

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1 A chronological summary of external assistance is shown in **Table 2**.

2 **Table 2**

3 **Chronological Summary of External Assistance**

LDC / Contractor	Employees	Crew Start Date	Crew Release Date
Halton Hills Hydro	15	Dec 21 - 3:45am	N/A
Control Room	2	Dec-21	N/A
Quality Tree	6	Dec-21	Jan-02
SouthWestern Energy	2	Dec-22	Dec 29
Westmore	13	Dec-22	Dec 29
Horizon Contracting	1	Dec-23	Dec-31
Asplundht	13	Dec-23	Dec-31
Davey Tree	10	Dec-23	Dec-31
Westario	3	Dec-24	Dec-31
Welland Hydro	2	Dec-24	Jan-02
London Hydro	15	Dec 25	Dec-31
Oakville Hydro	2	Dec-25	Jan-02
Great Lakes Landscaping	1	Dec-26	Dec-29
Dundas Powerline	23	Dec 26	Dec 29
Blue Water Power	5	Dec-26	Dec-29
Waterloo North Hydro	5	Dec-26	Dec-30
Kitchener Wilmot Hydro	2	Dec-26	Jan-01
Hydro One - Forestry	11	Dec-27	Dec-31
Guelph Hydro	2	Dec-27	Dec-29
Woodstock Hydro	2	Dec-27	Dec-29
Brantford Hydro	2	Dec-28	Jan-02

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Table 4
Ice Storm Principal and Carrying Charges for Recovery

Account Description	Account Number (USoA)	Closing Principle Balance at December 31, 2013	2014 Quarter 1 Accruals	2014 Q1 Carrying Charges	Projected interest from April 1, 2014 to October 31, 2014	Total Claim
Extraordinary Event Costs – Ice Storm Z-Factor	1572	\$1,712,395	(\$170,166)	\$5,918.40	\$13,224.61	\$1,561,371.96

5. **Z-Factor Rate Rider**

5.1 The Z-Factor Fixed Rate Rider was calculated by applying the revenue requirement allocations from HHHI's 2012 Cost of Service Application to total Z-Factor Claim of \$1,561,371.96. The costs allocated to each class were divided by the number of customers in each class as at December 31, 2013 and reporting in HHHI's RRR 2.1.2 reporting, and further divided by twenty-four (24) months for the final class specific rate rider.

5.2 The following **Table 5** sets out the calculation of HHHI's proposed Z-Factor Fixed Rate Rider per month, per connection and metered customer. HHHI also proposes that the Z-Factor Rate Rider be effective for a period of twenty-four (24) months beginning November 1, 2014 and ending October 31, 2016. The proposed twenty-four (24) month period will mitigate the customer bill impact.

Table 5
Proposed Ice Storm Z-Factor Rate Rider

Customer Class	2012 Cost of Service Base Revenue Requirement Approved	2012 Cost of Service Revenue Requirement % Approved	Proposed Z Factor Amount for Recovery per Customer Class	Customer Count @ Dec 31, 2013	Proposed Recovery Amount per Customer	Proposed Recovery Amount per Month based on 24 Months Recovery Period
Residential	\$ 5,280,540	61.25%	\$ 956,319	19,511	\$ 49.01	\$ 2.04
General Service less than 50 kW	\$ 991,335	11.50%	\$ 179,533	1,768	\$ 101.55	\$ 4.23
General Service 50 to 999 kW	\$ 1,193,153	13.84%	\$ 216,083	207	\$ 1,043.88	\$ 43.50
General Service 1,000 to 4,999 kW	\$ 772,817	8.96%	\$ 139,959	13	\$ 10,766.08	\$ 448.59
Sentinel Lighting	\$ 25,175	0.29%	\$ 4,559	177	\$ 25.76	\$ 1.07
Street Lighting	\$ 341,198	3.96%	\$ 61,792	4,477	\$ 13.80	\$ 0.58
Un-metered Scattered Load	\$ 17,268	0.20%	\$ 3,127	146	\$ 21.42	\$ 0.89
TOTAL	\$ 8,621,486	100%	\$ 1,561,372	26,299		

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5.3 HHHI has calculated the total bill impact for a monthly Residential customer using eight hundred (800) kilowatt hours to be 1.62% and for a monthly General Service less than 50kW customer using two thousand (2,000) kilowatt hours to be 1.43%. HHHI has used the OEB-Approved Tariff of Rates and Charges effective May 1, 2014 in calculating the total bill impacts.

6. Conclusion

6.1 HHHI is filing a Z-Factor Application for the recovery of restoring electricity to one hundred percent (100%) of customers in the Town of Halton Hills as a result of the 2013 Ice Storm.

6.2 HHHI submits that the total cost of restoration, including carrying charges, in the amount \$1,561,372 meets the Z-Factor requirements as set out in Section 2.6 of the Board's Report on 3rd Generation Incentive Regulation for Ontario's Electricity Distributors issued July 14, 2008 and Chapter 3 of the Filing Requirements for Electricity Distribution Rate Applications, Section 3.2.2, issued July 17, 2013.

1 6.3 HHHI has calculated the ice storm Z-Factor Rate Rider as a fixed charge based on its reported customer count of
2 connections and metered customers as at December 31, 2013.

3 6.4 HHHI has calculated the ice storm Z-Factor Fixed Rate Rider over a twenty-four (24) month period beginning
4 November 1, 2014 and ending October 31, 2016 in order to mitigate the total bill impact of the Fixed Rate Rider.

5

6 **7. Relief Sought**

7 7.1 HHHI is requesting that the \$1,561,372 in total incremental restoration costs, including carrying charges, be approved
8 as a Z-Factor Adjustment recorded in USoA 1572 and be recovered by way of a monthly fixed Rate Rider to be
9 applied to all connections and metered customers from November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2016.

10 7.2 HHHI requests a USoA 1572 sub-account - Z-Factor 2013 Ice Storm recovery, to track rate rider revenue.

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12 **8. Form of Hearing Requested**

13 8.1 HHHI requests that this Application be disposed of by way of a written hearing.

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15 **Respectfully submitted this 6th day of June, 2014.**

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19 Arthur A. Skidmore, CPA, CMA

20 President & CEO

21 Halton Hills Hydro Inc.

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Appendix A

Images of Damage and Restoration

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Appendix B

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Letter from Environment Canada

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Environment Canada
Environnement Canada

January 7, 2014

Geoff Coulson
Warning Preparedness Meteorologist
Environment Canada
4905 Dufferin St.
Toronto, Ontario
M3H 5T4

Email: Geoff.coulson@ec.gc.ca
Phone: 416 739-4466

Harry Olivieri
Deputy Chief Prevention and Public Education
CEMC, CMMIII
Halton Hills Fire Department
14007 10 Side Road
Halton Hills, Ontario
L7G 4S5

Subject: Ice Storm in Southern Ontario - December 20 to 22 2013

Dear Harry,

I have had an opportunity to review the weather situation responsible for the ice storm that impacted portions of Southern Ontario between December 20 and 22 of 2013. A couple of moisture-laden storm systems that originated in Texas moved through Southern Ontario during this time. These systems interacted with a high pressure system and very cold airmass that remained firmly entrenched over Northern Ontario and Central Quebec. This high pressure system continued to pump cold air into the low levels of Southern Ontario while the Texas weather systems mild and moist air rode up over this thin layer of cold air near the ground. This setup is an ideal situation for a long-lived freezing rain event as snow melted into rain in the warm air aloft and then promptly refroze as it hit the frozen ground.

Based on ice accretion observations received by Environment Canada in the wake of the storm, the part of the province that experienced the longest period of freezing rain was a swath from north of London through Halton Hills and the Golden Horseshoe Area and then eastwards along the north shore of Lake Ontario and up the St. Lawrence River Valley. Ice accretions in this swath were generally in the 20 to 30 mm range which is quite significant. Estimates of ice accretions in the Town of Halton Hills itself were on the order of 25 to 30 mm.

In the days following the ice storm, temperatures dropped notably to values of -16 degrees Celcius by the evening of December 24th with temperatures remaining well below freezing on Christmas Day as well. This allowed the ice

Canada 



Environment Canada
Environnement Canada

that had formed on power lines and tree limbs to further solidify in the days following the ice storm. During the event and in the days following, this resulted in numerous downed power lines, as well as broken tree limbs and trees across the area most significantly impacted by the ice storm which included the Town of Halton Hills.

If you require more information on this event, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Geoff Coulson

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Appendix C
Presentation by President and CEO

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Ice Storm December 2013



Halton Hills Hydro

- * Total Kilometers of Line: 1497
 - * Overhead: 892 KM
 - * Underground: 605 KM
- * Hydro Poles: 8935
- * Transformers: 3937
 - * Overhead: 2420
 - * Underground: 1517
- * Total Service Area: 280 SQ KM
 - * Urban: 25 SQ KM
 - * Rural: 255 SQ KM
- * Municipal Population: 59,010



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Halton Hills Hydro Supply Points



 44kV & 27.6 kV Supply Points

 Substations



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Substations

* Rural

- * MS1 – Ballinafad
- * MS5 – Silvercreek
- * MS11 – Glen Williams
- * MS21 – Norval
- * MS23 - Ashgrove

* Georgetown

- * MS13 – Cross
- * MS15 – River
- * MS17 – Mountainview
- * MS19 – Armstrong

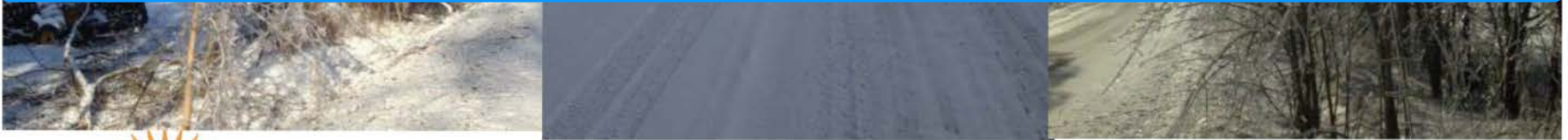
* Acton

- * MS3 – Willow
- * MS7 – Beardmore
- * MS9 - Queen

Customers by Substation

MS3	WILLOW	MS13	CROSS	MS23	ASHGROVE	MS19	ARMSTRONG
	# Of Cust		# Of Cust		# Of Cust		# Of Cust
MS3F1	499	MS13F1	407	MS23F1	375	MS19F1	42
MS3F2	296	MS13F2	551	MS23F2	256	MS19F2	279
MS3F3	47	MS13F3	612	MS23F3	146	MS19F3	0
Total	842	Total	1570	Total	777	Total	321
MS5	SILVERCREEK	MS15	RIVER	41M21 (27.6 kV)		41M30 (27.6 kV)	
	# Of Cust		# Of Cust		# Of Cust		# Of Cust
MS5F1	805	MS15F1	651	41M21	3612	41M30	1175
MS5F2	542	MS15F2	784				
MS5F3	64	MS15F3	599				
Total	1411	Total	2034	Total	3612	Total	1175
MS7	BEARDMORE	MS17	MOUNTAINVIEW	41M29 (27.6 kV)			
	# Of Cust		# Of Cust		# Of Cust		
MS7F1	407	MS17F1	919	41M29	231		
MS7F2	205	MS17F2	498				
MS7F3	0	MS17F3	963				
Total	612	Total	2380	Total	231		

The Storm



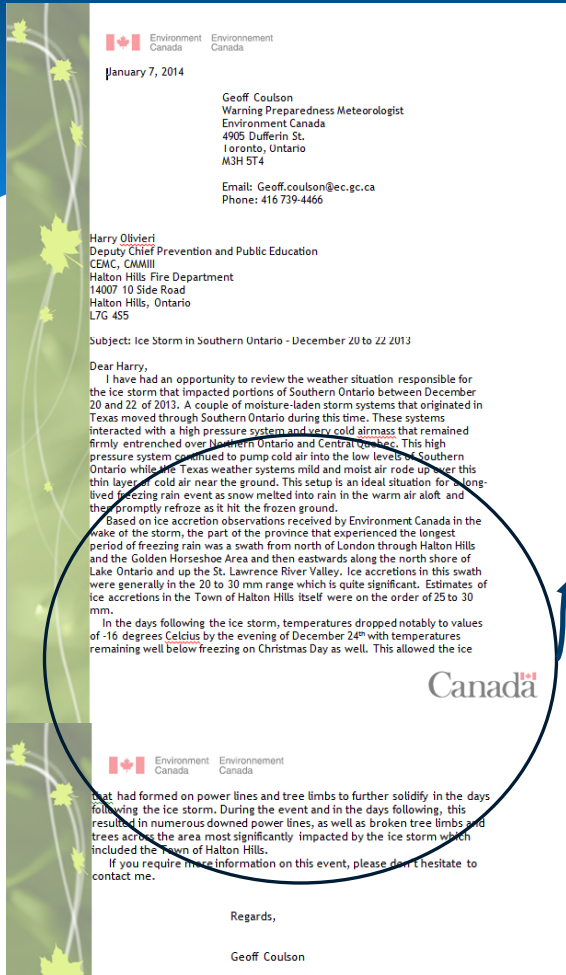
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The Ice Storm Event

... the part of the province that experienced the longest period of freezing rain was a swath from north of London through Halton Hills and the Golden Horseshoe Area... **Estimates of ice accretions in the Town of Halton Hills itself were on the order of 25 to 30 mm.** In the days following the ice storm, temperatures dropped ... This allowed the ice that had formed on power lines and tree limbs to further solidify ... **this resulted in numerous downed power lines, as well as broken tree limbs and trees across the area ...**



Impact of Storm

Utility	Maximum Customers Out		Customers out >48 Hours	
	Customers	% of Customers	Customers	% of Customers
Halton Hills	23000	100%	14000	61%
Oakville	29000	45%	30	0.0004%
Milton	15000	46%	1000	3%
Burlington	7500	11%	1300	0.02%

As of January 8th, all but 3 customers restored – these 3 have extensive private property damage on unused properties that will be addressed in spring.



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Chronology of Storm

- * Freezing rain started on Saturday December 21st
 - * 1st crew response to outage reports was 3:45 am on December 21st
 - * By 6pm on December 21st, all line staff called in
 - * By 10pm on the 21st, approximately 12,300 customers without power
 - * **By 11:00 pm on the 21st, 100% of customers without power.**

Timeline of the Ice Storm (1 of 4)

- * December 19: Environment Canada issues 1st Freezing Rain Warning
- * December 20th: Environment Canada issues 2nd stronger warning
- * December 21st: Power outages begin
- * December 22nd: Weather network reports 30 mm of ice accumulation in Georgetown
 - * Halton Hills Hydro declares Major Emergency
 - * Mayor appeals to residents to stay home
 - * 4pm HHH tells customers to plan for lengthy outage
 - * Warming Centres opened

Timeline of the Ice Storm (2 of 4)

- * December 23rd – Gellert Centre opens as evacuation centre
 - * Extreme Cold Alert issued by Halton Region
 - * Halton Hills Hydro advises customers still without power to plan for at least another 72 hours
- * December 24th – Approx. 3500 customers still without power
- * December 25th – Numerous external crews arrive to help with restoration efforts
 - * Free community Christmas lunch in Acton for those without power

Timeline of the Ice Storm (3 of 4)

- * December 26th – Approx. 1700 customers still without power
 - * More external crews arrive
- * December 27th – Approx. 900 customers still without power
 - * Messaging focusing on customers requiring work from licensed electricians before connection can occur
- * December 28th – Approx. 300 customers still without power – not including individual damaged services.
 - * Community members distributing hot coffee and hot chocolate to those without power.

Timeline of the Ice Storm (4 of 4)

- * December 29th: All distribution lines restored. Those without power require electrical work on their own equipment before reconnection
- * December 30th & 31st: Focus on reconnection of individual services as customer have work completed on their end.
- * Source: The Independent and Free Press

Communication



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Media Releases

- * Daily media releases from Art distributed to media, website, social media
 - * Numbers of customers still without power
 - * Information on warming centres
 - * Updates on numbers of crews working
 - * Information for customers requiring work on their own lines and equipment

IFP Coverage

- * Daily articles on storm and restoration efforts
- * Daily coverage on social media
 - * Coverage of Environment Canada Reports
 - * Extensive coverage of Halton Hills Hydro restoration efforts
 - * Coverage of Town of Halton Hills Efforts



Photo by Mayor Rick Bonnette

Hydro crews working on Eighth Line, south of 10 Sideroad on Christmas Day.

Call Centre

Date	# of Calls	% Service Level	Hours of Operation
Dec.23	2105	93%	8:30am to 10:00pm
Dec.24	1403	92%	8:30am to 6:00 pm
Dec.25	566	92%	8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Dec.26	678	94%	8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Dec.27	920	91%	8:30 am to 8:00 pm
Dec.28	340	95%	8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Dec.29	240	96%	8:30 am to 1:30 pm
Dec.30	231	92%	8:30 am to 1:00pm
Dec.31	188	94%	8:30 am to 1:30 pm

Website Visits

	Mobile	Desktop	Tablet	Total
21-Dec	4048	721	538	5307
22-Dec	24045	4853	3427	32325
23-Dec	16684	9597	3080	29361
24-Dec	12010	5838	2625	20473
25-Dec	7028	2244	1786	11058
26-Dec	4869	2181	1464	8514
27-Dec	3027	2094	1030	6151
28-Dec	2830	1140	752	4722
29-Dec	1129	592	419	2140
Total:				120,051

Social Media

- * Facebook and Twitter monitored from 9pm on December 21st to December 29th
- * Live monitoring from approx. 8am to 11pm most days

Looking at our followers as a % of our customer base, we are now the #1 most followed LDC on Twitter and #2 on Facebook

Followers	Dec 19	% of Customers	Jan 6	% of Customers
Facebook	408	2%	1503	7.2%
Twitter	371	1.8%	1374	6.1%
Totals	779	3.8%	2877	13.3%

Facebook Daily Reach

Date	# of Unique People who saw our content
12/20/13	263
12/21/13	1743
12/22/13	20762
12/23/13	25329
12/24/13	15752
12/25/13	8589
12/26/13	10023
12/27/13	6622
12/28/13	5375
12/29/13	4390
12/30/13	1474

Twitter Statistics

- * 709 Tweets between December 21st and January 8th
- * 1000 New Followers
- * 50% of our Tweets had replies
- * 36% of Tweets were retweeted a total of 819 times
 - * Individual retweets reached a potential 70,000 people.
- * 408 Direct conversations with customers

Customer Reaction

- * As the outages progressed, customer frustration levels increased and phone calls became more irate
- * When phones were open, there was always an escalation contact available for irate customers
- * Only 3 insurance claims resulting from the ice storm
- * Overwhelmingly positive and supportive customer response

Customer Thanks

Thank you for giving up your
christmas to make mine better. I really
enjoyed my christmas.

Thank you,



Customer Thanks

Halton Hills Hydro,
Thank you for working so tirelessly
over the holidays to restore our
power. Hopefully you can now have a
bit of holiday fun with your
families. THANK YOU again!
- From a grateful house on
Poe's Path



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A sample of hundreds of customer comments on Facebook

Richard Bowers

★★★★★ Thanks for all your efforts and great communication. We have been off since Saturday but we realise you guys are working all out and will get to everybody eventually. It's tough to be in a cold house and have Christmas disrupted but I would think its no more fun for all the HHH staff and outside contractors who have had their Christmas disrupted to try and get the power back on. Many, many thanks for all your efforts and to your outside guys freezing their asses off working to fix this.

Jenn Doyle McNally

★★★★★ Took a little longer than I had hoped. What can I say with the devastation that was there on my street. Thanks so much HHH! Tonight I will be able to sleep in my own bed. I am sure you guys and gals are missing yours. Keep up the fantastic work! Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

Mark Jameson

★★★★★ Outstanding work over the last 4 days and ongoing around the clock to get the community back on the grid. Social Media updates have been excellent, great work by all involved! Thank you.

Ann Vanderlaan Adema

★★★★★ And we as community are GRATEFUL, thankful for the dedication shown from the office staff, field workers, Art Skidmore, and external organizations who all put in many overtime hours right through Christmas Day, beforehand, and afterwards!



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Karen McBride ×

★★★★★ Thank you HHH. Woke up around 1 am and heard workers outside. Our power came on around 3 am. Can't express enough gratitude to all the workers for what they are doing! I will never again complain about paying my hydro bill :) !!!!! And thank you for the excellent job you have and are doing on communication. Thinking about everyone who still needs to be restored.

Andrea O'Connell ×

★★★★★ Thank You Halton Hills hydro you gave me the best Christmas present ever by getting my power back on thank you for taking time away from your family so that we could be with ours with power

Louise Bujdoso

★★★★★ 5 stars for the employees at Halton Hydro. I see so much damage and a VERY WARM THANK YOU for all of those linemen that are working so hard under these difficult conditions.

Jennifer Sargeant ×

★★★★★ Thank you so much to the crews for working so hard to get the power restored, we really appreciate it! Thank you to the social media team for all the updates! And thank you to the rest of the staff for all of your hard work! You guys rock!!



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A sample of Twitter comments

Thanks to all! RT @RickBonnette1: Kudos to @HHHydro President Art Skidmore + staff for a dedicated week to restore power.

Josh Atkinson @brunswickj 28 Dec
A few hours shy of a week without power. Thank you to everyone at @hhhydro for all your work. 22 and Dublin line energized!

Jenny @4Jenny1 29 Dec
@HHHydro - you're the best! Words can't express how grateful I am for your commitment to our community.

Roland @haltonguy 27 Dec
@HHHydro - Thank you for the non-stop work during these trying times.



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Restoration



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Crews in the Field

LDC/Contractor	Employees	Crews start date	Crew Release date
Halton Hills Hydro	15	Dec 21 - 3:45am	never
Westmore	13	Dec-22	Dec 29 - 11
Dundas Powerline	23	Dec 26	Dec 29 - 23
Westario	3	Dec-24	Dec-31
Welland	2	Dec-24	Jan-02
London	15	Dec 25	Dec-31
Waterloo North	5	Dec-26	Dec-30
Kitchener Wilmot Hydro	2	Dec-26	Jan-01
Oakville	2	Dec-25	Jan-02
Brantford	2	Dec-28	Jan-02
Greta Lakes Landscaping	1	Dec-26	Dec-29
Asplundht	13	Dec-23	Dec-31
Davey	10	Dec-23	Dec-31
Hydro One	11	Dec-27	Dec-31
Quality Tree	6	Dec-21	Jan-02
Guelph Hydro	2	Dec-27	Dec-29
Woodstock Hydro	2	Dec-27	Dec-29
Blue Water Power	5	Dec-26	Dec-29
Total in Field at Height of Storm	132		

Crews in the field by Day

Date	Crew in the Field
December 21	13
December 22	37
December 23	60
December 24	65
December 25	71
December 26	93
December 27	112
December 28	121
December 29	132

Halton Hills Hydro Staff involved in Storm Response

Department	% of Staff Working
Operations	100%
Management	92%
Customer Care	77%
All other departments	67%
Total	85%



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Collaboration

- * Town of Halton Hills
 - * Significant efforts from Town to clear roads at the beginning of the storm so Halton Hills Hydro crews could work
 - * Mayor and Councillors retweeting updates and information
 - * Emergency planning and coordination with town
 - * Town council assisted with providing meals to crews



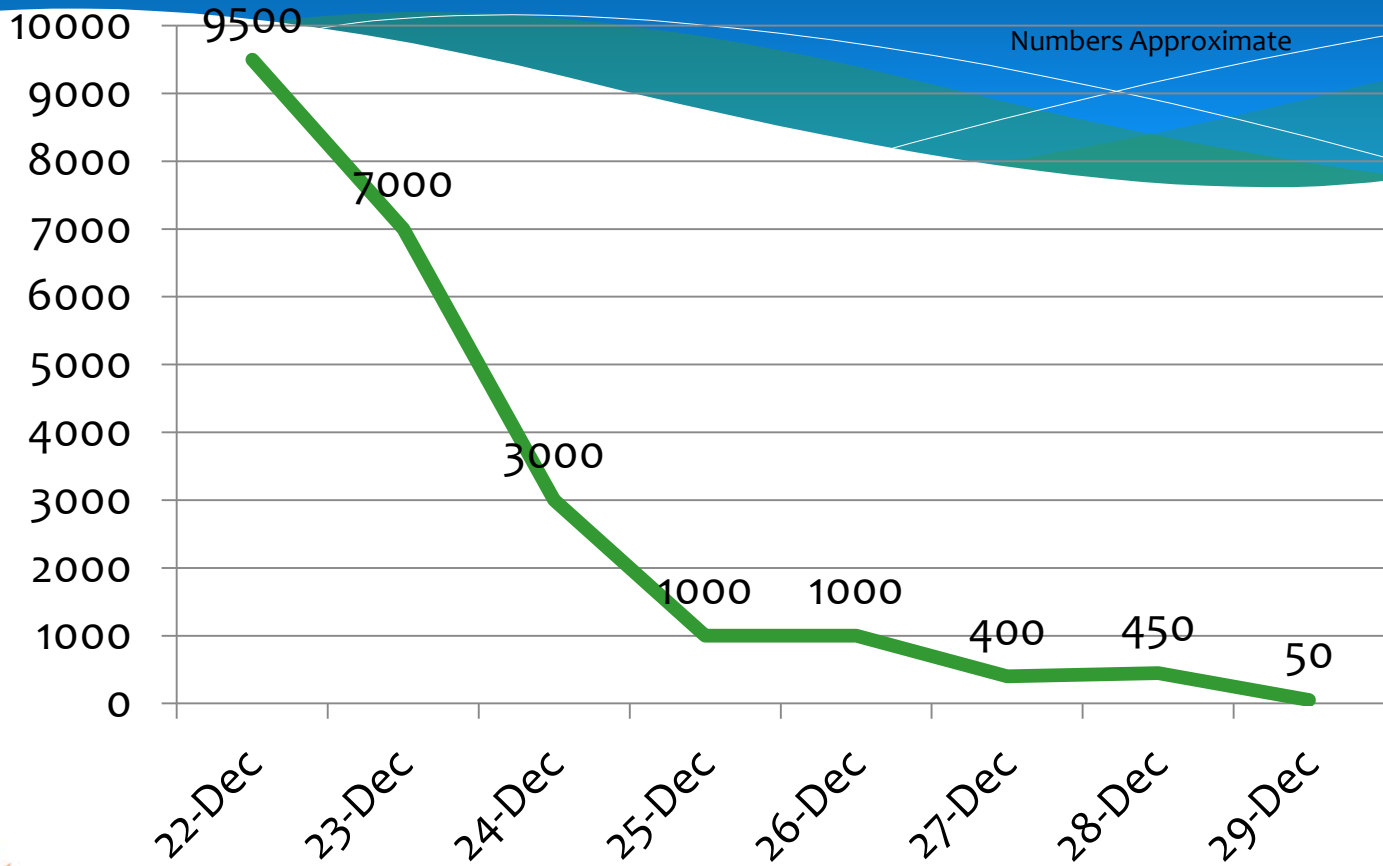
Order of Restoration

- * Order of Restoration
 - * High Voltage 44kV
 - * Mid Voltage 27.6 kV
 - * Substations
 - * Individual Streets
 - * Individual Customers



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Customer Restorations by Day

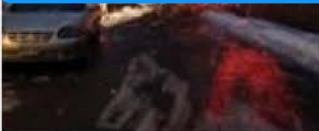


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Individual Reconnections

- * December 30 & 31st focused on connections to individual services affected by storm
- * Safety information from the ESA about generators, downed power lines, etc. posted on social media sites throughout outage
- * Detailed info on finding contractors from ESA posted on social sites starting December 25th
- * IFP article on repairing equipment damage before reconnection posted on December 28th
- * Detailed info on reconnection process and CTV news video posted as media release on December 29th.

ESA & Reconnections



connects their home to the power lines.

THEIFP.CA

Halton Hills Hydro outage update for December 29

Halton Hills Hydro is pleased to report that all distribution lines have been fully restored.

If you are still without power please contact our office at 519-853-3701

We continue to work on reconnections. Many customers who are without power suffered damage to the equipment that connects their home to the power lines. These repairs must be completed by a licensed electrician. Customers who have had damage to their service stack and meter base can call our Customer Care Centre at 519-853-3701 for a more detailed explanation or check the following websites: www.haltonhillshydro.com or www.esasafe.com.

[Electrical Safety Authority on CTV News Video](#)

Our Customer Care department will open today Sunday December 29 @ 8:30 am



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Operations Impact



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Cleanup

- * Expected 2 to 3 weeks of effort for clean-up including:
 - * Calls for customer service repairs, masts, meter bases, attachment points tree trimming
 - * Removing trees from secondary services and danger trees near primary lines
 - * Complete system inspection including both rural, urban & rear yard
 - * Making permanent repairs to any temporary fixes utilized during storm restoration
 - * Replacing broken poles temporarily supported during storm
 - * Clean-up in the Spring of debris buried in snow that cannot be dealt with now

Capital Work on Hold

- * Crews would normally be continuing with our 2014 budgeted capital program including Steeles Ave and pole replacements. This work is on hold until final storm related issues are dealt with.

Damage to our system

- * 10-15 poles
- * 3 Three-phase transformer banks
- * 7 Single phase transformers
- * 200-300 primary sleeves to repair damaged overhead conductors
- * Numerous top pin brackets & insulators
- * Numerous fuses

Tree Trimming

- * Entire system trimmed under emergency conditions
- * Tree contractors went back through 85% of our rural system removing danger limbs
- * Work continues to remove branches from secondary services
- * Trees are expected to grow faster as a result of the loss of upper branches so tree trimming will need to maintain or expand to keep on top of growth

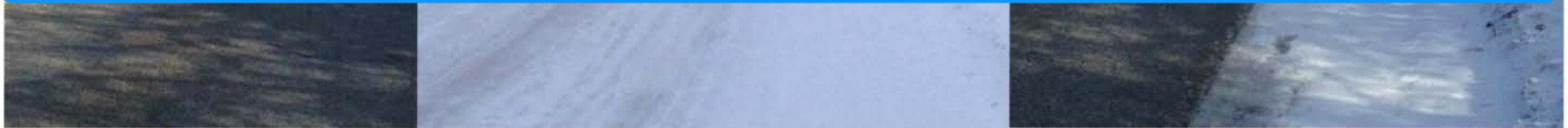
Ongoing Customer Care

- * HHH Tree contractors continue to assist customers with line clearing (Quality Tree and Westmore)
- * We continue to remove branches from secondary services
- * Waived all cut and reconnect fees for storm damage repairs



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Financial Impacts



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Cost of the Storm

Halton Hills Hydro	\$337,000
Contractors – Lines/Tree Trimming	\$623,000
Other LDCs	\$540,000
Total Cost of Storm	\$1,500,000



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Cost Recovery Options

1. Partner with Town for Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program funding
 2. Apply to the Ontario Energy Board for Z-Factor assistance
- * Recommended option: Apply for Z-Factor filing.

Cost Recovery – OEB Z-Factor Application

- * Z-factors are intended to provide for unforeseen events outside of a distributor's management control. The cost to a distributor must be material and its causation clear.
- * Halton Hills Hydro must: “provide a clear demonstration that the management of the distributor could not have been able to plan and budget for the event and that the harm caused by the event is genuinely incremental to its experience or reasonable expectations”.
- * Application to be filed within 6 months of event

Z-Factor Criteria

- * Causation
 - * Incremental costs must be outside of activities used to calculate rate base.
- * Materiality
 - * For LDC with revenue requirement <\$10,000,000, cost must be >\$50,000
- * Prudence
 - * The distributor's decision to incur the amount must represent the most cost-effective option (not necessarily least initial cost) for ratepayers
- * Unplanned Event
 - * Evidence that the event could not have been planned or budgeted

Z-Factor Cost Recovery

* Costs to be recovered through Z-Factor Application

\$1,437,100

Next Steps



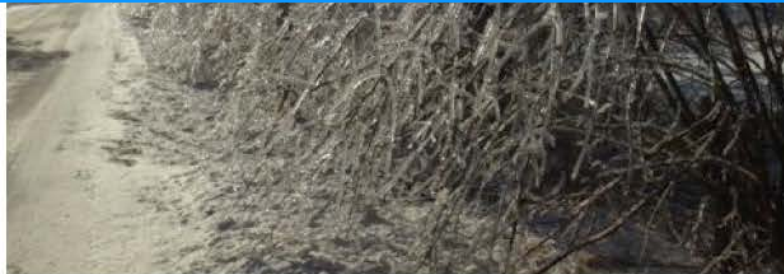
Debriefing Sessions

Department	Briefing Date
Operations and Engineering	January 8, 2014
Control Room	January 9, 2014
Management Team	January 10, 2014
All other Departments	January 13, 2014

Review and Lessons Learned

- * Departmental meetings and Management team meetings underway
 - * Review what worked
 - * Review what could be improved
 - * Update emergency preparedness plans and documentation
 - * Internal communication and processes
 - * Customer facing communication and processes

Questions?



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4 **Appendix D**
5 **Local Media Articles**
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Saturday, December 21, 2013 - 8:08:56 AM

Freezing Rain Warning continues

Environment Canada is continuing its Freezing Rain Warning for Halton Hills-Milton.

Periods of freezing rain will taper off this morning but a major ice storm will likely move into the area this afternoon or evening into Sunday morning.

According to EC's Warning issued this morning, "A significant frontal boundary from Sarnia to near Hamilton eastwards across Lake Ontario is expected to remain in the area for the next couple of days. North of this front, periods of freezing rain will taper off or change to drizzle or freezing drizzle this morning. Regions from Southern Lake Huron to Toronto are expected to see temperatures rise just above the freezing mark this morning.



The next disturbance is over Texas this morning and will track towards the Lower Great Lakes tonight. The moisture associated with this low is substantial and will likely produce a major freezing rain storm over portions of Southern and Eastern Ontario. Freezing rain may be heavy at times tonight, with 20 to 30 mm of freezing rain possible. Freezing rain will redevelop this afternoon and continue tonight and into Sunday morning. For regions from Sarnia to Burlington and south to Lake Erie, rain begin later this morning and change to freezing rain this evening.

As a result, ice accumulation on trees and power lines could potentially create widespread power outages and downed trees. Driving conditions on untreated roads could become very hazardous. Motorists and pedestrians should exercise caution and adjust travel plans accordingly."

Recommend 8 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Saturday, December 21, 2013 - 9:09:58 PM

Ice storm continues

Halton Hills Hydro crews have been responding all day to ongoing power outages throughout the town.

Currently residents in Acton, north-central Georgetown, Glen Williams and the rural area are sitting in the dark.

Environment Canada has continued its Freezing Rain Warning forecasting a major ice storm forecast this evening into Sunday morning.

A Texas low continues to track towards the Lower Great Lakes this evening and will generate substantial moisture over the area. As a result a major freezing rain storm is expected for portions of Southern and Eastern Ontario. Additional freezing rainfall amounts on the order of 20 to 30 mm are possible by Sunday morning.

As a result, ice accumulation on trees and power lines could potentially create widespread power outages and downed trees or tree limbs. Driving conditions on untreated roads could become very hazardous. Motorists and pedestrians should exercise caution and adjust travel plans accordingly.

Recommend 46 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



[Previous](#)

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Photo of Georgetown South by resident Rhianna Mellor



Sunday, December 22, 2013 - 11:11:54 AM

Halton Hills Hydro: It's a Major Emergency

Prepare for lengthy hydro outages says Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore.

He issued a letter this morning to Halton Hills Hydro customers this morning on its website.

"The current ice storm has hit our municipality very significantly. Halton Hills Hydro considers this a Major Emergency as we have sustained outages in many parts of our community. Our crews are working around the clock to clear trees off our lines and restore power.

However, due to the extent of damage it is not possible to estimate the restoration times. The freezing rain is a safety concern for the general public and for our restoration crews. The ice on the branches of trees is causing trees to tear down our distribution lines.

We encourage customer's to plan for a lengthy outage.

Our main focus is restoring power to our main electricity feeders, once this has been completed we will start restoration to individual customers.

I want to thank all customers for their patience and understanding during these difficult circumstances. Our priority is to return service as quickly as possible, while ensuring the safety of our crews."

The ice storm has caused major damage throughout Halton Hills. Crews are working around the clock to clear trees off the lines and restore power. Freezing rain is a safety concern for everyone right now, and Hydro is unable to guarantee restoration times at this time.

Hydro's phone lines are overloaded with the high volume and it may take a while to get through. The after hours number is 1-855-226-4173 if an outage or downed lines to report.

Recommend 119 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



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Photo by Jon Borgstrom

Downed trees on Church St. in Georgetown Sunday morning



Sunday, December, 22, 2013 - 4:04:24 PM

Crews working around clock to restore power

Hydro and Town crews are working around the clock to clear trees off lines and to restore power, in the latest release from Town of Halton Hills.

The current ice storm has had a significant effect on the Town of Halton Hills with numerous downed power lines and tree limbs.

Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore called it a major emergency because of the numerous outages in many parts of the community.



Halton Hills Hydro CEO Art Skidmore.

However, due to the extent of damage it is not possible to estimate the

restoration times. The freezing rain is a safety concern for the general public and for our restoration crews. The ice on the branches of trees is causing trees to tear down distribution lines.

Customers should plan for a lengthy outage, Skidmore said.

"Our main focus is restoring power to our main electricity feeders, once this has been completed we will start restoration to individual customers" said Skidmore. "I want to thank all customers for their patience and understanding during these difficult circumstances. Our priority is to return service as quickly as possible, while ensuring the safety of our crews. Thank you for your continued support."

Earlier today, Mayor Rick Bonnette, working from the Halton Hills Hydro office in Acton, tweeted that Halton Hills firefighters were working with the Town's public works employees using chain saws.

"Everyone is pulling together as best we can," the mayor said, adding that it's very frustrating for Halton Hills Hydro crews. "They get one area cleared than another branch or tree crashes down."

Bonnette described the impact on trees as "branches are falling like toothpicks."

Councillor Jane Fogal tweeted, "Dawn shows devastation of trees. And the eerie sound of huge icy limbs crashing continues every few minutes."

Bonnette urged everyone to stay at home and off the streets. All Town facilities were closed as were many stores, he said.

Sunday afternoon members of St. Alban's Church in Acton brought food for the hydro crews and to the various homes in the community.

Councillor Moya Johnson who lives in the old Georgetown area said her power had been off for more than 12 hours and heated coffee and tea on her barbecue outside.

Tweeting early Sunday evening Johnson said, "This tree about to fall on our house. Trees falling every minute. Yikes"

Halton Hills Hydro, with 22,000 customers, serves two urban centres, Georgetown and Acton, the Halton Hills Premier Gateway employment area, three hamlets: Glen Williams, Stewarttown and Norval and several smaller settlements, covering 260 square kilometres.

Recommend 4 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Monday, December, 23, 2013 - 2:02:46 PM

Gellert Community Centre now evacuation site for residents without power

Gellert Community Centre is now an evacuation site for area residents who are still without power.

The Centre, 10241 Eighth Line, has cots set up, food, showers, etc. and will remain open as long as the need exists.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette says good progress has been made in cleaning up and restoring power from the ice storm, but there is significant damage and extreme ice conditions are hampering crews' best efforts.

As of Monday afternoon various areas in urban Georgetown and Acton remained without power along with many rural residents. This means residents should be prepared for a continued and prolonged period without power, especially rural residents, said Bonnette.

Warming sites remain open and are located at the Acton Fire Hall, 21 Churchill Rd. South, and the Halton Regional Police Services building, 217 Guelph Street in Georgetown.

"Main roads are in good shape, and we have brought in additional staff to assist in the clean-up and we are making progress with local roads. However, please be careful as you travel throughout our community. Icy conditions, downed power lines and tree limbs still pose a risk to safety, so take care," said Bonnette.

"I sincerely thank everyone for their patience. Please be sure to check in on vulnerable family members or neighbours to ensure they are safe and healthy."

Residents are reminded to call 911 only in the event of an emergency. Residents can also dial 311 for more information or follow @bPreparedHalton on Twitter.

To report power outages or downed lines call 519-853-3701. The after hours number is 1-855-226-4173. Hydro's phone lines are overloaded with the high volume and it may take a while to get through.

Updates will be posted on www.haltonhills.ca





Monday, December 23, 2013 - 3:03:27 PM

Extreme Cold Alert issued

An Extreme Cold Weather Alert, in addition to the ice storm and related power outages, has been issued by the Halton Region Health Department starting tomorrow (Tuesday) night.

This alert is issued when temperatures are expected to fall below -15°C (without wind-chill), or when weather conditions are severe enough to warrant alerting the community to the risks involved with prolonged exposure. The alert is intended to inform the general public and community agencies and recommend

precautions. This alert is in effect until temperatures rise above -15°C (without wind-chill) or weather conditions improve and the risks involved with prolonged exposure are reduced.

For information about warming and evacuation centres, and related safety information in Halton, dial 311 or visit www.halton.ca/severeweather.

Anyone can be affected by extreme cold-related weather conditions, depending on length of time and exertion levels. Those especially at risk include: older adults (over the age of 65), infants and young children, outdoor workers, sport enthusiasts (hikers, skiers), homeless persons, and/or those lacking shelter, proper clothing or food.

To keep yourself and your family safe, you should know how to prevent cold-related health problems and what to do if there is a cold-weather emergency. You can avoid cold-related injury by dressing appropriately and covering exposed skin. It is also important, in preparation for winter driving conditions, that you keep a Car Survival Kit in your car at all times. This kit can include items such as: cell phone, blankets, booster cables, shovel, first aid supplies, flashlight and batteries, extra boots/socks, etc. A kit such as this can save your life or someone else's. Plan ahead and listen to the weather forecast!

Additional information, weather forecasts and wind-chill information can also be obtained from the Environment Canada website. For further information on extreme cold, please contact Halton Region by dialing 311 or visit www.halton.ca.



Recommend 28 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Monday, December, 23, 2013 - 3:03:39 PM

Hydro crews making progress

By Lisa Tallyn

Staff writer

Halton Hills Hydro crews are making progress in restoring hydro to the thousands of customers affected by the weekend's ice storm, but as of Monday morning, many residents were still without power.

Art Skidmore, Halton Hills Hydro (HHH) President and CEO, estimated that 75 per cent of Georgetown customers didn't have hydro, but the good news was that most of Acton, which hadn't had power since Saturday night, had been reconnected, except for a couple of small areas.

"I expect we will see a lot of reconnecting happening today (Monday)," said Skidmore. He added that while hydro may be restored in an

area, individual customers (most commonly in the rural area) may still not have power because a downed tree may have taken out the hydro line on their property. Those customers should contact an electrician to deal with the issue, he said.

"Halton Hills got the worst of the storm," Skidmore said. "We got nailed."

The ice on the trees snapped branches off all across the town, many of them landing on or pulling down hydro wires as they fell. Skidmore said at least six hydro poles had been broken, but crews hadn't been able to get to those yet.

"The trees are our culprit," said Skidmore. "The ice was unbelievable."

Hydro crews have been working 16-hour rotating shifts and four private tree contractors have been brought in to help remove downed branches and trees.

With the trees still coated in ice, Skidmore thinks there will be more power problems arising from downed branches. He urges everyone to stay away from the trees.

"These branches are precarious. The trees could snap at anytime."

HHH sought help from other hydro companies, but no one is available as they're all out dealing with hydro outages in their own communities.

Skidmore said HHH's Customer Care Department at 519-853-3701 was staying open until 11 p.m. Monday, and they would continue to update social media.

He said crews are working as quickly as they can, but he understands that customers are frustrated.

"We thank everyone for their continued support. We know how difficult and stressful it is to be without power. We are moving as quickly and safely as we can," said Skidmore.

He urges people who don't have power and they're cold to go somewhere where they can get warm— malls, friends, relatives, or the warming centre located in Georgetown at Georgetown Police Station, 217 Guelph St.

Halton Police tweeted Monday that over the weekend only one person, an 87-year-old, visited the warming centre.

The ice storm has meant for "pretty much mayhem," said Michelle Lemme of Colonial Tree Service.

Lemme said the crews had been working with hydro companies to remove branches from lines, and also for individual residents with downed trees.

"We're trying to deal with prioritized emergencies," said Lemme.

Halton Hills resident Jan Wareing is frustrated with the information she has received from Halton Hills Hydro during the outage, and believes the utility company and Mayor Rick Bonnette should have provided more information to radio stations. <



Photo by Jon Borgstrom

Halton Hills Hydro worker Alex Goodfellow fires up his chainsaw in the bucket while working on hydro lines north of Acton Curling Club Monday. Crews were working their way to 32 Sideroad and when completed they said it would restore power from the Pumping Station to Lasby Lane and that affected area. Officials say residents should expect prolonged outages.

She said after many calls she finally got through to Halton Hills Hydro Customer Care and was told she would be without power until Dec. 24 and no other information was provided.

While she understood the Mayor had been tweeting throughout, she said, "not everybody has a smart phone or an iPad."

"It's very frustrating not knowing," said Wareing.

Bill Oates, 76, who lives at Kin Court (3 Hyde Park Dr.) said his building, which has many seniors, was without power since Saturday.

"Someone should have checked on the seniors at least on Sunday," said Hyde, who said he was told by Hydro officials power wouldn't be restored until Christmas Day.

Recommend 17 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Tuesday, December 24, 2013 - 2:02:00 PM

Town says 3,500 still without power

By Lisa Tallyn

Staff writer

With Halton Hills Hydro (HHH) crews working around the clock, more and more area residents finally have power, but there are still about 3,500 hydro customers who remain in the dark as of today (Tuesday).

That's down from all HHH customers—about 23,000—who were without power at the peak of the ice storm which struck the area this past weekend.

Due to the fact the storm was so widespread, HHH president and CEO Art Skidmore said it has been very difficult to get crews from other areas. However, three additional crews from Welland and the Kincardine area (Westario Power) are expected to arrive this afternoon (Tuesday) to help out.

Most urban customers are now reconnected, but a significant number of rural customers still don't have power, said Mayor Rick Bonnette at a press conference Tuesday. The rural residents, and those who live in Georgetown West who are fed by a rural substation, are going to have wait longer to have their power restored. It could still be sometime Thursday before their hydro is back on.

"That's (tree trimming in the rural areas) where all the crews are focused right now," said Don Matthews, HHH Operations Manager.

Skidmore said currently there are 13 tree trimming crews, four line crews and two emergency service crews working 16-hour rotating shifts to restore power.

A rumour that they will be taking time off for Christmas is not true, said Skidmore.

"We have a very committed line staff. I can't tell you the job that they're doing."

Matthews said all substations are on and crews are now working on getting that power distributed to customers.

"It's just a matter of clearing lines, we have 900 km of lines," said Matthews.

Skidmore said currently there are pockets in Georgetown still without power.

"Street by street is really how we're going. Every street is different," said Skidmore.

Matthews explained they are currently working on two sections of Georgetown (in the Delrex area) that are fed by the Mountainview Rd. substation.

"A large number are out because there is damage to their services specific to their house," said Matthews. If one house on a street doesn't have power, but all the other homes do, that is likely the case and those residents need to contact HHH.

"We have made tremendous progress in the clean-up from both a Town and Halton Hills Hydro perspective," said Bonnette.



Photo by Linda Semerko

Park Avenue in Georgetown was among the hardest hits areas by the weekend ice storm.

"On Sunday we established an Emergency Control Centre to ensure our actions and responses are well coordinated between all agencies. Town senior management and I have been in regular contact with the province's Emergency Management Ontario and Halton Region staff."

Bonnette said, in consultation with colleagues, the Town has decided not to declare a state of emergency "since the staff has been able to address most of the community's needs to this point, (and) we have not encountered any extraordinary costs or resources issue that would require a state of emergency."

"Our roads are open, the hospital is open and people can get around," said Bonnette.

But Bonnette said just because a state of emergency wasn't declared it doesn't mean the Town can't get additional funding from the Province if needed.

"The weather still poses some challenges. As the temperature drops, ice, that has encased tree limbs and power lines, will not melt and the weight of the ice may still cause them to fall. There is also a possibility of strong winds which will make restoration efforts challenging, so we're not out of the woods yet," said Bonnette.

He said Town Public Works staff and Halton Hills Fire Service staff have worked to make the roads safe. Halton Hills Fire Department has responded to approximately 80 calls over the last 72 hours, but there have been no significant emergencies. Public Works staff and firefighters have been going door-to-door to high-risk seniors' apartments to ensure their safety.

"I sincerely thank everyone for their patience," said Bonnette. "It's been very stressful, very trying times."

Town warming stations at Acton Fire Hall and the Georgetown police station remain open, as does the Gellert Community Centre as an evacuation centre where residents without power can have a shower, get some food and sleep over.

Anyone who requires non-emergency assistance is asked to dial 311.

Recommend 8 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Wednesday, December, 25, 2013 - 12:12:11 PM

Work continues on Christmas Day

Halton Hills Hydro crews and Town employees continue to work on Christmas Day, helping to restore power and assist with recovery from the weekend ice storm.

In a message to residents on Christmas Day, Halton Hills Hydro President & CEO Art Skidmore said, "Halton Hills Hydro crews continue to work on a rotating shift basis and will continue to do so until all customers have power. We are seeing moderate progress with hundreds of additional customers reconnected yesterday.

We still have a approximately 2,500 customers without power. In addition, there are many individual outages are due to meter base damage.

Crews are currently dispatched throughout our service territory, including Silvercreek, Ashgrove, Balinafad, Norval, Glen Williams, Georgetown and Acton.

Unfortunately, the weather not helping as ice is not melting off tree limbs and power lines.

Our Customer Care Centre is open. Customers may phone, email or use social media to contact us. Our phone number is 519-853-3701."

Crews from Westario Power, Welland Hydro, London Hydro and Westmore Poleline and Electric Inc. will be working with Halton Hills until power is restored. The two additional crews from London Hydro arrived on Christmas morning.

On its Facebook site this morning, one resident asked "Did you forget Limehouse?"

Halton Hills Hydro replied, " there has been extensive damage in that area but we will keep working until ALL are restored."

Kelly Martin posted on Facebook, "They (hydro crews) were in Limehouse yesterday. I went for a drive and there were lines down on Sixth Line North of Hwy 7...but not many; unfortunately Sixth line just south of 7 had quite a few lines down and Sixth Line south of 17 sideroad was really bad. I don't know what Fifth line was like. If it was anywhere close to the damage on Sixth I think it will be a while yet."

Steve Turner tweeted "HHHydro thanks for all the hard work, even though we still are with no power. We are at home with our loved ones as the crews are not."

Halton Hills Hydro reminds residents to check its website <http://www.haltonhillshydro.com> for the list of streets that have been restored.

Mayor Rick Bonnette tweeted today, that Halton Hills Firefighters were out visiting seniors' homes, checking up on them. He said a few people also dropped into the Acton Fire Hall warming centre to enjoy some hot chocolate. Bonnette said for those who are alone or without power there will be a free Christmas turkey lunch at the Acton Town Hall.



Photo by Jon Borgstrom



Wednesday, December, 25, 2013 - 3:03:47 PM

Ice storm work goes on

Hydro crews working on Eighth Line, south of 10 Sideroad on Christmas day.

Photo taken by Mayor Rick Bonnette as he was delivering volunteered-cooked meals for the hydro crews.



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Photo by Mayor Rick Bonnette

Hydro crews working on Eighth Line, south of 10 Sideroad on Christmas Day.

Recommend 6 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Thursday, December, 26, 2013 - 4:04:03 PM

Winds tonight could bring down lines, trees

In a Special Weather Statement issued for Halton Hills-Milton at 3:30 p.m., Environment Canada warned of moderate winds through early evening for regions most affected by the ice storm.

In areas affected by the ice storm, winds are forecast to remain in the 20 to 40 km/h range until early this evening, then gradually diminish. These wind speeds would normally have little or no impact, however with trees remaining heavily ice covered, this may be enough to bring down additional branches, resulting in further sporadic power outages, the Statement said.



Friday's weather will be a mix of sun and cold with a 40 per cent chance of flurries early in the morning. High -2.

On Saturday and Sunday, the temperature will climb above 0 to +2 to +3.

Recommend 21 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Thursday, December, 26, 2013 - 5:05:38 PM

Town is rebounding from ice storm damage

Halton Hills Town and Hydro staff continue to work together to address the damage caused by this week's devastating ice storm.

"The storm came as advertised and then some," said Mayor Rick Bonnette. "While we still have a lot of work to do, there's more than just the buzz of chain saws in the air, there's also a strong sense of community and appreciation for the efforts of staff who have worked through the holiday to address the ice storm damage. I'm very impressed by the way everyone is pulling their weight."

The two warming centres in Acton and Georgetown remain open and available for those in need. Residents are also using the evacuation centre at the Gellert Community Centre on

Eighth Line (Main St.). These three buildings will remain open as long as the need persists, said the mayor. The Town remains in regular contact with the Province's Emergency Management Office.

The Town's Public Works department are on the street, clearing roads of snow that fell overnight as well as tree clean-ups.

Halton Hills Hydro had been joined in its restoration efforts by crews from several other distributions centres including London and Sarnia.

As of Boxing Day morning, approximately 1,700 customers remain without power, with more reconnections happening throughout the day.

Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore said with the additional crews, the big push is on, and hopefully reconnection of almost all residents will be completed by Friday night or Saturday morning.

All Town facilities- arena and recreation centres- will be open Friday and all regular recreation programs will operate as scheduled.

"We fully appreciate the hardship and stress this situation has caused. I thank everyone for their continued patience. Everyone is doing their best and things are gradually improving," said Bonnette.



Photo by Cynthia Gamble

Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore (left) informs Mayor Rick Bonnette about street by street power situation in the "War Room" at Halton Hills Hydro building in Acton. The two have been working together since Sunday.

Recommend 40 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Saturday, December, 28, 2013 - 9:09:47 AM

It is an extra extraordinary event: Hydro CEO

By Cynthia Gamble
Staff Writer

It is Boxing Day- day six after the Ice Storm first hit- and the Halton Hills Hydro office is filled with staff. President and CEO Art Skidmore, who rushed home Sunday from Penetanguishene where he had been on vacation with his son, is making calls trying to find hydro crews and tree trimming contractors around the province to come help as well as finding supplies for their depleted stores.

"I had reached out to my colleagues to look for extra help on Sunday afternoon. And every day we have

been getting more and more resources to where we are today with 30 plus crews (a combination of power line companies or tree-trimming companies), scattered throughout Halton Hills for that great final push to get all of customers reconnected," said Skidmore. He is hoping that main restoration will be done by Friday midnight or early Saturday morning.

Just that day a convoy of five trucks and crews arrived from London.

"What an adrenaline rush that was," said Mayor Rick Bonnette as he sits in the "war room" at the Halton Hills Hydro with Skidmore talking about the events of the past week with *The Independent & Free Press* in the early afternoon. Since Sunday, Mayor Rick Bonnette had been stationed at the Hydro building – powered in the aftermath by a huge generator – on Alice St. in Acton. Today he is on the phone in contact with senior management who are preparing an afternoon press release, greeting volunteers who have brought food for the Hydro workers and responding and updating residents through email or his Twitter feed with over a 1,000 followers. By Tuesday night, he had responded to close to 1,500 emails and tweets.

In the next room, Operations Manager Don Matthews is talking strategy with his Sub-foreman Mike Quantrell and tree cutting specialist Brian Lang of Horizon Contracts Management. Matthews is coordinating 30 crews –about 60 men out in the field – a geographic area of 280 sq kilometres with over 900 kilometres of lines. Over the course of the week, crews have come from as far away as Ottawa and Sarnia. Assisting Halton Hills Hydro are tree contractors: Davey Tree Service, Quality Tree Service (Georgetown), Asplundh Tree Service; utilities: Westario Power (Kincardine, Port Elgin and Hanover), Woodstock Hydro, Welland Hydro, London Hydro, Bluewater Power (Sarnia), Waterloo North Hydro, Oakville Hydro, Brantford Power, Guelph Hydro and Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro and Hydro One and electrical contractors: Westmore Powerlines and Dundas Powerlines.

Down the hall, Natasha Newman, normally a senior engineering tech and Tracy Rehberg-Rawlingson, a regulatory affairs officer are organizing all calls received about lack of power and grouping them into sections and then giving them out to the crews while Matt Wright, a senior engineering tech sub-station electrician, is putting together work packages for all the additional crews brought into the community.

Junior accountant Raj Johal and Conservation officer Linda Boyer were out delivering meals to the line crews spread across Halton Hills.

Standing in the cold, directing traffic around hydro crews working on Five Sideroad, a Quality Tree Service worker is asked how many days he had been working. "Too many to count," he wearily replies.

In the "communication centre" in the basement- working from their desks, six women: Diane Bailey, Customer Care rep; Janice Tennant, Executive Assistant; Fiona Paaren, Customer Care rep; Car Jarv, Business Analyst; Leslie Froude, AMI Co-ordinator and Sandie Pitre, Customer Care rep are manning the phone lines. It's only early afternoon and already close to 550 calls have been fielded. Other employees of the 51 Halton Hills Hydro



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In the "communication centre", Sandie Pitre, Customer Care rep checks what has been reconnected.

complement are working from home updating the website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, keeping residents informed hourly of the progress. Controllor Ravi Baichan is serving as "the escalation person" for those people who really want to vent."

"We've had a few of those," said the mayor, with a wry smile.

"This has truly been an organizational effort. We have had 100 per cent of line staff in since this happened," said Skidmore, adding one even returned from vacation in Sudbury. "It's unprecedented to see that type of commitment to the organization."

"It's been all hands on deck," added Bonnette, explaining many Town and Hydro employees are working on their vacation days – not to mention Christmas and Boxing Day.

"Morale has been up and down," Skidmore said. "When we saw the devastation in the community, I think our morale was pretty low because we had a ton of work to do. But as progress happened, their spirits picked as we got more help in.

"Everyone is concerned over the length of this, but it's such a vast devastation- 900 kilometres of distribution lines. Just look at the devastation everywhere. ... I don't know how many broken poles and transformers that had to be replaced."

At least a couple of hundred residents took the opportunity of a hot shower at the Gellert manned by the Recreation staff, St. John and Red Cross. Sixteen people spent Christmas night sleeping on cots there and Bonnette said the Centre would remain open as an evacuation centre until it's no longer needed.

For the first couple of days, Halton Hills firefighters have been on a "community watch" driving up and down the rural area looking for trouble spots, trees down, notifying Hydro, said the mayor. They have assisted public works with cutting trees, they checked all the seniors residences, and even served tea and coffee at the fire station in Acton, now doubling as a warming centre.

"They have been doing yeoman's work," the mayor said.

Town public work crews have been on the job too, helping the hydro crews with tree limbs in the streets and making the icy and snowy roads safe for travel. Communication staff began writing press releases sending them to media outlets including radio stations, to update the public on progress of the restoration. "We have no control on whether they are used," the mayor said in reply to criticism that no radio stations reported on Halton Hills. The press release was repeated in a message over the phone for anyone who phoned the Civic Centre, which had lost power.

Both Skidmore and Bonnette were pleased with the advantages of social media in getting the word out.

"I think it's been working fabulous," said Skidmore, who at the height of storm was preparing two releases daily.

Information is posted on Hydro's website, Facebook and Twitter as well as the Town's website, with the Mayor and several councillors regularly tweeting.

"Yes I know not everyone has a smart phone or a computer, but the social media has kept people engaged and it's a very effective method to get the information out," Skidmore. "We will do a full debrief on our response, but for the most part I think our response has been pretty good."

"The cooperation between the Town and Halton Hills Hydro has been outstanding," said Skidmore.

The mayor added he, Town senior management and Skidmore are having daily conference calls.

While they say 99 per cent of the feedback from the public has been positive there have been a few complainers. One Glen Williams woman without power for days complained how the mayor and Hydro office have already been energized.

"It just the order of restoration," explained Skidmore. "We go from the high voltage to the mid voltage to the sub-station. The ones that hold are the ones we're going to work on. The ones that don't hold, we have more work to do. That's the restoration, it depends on the supply feeds on where we go first. ... Somebody has to be first and somebody has to be last unfortunately, and there's lots in between."

There were certain pockets in the community with significant damage – broken poles, lines down and trees on the roadway- and they are taking longer to repair. Another neighbourhood in Acton had all the lines in the backyards, pulled down by the trees. The crews could not get their equipment in and had trek everything in, said Skidmore. He bristled at the suggestion that Halton Hills Hydro was ill prepared for the storm.

"I think we were pretty prepared. We had all of our crews out when the ice started. It really started going downhill at 10:30 a.m. Sunday. At the height of the storm, we had every customer – 23,000- off," Skidmore said.

"We did put out the call Sunday afternoon," said Skidmore, adding that Halton Hills, north Milton and north Burlington were among the worst-hit communities with about 30 mm (1.3 inches) of ice coating trees and lines.

"But people geographically were in the same boat. ... We made the call Sunday, we made the call Monday, we made the call Tuesday. Everyone's looking for contractors... So we have been ramping up as crews become available."

It's not just a matter of getting crews, added Bonnette. Each new crew must get a safety orientation training before heading out into the field, plus the crews must be housed and fed.

"Trying to find accommodation on Christmas day was not easy," the mayor said.

Bonnette applauded Acton resident Kathleen Dills who organized Christmas turkey lunches for the crews as well as organizing a Christmas dinner at the town hall for those who had no power. The Milton Baptist Church also brought in hot meals.

"And the crews don't come in and sit at a banquet feast, they sit in their trucks and eat, and then get right back to it," he said.

Criticism has been pointed at Hydro for not implementing a tree-trimming program.

But Skidmore said that's not true.

"We have a tree-trimming program that we follow every year. We spend a significant amount of money each year. We try to maintain a third of our community every year so it's on a three-year basis, and that's usually the type of trimming that needs to be done," he said. "This is an extra-extraordinary event."

Bonnette added, "It's a rural area ... what do we have a half a million trees?"

Skidmore warns individual customers who have had damage done to their home services, they must get a certified electrician to repair it before Halton Hills Hydro can reconnect the power.

A roving crew is connecting those individual customers once that happens.

"I remind customers to make sure they are using qualified electricians," said Skidmore. "We cannot reconnect unless we have an ESA (Electrical Safety Authority) certificate. That's the safeguard in the province to ensure work has been done correctly."

Halton Hills Hydro has posted a link to a list of qualified electricians. <http://applications.dmtispatial.com/esa/>

For Halton Hills Hydro the work will not stop even after the last customer has been reconnected.

"There's been a lot of work been done just to get customers connected," explained Skidmore, "We need to put our system back to the way it should be. That will take weeks into January. It won't impact customers at all but we need to put switching back the way it's meant to be."

"We just hope we don't get any more bad weather before it's fully restored," said Skidmore.

Halton Hills Hydro Customer Care Centre remains open. Customers may phone, email or use social media, 519-853-3701, www.haltonhillshydro.com

Recommend 130 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Saturday, December, 28, 2013 - 5:05:52 PM

Homes with electrical damage must be fixed before Hydro can reconnect

Some of the remaining Halton Hills Hydro customers who are still without power suffered damage to the equipment that connects their home to the power lines.

These repairs must be completed by a licensed electrician hired by the homeowner.

Customers who have had damage to their service stack and meter base can call Halton Hills Hydro Customer Care Centre at 519-853-3701 for a more detailed explanation or check the following websites: www.haltonhillshydro.com or www.esasafe.com

Halton Hills Hydro reports today "we have some crews doing nothing but restoring power to individual services. We have several hundred of these services to get to."

The Electrical Safety Authority has a number of tips for residents affected by the ice storm.

After a storm, check around and in your home for potential electrical damage. Remember, if there is serious damage to your home's connection to the electricity system, your utility may not be able to safely restore power to your home. You will have to arrange for a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC) to make repairs.

STEP ONE: Check for damage to the electrical service coming into your home

STEP TWO: Check for damage to electrical connection to your house (stand pipes and masts)

STEP THREE: Look for damage inside your home caused by flooding

STEP FOUR: Be careful when clearing up snow, ice and debris

STEP FIVE: Arranging for repairs, permits and inspection

STEP ONE: Check for damage to the electrical service coming into your home

Visually check (do not touch!) for damage to electrical wires connecting your home to hydro wires on the street. If these wires are down, sagging, touching trees or your home, or pulled away from your home or the hydro wires: Do not touch! Even if you think the power is off. Stay at least 35 feet or 11 meters (about the length of a school bus) back from the wires.

Do NOT attempt to repair yourself.

Contact a Licensed Electrical Contractor to make repairs. <http://applications.dmtispatial.com/esal>

STEP TWO: Check for damage to electrical connection to your house (stand pipes and masts) **STORM DAMAGE**

Visually check (do not touch – even if you think the power is off!) for damage to stand pipes/masts. These are the pipes typically attached to the side of a house, connecting incoming hydro wires to your meter. If the pipe/mast is pulled away from your home or damaged in any way, contact a Licensed Electrical Contractor to arrange repairs. Do NOT attempt to repair yourself.

Contact a Licensed Electrical Contractor to make repairs. Find a Licensed Electrical Contractor in My Area

<http://applications.dmtispatial.com/esal>

STEP THREE: Look for damage inside your home caused by flooding

Burst pipes, burst or backed-up water mains, and other sources may have caused flooding in your home. If there is



Photo by Victoria Julien taken during the ice storm.

water in your basement above the level of electrical outlets or near your electrical panel, do not enter the basement until your utility has disconnected your power.

If there is no standing water in your basement, do a visual check. Look (do not touch!) for water damage to electrical outlets, panels, wiring and appliances. If water has made contact:

Do not use electrical appliances that have been affected by water. Hire a qualified appliance repair person to check for and repair any damage

STEP FOUR: Be careful when clearing up snow, ice and debris

If you're clearing away snow, ice, tree limbs or other debris around your home, watch out for and stay well clear of electrical wires.

Do not attempt to clear tree limbs that are leaning on or caught in powerlines; report them to your local utility.

Look up and look out when carrying and moving ladders. Do not to come near or make contact with overhead powerlines. Electricity can jump from the wires to items like ladders so you don't even have to make physical contact to risk shock or injury. Stay 35 feet or 11 meters back.

Be careful when digging through snow or chipping ice – Make sure that powerlines have not come down and are buried under snow or ice.

If you see a downed powerline, contact your local utility and call 9-1-1.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, most home insurance policies would cover the cost to repair a home's electrical mast. A Licensed Electrical Contractor must do the repairs, the homeowner's insurance policy deductible would apply and the insurer should be notified with receipts retained for the claim.

STEP FIVE: Arranging for repairs, permits and inspection

Contact a Licensed Electrical Contractor to get an assessment of the damage and extent of the required repairs. The Licensed Electrical Contractor will arrange for a permit and electrical inspection with the Electrical Safety Authority.

Once repairs are complete, the Electrical Safety Authority will inspect in a timely manner, and advise your electrical utility that your property is ready for connection of power.

Recommend 28 people recommend this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.



Sunday, December, 29, 2013 - 10:10:32 AM

Timeline of the Ice Storm of 2013

On the night of Friday, Dec. 20, freezing rain began to fall on Halton Hills. By the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 22, devastation has come to town and stayed for week.

More than 30 mm of ice coated trees, lines and buildings with power to 100 per cent of the Halton Hills Hydro's 23,000 customers was down. Trees, limbs and hydro poles were snapped littering the streets. Some neighbourhoods' power returned later that day, but in other neighbourhoods, chaos was an unwelcome Christmas visitor.

Over the course of the week, crews have come from as far away as Ottawa and Sarnia swelling Halton

Hills Hydro's complement of 12 linemen to over 100, working 16 hours days. Assisting Halton Hills Hydro are tree contractors: Davey Tree Service, Quality Tree Service (Georgetown), Asplundh Tree Service; utilities: Westario Power (Kincardine, Port Elgin and Hanover), Woodstock Hydro, Welland Hydro, London Hydro, Bluewater Power (Sarnia), Waterloo North Hydro, Oakville Hydro, Brantford Power, Guelph Hydro and Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro and Hydro One and electrical contractors: Westmore Powerlines and Dundas Powerlines.

Town staff provided support throughout, road clearing, tree trimming, going on Community Watch at seniors residences, fighting a house fire, and manning warming evacuation centres.

Halton Police responded to calls, directed traffic and also hosted a warming centre at the Georgetown Station.

Volunteers like Katie Downes and Kathleen Dills and local churches jumped into the fray, organizing volunteer drive for dinners for hydro crews, Christmas meals, going door to door with hot drinks and foods for those without power.

Here is a timeline of events as they unfolded, culled from news reports, Facebook postings and tweets.

Thursday, Dec. 19

* The IFP reports: Environment Canada issues its first Freezing Rain Warning – ice accretion of up to 5 mm can be expected in some places. After a break Saturday, another more potent storm approaches southern Ontario Saturday evening into Sunday. There is a risk that this could be a major ice storm for an appreciable swath of southern Ontario.

Friday, Dec 20

* The IFP reports: Environment Canada issues its second warning. A second and stronger system could bring a major ice storm to the regions late Saturday into Sunday morning.

Saturday, Dec 21

* Power outages were reported by Halton Hills Hydro – North East Rural Glen Williams area, Hornby area and southeast and southwest Georgetown. Power was restored by crews.

* Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: alerts residents it posts power outage information on its website and Facebook and Twitter. If you do experience an outage that HHH hasn't reported, please call the office. 519-853-3701 or after



Photo by Shelli Harrison

Shot of James Young Dr. in Georgetown South after it was partially cleaned up. Photographer Shelli Harrison posted this photo using Wifi at Tim Hortons because her home was without power.

hours at 1-855-226-4173. Please keep in mind that during a major outage, the phone system may be overloaded so please be patient.

* 9 p.m. The IFP reports: Halton Hills Hydro crews have been responding all day to ongoing power outages throughout the town. Currently residents in Acton, north-central Georgetown, Glen Williams and the rural area are sitting in the dark.

* The IFP reports: Environment Canada has continued its Freezing Rain Warning forecasting a major ice storm forecast this evening into Sunday morning. Additional freezing rainfall amounts on the order of 20 to 30 mm are possible by Sunday morning. As a result, ice accumulation on trees and power lines could potentially create widespread power outages and downed trees or tree limbs. Driving conditions on untreated roads could become very hazardous.

* The IFP reports: Mayor Rick Bonnette says "I don't think anybody in Halton Hills slept more than two hours on Saturday night because 'crack!' then 'crack !' there goes another tree. One street, Jeffery in Acton, was just like a war zone, you couldn't have negotiated a car through."

Sunday, Dec 22

* Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: 30 mm of ice accumulation reported so far in Georgetown per the Weather Network.

* 8 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Halton Hills Hydro is currently experiencing a sustained power outage due to the current weather conditions and ice buildup. Branches are breaking off trees above the lines as quickly as they are cleared. We expect this outage to continue for an extended period and appreciate your patience as our crews work around the clock to restore power

* Main feeder lines start going down – creating widespread blackouts throughout the 280 sq. kilometre area. The ice storm has caused major damage. Crews are working around the clock to clear trees off the lines and restore power. Freezing rain is a safety concern for everyone right now. The main focus is restoring power to the main feeders.

* 9 a.m. The IFP reports – The first day of winter today, Sunday, will be a nasty day of ice, wind and cold. Significant ice accumulation on trees and power lines is creating widespread power outages and downed trees or tree limbs. Since yesterday morning, Halton Hills Hydro crews has been working non-stop to restore power to various sections of the town. No area has been spared ... Georgetown, Acton, Limehouse, Ballinafad, Hornby have all been affected by the loss of power at some time in the last 24 hours.

* Halton Hills-Milton detachment of Halton Regional Police tweets: "All our calls right now are for 'unsafe conditions'

* Halton Hills Hydro tweets: "Crews working to restore, but heavy ice build-up on trees and lines."

* Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: "Halton Hills Hydro is doing everything to restore power but the weather is not cooperating. Too many trees are broken."

* Councillor Jane Fogal tweets: "Power still off and no wonder. Dawn shows devastation of trees. And the eerie sound of huge icy limbs crashing continues every few minutes."

* Councillor Moya Johnson tweets: "No power and lots of trees/branches down in central Georgetown. Stay home and don't travel unless you have to."

* 10 a.m. Environment Canada continues Freezing Rain Warning continuing until at least the afternoon. Additional freezing rainfall amounts in the order of 10 to 15 mm are possible today. Wind increasing this morning will gust 30 to 50 kilometres per hour may also cause damage to structures and trees due to the weight of ice accumulation.

* 11 a.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: Town of Halton Hills has closed all of its facilities today including arenas and pools.

* 11 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore releases statement: The current ice storm has hit our municipality very significantly. Halton Hills Hydro considers this a Major Emergency as we have sustained outages in many parts of our community. Our crews are working around the clock to clear trees off our lines and restore power. The ice on the branches of trees is causing trees to tear down our distribution lines. Hydro's phone lines are overloaded with the high volume and it may take a while to get through. The after hours number is 1-855-226-4173 if an outage or downed lines to report.

* 12 p.m. Mayor Bonnette releases message to the media: "I want to assure you that Halton Hills Hydro are doing their best to restore power, the main issue is the falling trees throughout our Town as well as the below zero temperatures

Almost all stores are closed. Town facilities are all closed, traffic lights are out in many locations. I encourage residents to stay home unless it is an absolute emergency. Even walking is a hazard with the tree branches falling. If your power is out, your neighbour's are also out. Please check on them if they are a senior or have accessibility issues. In the meantime please be patient, this storm has come as advertised and then some."

* 1:17 p.m. Freezing Rain Warning for Halton Hills-Milton has ended. However light freezing drizzle continues, ending later this afternoon. Winds are coming from the northeast at 20 km/h, gusting to 40 km/h. Temperatures will drop tonight to -5 C.

* 4 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro announcement: Customers should plan for a lengthy outage. "Our main focus is restoring power to our main electricity feeders, once this has been completed we will start restoration to individual customers," said Skidmore. "I want to thank all customers for their patience and understanding during these difficult circumstances. Our priority is to return service as quickly as possible, while ensuring the safety of our crews. Thank you for your continued support."

* Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: Halton Hills firefighters are working with the Town's public works employees using chain saws. "Everyone is pulling together as best we can," the mayor said, adding that it's very frustrating for Halton

Hills Hydro crews. "They get one area cleared than another branch or tree crashes down." ... "branches are falling like toothpicks."

* Sunday afternoon: members of St. Alban's Church in Acton brought food for the hydro crews and to the various homes without power in the community.

* 5 p.m. Councillor Moya Johnson tweets: her power had been off for more than 12 hours and heated coffee and tea on her barbecue outside. "This tree about to fall on our house. Trees falling every minute. Yikes"

* 5 p.m. the 15F3 main feeder was energized. From King St to Elena Crt and from Rosetta to Guelph. Streets that were not energized are Arletta and Murdoch that had extensive damage. Crew is heading back to work on these streets. (Restoring power to ~580 customers)

* 5 p.m. another main feeder energized. The entire feeder is on with the exception of 1 transformer on the Fifth Line. This covers Fifth line to Sixth Line and 27 Sideroad to 32 Sideroad. (Restoring power to ~400 customers)

* 8 p.m. Town opens two warming centres for residents who are still without power.

The Acton Fire Hall, 21 Churchill Rd, and the Halton Regional Police Services building, 217 Guelph Street in Georgetown, will remain so as long as the need exists.

"The health and safety of our residents is of paramount importance. Anyone who is still without power and therefore has no heat is welcome to go to one of these warming centres," said Mayor Rick Bonnette.

* Halton Hills Hydro reports that outages will likely persist for an extended period and anyone without power at this moment should not expect hydro to return this evening. Residents should be prepared to make arrangements for outages that could last for days.

* The IFP reports: Mayor Bonnette cautions all residents to stay clear of downed wires and to not walk underneath trees which are still bearing the weight of the ice from the storm. Due to the overwhelming amount of ice and damage, public works crews have not had an opportunity to salt local roads or sidewalks, residents are asked to take extra care in those areas. All Town equipment has been dispatched and crews are being assisted where appropriate by Halton Hills firefighters.

The Town is also working closely with Regional staff to ensure the safety of people living in seniors' residences and other similar facilities and are relocating people as needed.

"We appreciate the patience everyone has demonstrated during this very stressful time. Town staff is working diligently and we are striving to bring things back to normal as soon as we can," added Mayor Bonnette.

* 8 p.m. The IFP reports: Thousands of Halton Hills Hydro customers remain without power this evening. "We are continuing to deal with extensive power outages throughout our service territory," said Skidmore, in a message posted through social media tonight (Sunday). "Our crews are working diligently to clear trees and branches off our lines. However, as the freezing temperatures continue and winds have increased new problems are being reported as more ice covered trees and branches are falling. This is complicating our efforts to restore power." If you do not have power now, please prepare for a night without electricity, Skidmore said.

* 9 p.m. Region opens Emergency Operations Centre to provide support to the community.

* Environment Canada releases Special Weather Statement for Halton Hills-Milton.

Freezing drizzle is expected this evening but that will end. The ice storm left anywhere from 10 to 30 millimetres of ice on surfaces and trees. Moderate westerly to northwesterly winds of 20 to 40 kilometres will develop this evening and continue through Monday. There may be continued impacts from the ice storm from these winds due to tree branches falling.

Monday, December 23

* 6 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Power restored in Main feeder serving Hornby and southeast Georgetown.

* Karen Adcock on Facebook – Power finally back on at 6 a.m. this morning. Don't know if the store has power. Even the cats found it cold in here last night. Thank God for Tim Hortons.

Josie Lauricella Widdifield: How long was your power out? Ours was about 7 hours—but through the day not night.

Karen Adcock: Ours went out 10:30 p.m. on Saturday

* 6:29 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Power outages continue to happen Halton Hills Hydro Rural Ashgrove and Stewarttown area (23F2) has been affected by a power interruption. Crews have been notified and dispatched

North West rural Acton area (5F1) has been affected by a power interruption. Crews have been notified and dispatched.

8 a.m. Halton Police tweets: We only had one 87 year old visitor to the police warming centre. She was well cared for and transported home. Please lend a hand to seniors

Just remember the hydro workers don't have a secret store of electricity for their own families. They want it back as fast as you do

* 9 a.m. The IFP reports: Thousands of Halton Hills Hydro customers are still without power today, however the utility made moderate progress overnight.

Art Skidmore, President & CEO, Halton Hills Hydro said in a statement on their Facebook page additional resources have been brought in from outside the community to assist with the restoration, notably tree cutting and electrical contractors. This has tripled the complement of crews working on the restoration.

Halton Hills Hydro is also extending the hours of its Customer Care Centre and can be reached at 519-853-3701.

* 10 a.m. Cynthia Gamble tweets: Traffic lights out all along Guelph St. creating major traffic jams. Be patient and treat as four-way stop.

* 10:20 a.m. Cynthia Gamble tweets: Georgetown Market Place is open serving hot coffee and hot foods to lots of cold folks

* 11 a.m. Halton Police tweets: Officers out at traffic duty Mountainview/Guelph lights out and volume of traffic is high Lots of places closed call before leaving home

* 2 p.m. Region offers enhanced bulk brush collection after ice storm to assist residents with clean up from this weekend's ice storm until Jan. 31. For details call 311 or www.halton.ca

* Comment posted on The IFP site: "Is this someone's idea of a joke? Nothing bigger than 3" and one bundle limit? I only lost one large tree and this won't even begin to help me!"

* 2 p.m. Gellert Community Centre now evacuation site for residents without power

Gellert Community Centre is now an evacuation site for area residents who are still without power. The Centre, 10241 Eighth Line, has cots set up, food, showers, etc. and will remain open as long as the need exists. Warming sites remain open and are located at the Acton Fire Hall, 21 Churchill Rd. South, and the Halton Regional Police Services building, 217 Guelph Street in Georgetown.

* Main roads are in good shape, and in additional staff brought in to assist in the clean-up and are making progress with local roads. Icy conditions, downed power lines and tree limbs still pose a risk to safety.

* 11 a.m. The IFP reports: as of Monday morning, 75 per cent of Georgetown customers didn't have hydro, but the good news was that most of Acton, which hadn't had power since Saturday night, had been reconnected, except for a couple of small areas.

"Halton Hills got the worst of the storm," Skidmore said. "We got nailed."

The ice on the trees snapped branches off all across the town, many of them landing on or pulling down hydro wires as they fell. Skidmore said at least six hydro poles had been broken, but crews hadn't been able to get to those yet. "The trees are our culprit," said Skidmore. "The ice was unbelievable."

* Hydro crews have been working 16-hour rotating shifts and four private tree contractors have been brought in to help remove downed branches and trees.

HHH sought help from other hydro companies, but no one is available as they're all out dealing with hydro outages in their own communities.

* Halton Police tweets that over the weekend only one person, an 87-year-old, visited the warming centre at the Georgetown Police Station.

* Michelle Lemme of Colonial Tree Service: The ice storm has meant for "pretty much mayhem. Lemme said the crews had been working with hydro companies to remove branches from lines, and also for individual residents with downed trees.

"We're trying to deal with prioritized emergencies," said Lemme.

* 3 p.m. Extreme Cold Alert issued by the Halton Region Health Department starting Tuesday night. This alert is issued when temperatures are expected to fall below -15C (without wind-chill), or when weather conditions are severe enough to warrant alerting the community to the risks involved with prolonged exposure.

* 4:34 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Crews from Halton Hills Hydro have continued to work on restoring power to Halton Hills. While we have successfully restored several of our substations, a great deal of work remains. Unfortunately, based on our most current assessment of the damage and progress to date, some customers may remain without power for at least another 72 hours. ...

* 11:36 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro: Thank you for all the kind words, continued patience and support. We are signing off for the night. Crews are still hard at work throughout the night restoring power.

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24

* 8 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: We understand that many customers want more specific restoration times, unfortunately that information is constantly evolving. Restoration times vary significantly from one area to another depending on the amount of damage. At the present time, we have multiple crews throughout our territory including: Georgetown, Ballinafad, Ashgrove, Silvercreek, and Glen Williams. We would like to thank the additional crews from Davey Tree, Quality Tree, Asplundh, Westario Utilities, and Welland Hydro who have arrived to assist and together with Halton Hills Hydro they will be working through the holidays to restore power. Everyone in Halton Hills Hydro is a priority and our staff will be here to help. Our phone lines will be open on Christmas Day at 8:30 a.m.

8 a.m. Halton Police tweets: Wires down Dayfoot/Mill St G'town. Reroute. Remember assume all wires are live DO NOT GO WITHIN 10 metres

* 10:35 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Power has been restored to Sinclair Av. from Mountainview Rd. to Guelph St. South of Sinclair Ave., Raylawn Cres. from Duncan Dr. to Langstone Cres., Duncan Dr., Gower Rd., Moultreys Cres., Langstone Cres. Crews continue to work in this area clearing and restoring power although a vehicle accident was just reported that may affect services.

* 12:56 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Our crews are working around the clock to restore power. Should you see a crew working in the field, please do not approach them for an update. The crews are unable to provide any information and any time spent speaking to concerned customers is time they are not able to work towards restoring power. Any updates on restorations can be found on our www.haltonhillshydro.com, Facebook and Twitter sites or please call the office.

* The IFP reports: Despite the devastation to their neighbourhood, the Christmas spirit is still alive on Miller Drive in Georgetown. Neighbours and friends helped each other to cut down the remains of their trees, including the boulevard tree in front of 119 Miller Drive. Instead of leaving a "stump" behind, friends Steve, Tim, and Joe, decided to leave a little bit of humor and Christmas cheer for passersby – a tree stump dressed as an unhappy snowman.

* 2 p.m. The IFP reports: 3,500 customers still without power. That's down from all HHH customers— about 23,000— who were without power at the peak of the ice storm which struck the area this past weekend. Additional crews from Welland and the Kincardine area (Westario Power) are expected to arrive Tuesday afternoon to help.

* Most urban customers are now reconnected, but a significant number of rural customers still don't have power, said Mayor Rick Bonnette at a press conference Tuesday. The rural residents, and those who live in Georgetown West who are fed by a rural substation, are going to have wait longer to have their power restored. It could still be sometime Thursday before their hydro is back on.

* Skidmore said currently there are 13 tree trimming crews, four line crews and two emergency service crews working 16-hour rotating shifts to restore power.

A rumour that they will be taking time off for Christmas is not true, said Skidmore.
"We have a very committed line staff. I can't tell you the job that they're doing."

* Skidmore said currently there are pockets in Georgetown still without power.

"Street by street is really how we're going. Every street is different," said Skidmore.

* "A large number are out because there is damage to their services specific to their house," said Matthews, Halton Hills Hydro Operations Manager. If one house on a street doesn't have power, but all the other homes do, that is likely the case and those residents need to contact HHH.

* Mayor Bonnette, in consultation with colleagues, has decided not to declare a state of emergency "since the staff has been able to address most of the community's needs to this point.

"Our roads are open, the hospital is open and people can get around," said Bonnette.

But Bonnette said just because a state of emergency wasn't declared it doesn't mean the Town can't get additional funding from the Province if needed.

* Bonnette said Halton Hills Fire Department has responded to approximately 80 calls over the last 72 hours, but there have been no significant emergencies. Public Works staff and firefighters have been going door-to-door to high-risk seniors' apartments to ensure their safety.

* Shelli Harrison on Facebook – Still no power there. (at parents place in Glen Williams) Christmas Eve celebration is officially at my house. Had to rearrange all my furniture to fit 21 for dinner. Ryan is bringing a generator from St. Thomas since they are sold out everywhere around here. (Parents' power is restored at 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve.)

* 8:35 p.m. Stephanie Patterson on Facebook - A LOT of huge bangs happening all over. Last night all of Elora shook with a huge bang and others in Guelph are hearing enormous bangs. So far unexplained, weird

Halton Region Police explanation: Frost quakes, a common occurrence after ice storms.

* 8:43 p.m. Tweeter – IT'S F***ING BEEN 86 F***ING HOURS WITHOUT HYDRO @RickBonnette1 F*** YOU MERRY F***ING CHRISTMAS YOU F***ING D*** HEAD

Mayor Bonnette- Nice language wishes. HHHydro have tried their best.

* 11:01 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro – Thank you to our customers for your continued patience and support. We will continue to have crews working throughout the night restoring power. We are signing off social media for the night but will be back in the morning.

* Sandy Woodworth on Facebook - We came home from a candlelight church service to a lit and warming up house on Wildwood. Thank-you HHH for working so hard to restore as much power as you can. Will crews be out today and any word when people on the Ninth Line north of Preston's will be restored?

Christmas Day, Dec 25

* 7 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Halton Hills Hydro crews continue to work on a rotating shift basis and will continue to do so until all customers have power. We are seeing moderate progress with hundreds of additional customers reconnected yesterday. We still have an approximately 2,500 customers without power. In addition, there are many individual outages are due to meter base damage. ...

* 7:46 a.m. Duane Coleman on Facebook – Did you forget Limehouse?!

Halton Hills Hydro: There has been extensive damage in that area but we will keep working until ALL are restored.

* 2 p.m. The IFP reports: Ice storm has dealt another blow, with the organizers of Light Up The Hills decided to shut down the annual Christmas light display in Dominion Gardens this year. The display was scheduled to light up the park until Jan. 3

"It is with sadness and disappointment that Light Up The Hills has decided to shut down our 'Dominion Gardens Display' for 2013. We are attempting to keep our Tree of Hope lit Christmas Eve and Christmas Day," said Gerry Kentner, chair of Light Up The Hills "Now this 'Storm of 2013' has caused extensive damage to our wiring runs. Trees have fallen and broken extension cords and light strings are broken creating a potential hazard to park users."

* Halton Hills Hydro CEO Art Skidmore in his daily briefing said, "Halton Hills Hydro crews continue to work on a rotating shift basis and will continue to do so until all customers have power. We are seeing moderate progress with hundreds of additional customers reconnected yesterday – approximately 2,500 customers without power. In addition, there are many individual outages are due to meter base damage. Crews are currently dispatched throughout territory, including Silvercreek, Ashgrove, Balinafad, Norval, Glen Williams, Georgetown and Acton. Unfortunately, the weather not helping as ice is not melting off tree limbs and power lines. Crews from Westario Power, Welland Hydro, London Hydro and Westmore Poleline and Electric Inc. will be working with Halton Hills until power is restored. The two additional crews from London Hydro arrived on Christmas morning.

* Kelly Martin posts on Facebook: "They (hydro crews) were in Limehouse yesterday. I went for a drive and there were lines down on Sixth Line North of Hwy 7...but not many; unfortunately Sixth line just south of 7 had quite a few

lines down and Sixth Line south of 17 sideroad was really bad. I don't know what Fifth line was like. If it was anywhere close to the damage on Sixth I think it will be a while yet "

* Steve Turner tweets: "HHHydro thanks for all the hard work, even though we still are with no power. We are at home with our loved ones as the crews are not."

* Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: a few people also dropped into the Acton Fire Hall warming centre to enjoy some hot chocolate. For those who are alone or without power there will be a free Christmas turkey lunch at the Acton Town Hall.

* 1:14 p.m. Jenn Budgen on Facebook: Glen Crescent Dr. in Glen Williams. – top half of street has power, but many houses at bottom still do not. Any updates would be appreciated. Also for Tweedle St. please

Halton Hills Hydro We will have a crew in that area tonight once they come off their mandatory 8 hour sleep period.

* 6:30 p.m. Nicole McClelland on Facebook: We live on Eighth line south of 32 Sideroad. Most properties have power back but ours does not. Is this an issue from the power line from the house to the street? If so is this an issue hydro resolves?

Halton Hills Hydro: If there is damage along the line running from your house to the street and/or including the stack and meter base it would be the responsibility of the customer.

* Mary-Ann Roach on Facebook: You guys are amazing! Thanks so much for continuing to work through Christmas day to help others have a Christmas!

* 6:45 p.m. Halton Hills Fire Department was kept busy with two major incidents occurring simultaneously at 6:45 p.m. on Christmas Day. Occupants of a single family home on Church St. West in Acton called 911 after being alerted to a bedroom fire by a smoke alarm. The cause of the fire is related to a candle left in the bedroom with damage to the home and contents estimated at \$150,000.

In the second incident, fire crews responded to the Bennett Galleria on Halton Hills Dr. after carbon monoxide (CO)P readings were found higher than acceptable and immediately began ventilation procedures for every floor and every individual apartment. Occupants were gathered in the ground floor common area.

* 7:48 p.m. Kelly Martin on Facebook: Can you please tell me if your crews will be working on the Sixth Line North of Hwy 7 anytime soon? The subdivision south (just less than 1/2 km away) had power two days ago as did our neighbours behind us on 5th Line. We heard today that townline less than 1/2 km north of us was restored today. We feel like you are avoiding us.

Christine Hunt Coleman on Facebook: 6th line????? Between 20th and 17th side road. Any estimate of time???? 100 hours now without power! I appreciate the hard work and all but it would be nice to hear an estimated time. Maybe a light at the end of this cold, dark tunnel?

Halton Hills Hydro: We are expecting additional crews tomorrow which will help us clear the lines on 6th line.

* 8 p.m. Environment Canada issues a Special Weather Statement for Halton Hills on Christmas Day: "Very cold temperatures moderating but brisk winds later today and Boxing Day could bring down more ice-laden tree branches and power lines.

Temperatures had bottomed out and are on the rebound with skies clouding over and light snow falling. With moderating temperatures, light winds this morning will increase to southeast 20 km/h this afternoon. On Boxing Day winds of 20 to 25 km/h from southwest are forecast. This could result in more ice laden tree branches and power lines to break."

* Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Thank you to our customers for your positive comments and support which keeps our staff and crews motivated to keep going until all power has been restored. We will continue to have two crews working throughout the night restoring power. We are signing off social media for the night but will be back in the morning.

* Connie Karlsson on Facebook – Snuggled in bed, after a warm shower, in a warm house with a light on never felt so good. Thank you to all the folks that worked tirelessly through dangerous situations over a cherished holiday time! You are my heroes!!

* Mayor Bonnette tweets "No matter what, this will be one Christmas we will never forget. Hope #icestorm2013 never repeats. #HaltonHills citizens have been troopers."

Boxing Day, Dec 26

* 8 a.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: There is a buzz in HaltonHills today. The sound of chain saws cutting more broken limbs, branches. We are getting there.

* Halton Police tweets: "Until we get the "all clear" from hydro take this chance to restock emergency supplies

If you reported "popping and exploding" sounds over the last few days you weren't hearing things check out "frostquake"

Road conditions are no any better today. Keep the insanity for your shopping frenzies. Pay attention on the roads several collisions yesterday

* Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Additional crews are here!! We have 10 line crews and over 20 tree trimming crews to assist with the final push.

* Mayor Bonnette tweets: What an adrenaline rush to see those trucks convoy in.

* 9 a.m. Skidmore daily briefing: Halton Hills Hydro and contractor crews worked throughout Christmas day and evening on a rotating basis to continue the restoration effort for customers. As of today, Boxing Day, about 1,700 customers remain without power. But there are many individual outages that are due to damage on customer

premises. "Today, the hydro crew complement has been strengthened with the addition of two crews from London Hydro, four crews from Dundas Powerlines, two crews from Bluewater Power in Sarnia, two crews from Waterloo North Hydro and one crew from Oakville Hydro. They join crews from Westmore Powerlines, Westario Power, Welland Hydro, Davey Tree, Quality Tree, and Asplundh. They have all agreed to support us until everyone is reconnected. Today, Boxing Day, crews will continue to work in all affected areas in: Glen Williams/Limehouse, Norval/Ninth Line, Ashgrove, Georgetown, Acton, Silvercreek, Ballinafad

* 2 p.m. The IFP reports: "The storm came as advertised and then some," said Mayor Rick Bonnette. "While we still have a lot of work to do, there's more than just the buzz of chain saws in the air, there's also a strong sense of community and appreciation for the efforts of staff who have worked through the holiday to address the ice storm damage. I'm very impressed by the way everyone is pulling their weight."

* The two warming centres in Acton and Georgetown remain open and available for those in need. Residents are also using the evacuation centre at the Gellert Community Centre on Eighth Line (Main St.). These three buildings will remain open as long as the need persists, said the mayor.

* The Town remains in regular contact with the Province's Emergency Management Office.

* The Town's Public Works department are on the street, clearing roads of snow that fell overnight as well as tree clean-ups.

* Skidmore said with the additional crews the big push is on, and hopefully reconnection of almost all residents will be completed by Friday night or Saturday morning.

* All Town facilities- arena and recreation centres- will be open Friday and all regular recreation programs will operate as scheduled.

"We fully appreciate the hardship and stress this situation has caused. I thank everyone for their continued patience. Everyone is doing their best and things are gradually improving," said Bonnette.

* 3:30 p.m. In a Special Weather Statement issued for Halton Hills-Milton, Environment Canada warned of moderate winds through early evening for regions most affected by the ice storm. These wind speeds would normally have little or no impact, however with trees remaining heavily ice covered, this may be enough to bring down additional branches, resulting in further sporadic power outages, the Statement said.

* Community volunteers are helping to prepare and deliver food to the hungry Hydro crews trying to re-connect the town's power grid. Volunteers like Councillor Jon Hurst (second from left) brings food into the Halton Hills Hydro office for the many employees working there, before heading out to deliver food to Hydro crews where they are working. The Hydro crews only take a break long enough to eat in their trucks and then continue their work. Tonight Councillors Jane Fogal, Ann Lawlor and Moya Johnson made and brought chili to the workers.

* Councillor Moya Johnson tweets: re Thank you to the volunteers. and Dave and Gerry Kentner who also brought Chili. Gerry's was the best!

Jane Fogal tweets: Happy to do something useful. +FUN it was a great crew.

* Councillor Moya Johnson tweets: Thank you #Sobeys #Acton for donating supplies to our hydro crews. #HaltonHills" GR8t community support from local business

* 8 p.m. Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: Hwy 25 just south of Acton got power. A happy resident just emailed me. Also Ottawa and Welland (hydro crews) working 25 and 15 Sideroads.

* Vicky Inglis on Facebook: My mother in law on Normandy still doesn't have power 86 years old!

(Power was restored on Normandy on Dec. 26 just after midnight)

* Karen McBride Thank you thank you thank you. I happened to wake up (live on Carole) and saw your truck driving away when the power was restored. You came, you fixed and conquered and then were driving off to the next ones who need your help. You were our heroes this week!

* Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Additional crews are here!! We have 10 line crews and over 20 tree trimming crews to assist with the final push.

* Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: We have a number of tree trimming crews working in Limehouse today. We can't energize a feeder until all the trees from it are clear and it is slow going. Given the amount of trees down in that area I can't give anything specific other than to assure you that we do have crews working there now.

* Sharon Ayers Still no power on 25 between 22 and up to 25 side road. We where told that workers would be doing our area and we are still with out power. Would like to know what is going on here please??????????

Halton Hills Hydro we've had tree trimming crews working today on 25 but our line crews can't energize until the tree trimming work is done. It's very slow going unfortunately.

* Lisa Shoebridge on Facebook: Any crews working in Limehouse?

Halton Hills Hydro: Yes we have had a number of tree trimming crews working in Limehouse today. I don't have an ETA for restoration though.

* Ryan Bensen on Facebook: Any update for 10th sideroad/Hwy 25 area?

Halton Hills Hydro: We've had tree trimming crews working there today but I don't have a status update.

* Brenda Speers on Facebook: Also Ninth Line north of Glen Williams. Haven't seen a truck of any kind in our area.

* Nadia Figliola on Facebook: Inching closer to third line...hopefully these are the last two buckets of snow we have to melt to flush the toilets!!

* Eowyn Anduin on Facebook: My house is up to 10C. It was at 2C this afternoon. It will be toasty by the morning. Thank you

* Tina Norman on Facebook: Thanks for all of your hard work & time away from your families. 100 hours without power! Thank you for your efforts.

* Jeffrey Rottluff on Facebook: After almost five days with out power it finally came back on at 7:15 p.m. here on Chapel Street. Please forward a thank to your hard working crew!

* Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Thanks to everyone for posting and sharing on this site. The past week has been tremendously frustrating. The comments on this site let us know we weren't alone and helped us survive this ordeal. Going without power for 5-6 days, at Christmas, in the bitter cold, was gruelling. Please post when you get power – so great to hear the good news!!

* 11 p.m. RickBonnette tweets: HaltonHills Hydro reports around 800 customers without power. 2 days ago was 3500. Big gains. Still more to go. Trying our best.

* 11 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro tweets: Thank you again to our customers for your continued support and encouraging comments. We have crews continuing to work through the night. We are signing off of social media for the night, we will be back in the morning.

Friday, Dec 27

* 8 a.m. Wendy Bruchal tweets: I love Halton Hills. During the ice storm neighbours helping each other. random acts of kindness the true spirit of the holidays

* 8 am. Mayor Bonnette tweets: I am hearing now hwy 25 south from Acton to Milton is energized.

* 8:30 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro tweets: At 1 a.m. power was restored to 5 Sideroad between Eighth line and Ninth line.

* Councillor Jane Fogal tweets: Thanks to guys working through the night.

* 12 p.m. Christian Febel tweets: don't walk under the wires in Georgetown large chunks of ice falling

* 12 p.m. Brenda Speers on Facebook: Looking forward to seeking some trucks on Ninth north of Bishop Court.

* 1:30 p.m. Halton Police tweets: Snowmobilers beware of fallen branches/ trees, on trails or hidden under snow. Hikers beware of ice buildup on trees and thick ice underfoot

* 1:30 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro tweets: FYI: We have had a couple of feeders trip affecting nearly 4000 customers. The feeders have been restored and holding. Crews are responding and investigating the root causes.

* 2 p.m. MPP Ted Arnott tweets: Len McMillan, VP Field Ops, Hydro One told me just now that they hope to send 5 bucket trucks with "forestry" staff to Halton Hills today.

* In his daily briefing Halton Hills Hydro President and CEO Art Skidmore says hydro crews are making steady progress in their restoration efforts. Another 800 customers were reconnected on Thursday, leaving another 900 without power for a seventh day, he said. Skidmore said the current crews have now been joined by additional resources from Brantford Power, Guelph Hydro and Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro.

* The restoration effort continues in all affected areas, including Glen Williams, Limehouse, Norval/Ninth Line, Ashgrove, Silvercreek, Ballinafad, Georgetown, Acton. "We continue to work on reconnections," said Skidmore. "Many customers who are still without power suffered damage to the equipment that connects their home to the power lines. These repairs must be completed by a licensed electrician. Customers who have had damage to their service stack and meter base can call our Customer Care Centre at 519-853-3701 for a more detailed explanation or check the following websites: www.haltonhillshydro.com or www.esasafe.com

* 2 p.m. Shelli Harrison on Facebook: For those who still don't have power, Rod at Wicked Beauty Centre is offering free hair washes. They are located at 184 Guelph St. (across from the Superstore).

* 4 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro reminds customers with a damaged privately-owned primary pole line, that a pole-line contractor will have to be hired to clear their line and make repairs before we can energize the service.

* 4:15 p.m. A confirmed feeder lockout on the Glen Williams 11F1 has resulted in a crew dispatch. Area affected includes 22 Sideroad between Sixth and Eighth Lines, Trafalgar Rd between 27 Sideroad and 22 Sideroad. Also included is Wildwood Rd. area. Estimated restoration time is 5p.m.

* 4:20 p.m. MPP Ted Arnott tweets: When the hydro emergency is finally over, a formal review should be undertaken. What went right? What would they do differently next time?

* 5:15 p.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: Best quote from a senior still without power. "This is nothing compared to child birth." That is Halton Hills tough.

* 5:20 p.m. Daniela Webb on Facebook: Thank you for re-restoring our power on 22nd.

Gabrielle St George- Hey Daniela, do you happen to know if it's on for Sixth Line south of 22nd?

Daniela Webb – Crews were working there all afternoon, but with the carnage, they will be a while. 22nd didn't look half as bad and it still took them two full days to restore ours.

* 6:30 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro Facebook: Please be advised that ESA has extended its call centre hours this weekend for ice-storm related inquires/connection authorizations as follows: Friday, December 27 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, December 28 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday, December 29 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. <http://www.esasafe.com/>

* 7 p.m. Halton Hills Hydro: As of 6:40 p.m. power was restored to 17 Sideroad from Hwy 25 to Townline Rd. and Townline Rd. from 20 Sideroad to 15 Sideroad. including Deer Run Cres.

* At 7:15 p.m. Confederation Street was restored between Bishop Cr. to Glen Crescent Dr.

Wanda Yeo Doyle on Facebook: Please say you are working your way up north on confederation! Soooooo close to me!

Brian Robinson: Glad to here it was restored, how about the rest of us less than a kilometre north of Bishop Court who are heading into our 7th night without power and water. You bring in Waterloo North Hydro to restore power to people who have already had power but leave us powerless. Thanks for nothing. Oh yeah saw 5 hydro trucks on Eighth Line north of Wildwood, guess what ,they have also had power for 2 days.Unbelievable

Wanda Yeo Doyle: Nothing exists past Bishop Courteverything seems to come up the road and stop there!

Brenda Speers: I agree Wanda. Would have been nice had the workers continued north where we have not had power. It seems the Ninth Line doesn't exist past Bishop Court.

* 8:30 p.m. Halton Hills Facebook: Thank you again to our customers for your continued support and encouraging comments. We have crews continuing to work through the night. We are signing off of social media for the night, we will be back in the morning.

Leanne Roffel-Boven I see flashing lights on sixth line. Hope that's a good sign! Waiting patiently. Thanks for the hard work. It's been a long week for all of us!

Janice Sexton Keep going Halton Hills! your doing it right!

Kelly Martin Thank you for working so hard. We are very pleased to have our power back on (sixth line north of 7).

Lisa Hayes-Parenti I saw quite a few go by on Sixth too! So exciting!

Deb MacKenzie Thankyou. I see you inching ever so closely to 5th line south of 22nd Sideroad . We're cheering you on.

* 8:40 p.m. Ted Arnott, MPP tweets: Glad to be updated again just now by Len McMillan, VP Field Ops, Hydro One. Their forestry crews will be working in Halton Hills tomorrow am

* 8:45 p.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: It is almost hand to hand combat for tree trimmers and multitude of Hydro crews to bring Hydro to rural

* 9:05 p.m. Jody Johnson tweets: Best thing I may have ever seen....a hydro truck!!!

* 9:38 p.m. Special weather statement for Halton Hills – Milton issued. The much anticipated melting from the ice storm is almost upon us. Temperatures will edge up overnight to near the freezing mark in those areas most affected by the ice storm. And it is expected to remain above freezing for roughly 36 hours or so until it cools off again Sunday night. This will be more than sufficient to melt all ice off of trees, buildings and other structures. The good news is that the milder temperatures will aid hydro workers' restoration efforts, as well as homeowners who remain without power.

* 11 p.m. Red Cross Halton tweets: We still have a shelter at the Gellert Centre, Georgetown. Food, showers, cots, friendship. If you still have no power, we're there for you.

Saturday, December 28

* 7:25 a.m. Halton Region Police (Halton Hills-Milton detachment) tweets: North Halton experiencing sporadic outages. Use cautions at intersections. The wind has picked up and branches falling

If you haven't done so already restock that emergency response kit – we are not out of the woods yet

Reminder if you locate downed wires stay at least 10 metres away. Consider all downed wires and the ground around it, live.

* 8:35 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro is advising customers that further power outages are possible as rising temperatures and strong wind gusts are expected Saturday and overnight and we will respond as quickly as possible.

* 7:40 a.m. Jody Johnson THANK YOU @HHHydro, #HaltonHills, out of town forces & @RickBonnette1... power has arrived...you guys are awesome! Thx for continued effort.

So nice to finally see the tree we decorated by flashlight on the 23rd all lit up...thanks @HHHydro, #HaltonHills and @RickBonnette1!

* 8 a.m. The IFP reports: In his daily briefing on Saturday, Dec. 28 to Halton Hills customers, President and CEO Art Skidmore said there are approximately 304 customers that still need power restored not including individual damaged services. It is our intention that all distribution lines will be restored by Sunday morning. Thank you for your continued patience.

* 9 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro on Facebook: Halton Hills Hydro is advising customers that further power outages are possible as rising temperatures and strong wind gusts are expected Saturday and overnight and we will respond as quickly as possible.

* 10 a.m. Isabel Grasby Owen on Facebook: Power's out on Elgin...again...melting ice...the branches caught are dropping quick...i heard a loud bang and darkness...hydro is a gift...hope people who haven't had it get theirs on...me and my three sweaters are friends:-)

* 11 a.m. Katie Downes on Facebook: If anyone is interested, I've assembled a group of volunteers to go door to door offering hot water, to fill tea kettles, hot coffee and hot chocolate for children. This will be our third day, Mcdonalds is supplying me with the materials to do this. If anyone wants to join us call me this morning we assemble at my house at noon today, 2 Cleaveholm Drive. If you know of a senior or family with young children that should be checked on you can text me, we have two apartments available to house people and two generators on call to power some houses. Cheers everyone

* 11 a.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: Huge THANK YOU to #Acton Bethel Church for supplying both lunch and dinner to Halton Hills Hydro crews. Meals are delivered to crews in trucks

* 12 p.m. Mayor Bonnette tweets: Acton Christian Bethel church is in need of potato peelers as they are preparing meals for Halton Hills Hydro crews. Call church for info.

* 12 p.m. Peter Henn on Facebook: I was driving home from work yesterday and was passing some crewmen working on the 5th line north of Hwy7, one of the guys was getting something out of the truck as I slowed to drive by. I opened my window and said " So, we're 6 days into this now, how many hours have you put in?", "I'm sure too tired to even do the math, " he said " What's 6 times 16?, that's how many hours I've put in". 96 HOURS!! I looked him in the eye and said " thank you".

* 1.40 p.m. Brenda Speers on Facebook: Yay. Power back on, Ninth Line from Bishop Court to Clayhill

* 1:45 p.m. Joanna Adema on Facebook: Any idea when the power will be restored on 5th line between 22nd sideroad and 17th?

Halton Hills Hydro: We have blanketed our entire rural area with crews. We are expecting power to be fed to all streets by tomorrow morning.

Daniela Webb: Driving by today, I saw construction signs and heard a lot of chainsaws in that area.

* 2:40 p.m. Mayor Bonnette: Those have power and it goes off. Not to panic. It is ice falling on the lines. Power will be easier to restore than it was on Sunday.

* 3 p.m. Lacey Cameron on Facebook: The issue (=damaged service to house) was fixed. My landlord had the trees removed. All they have to do is turn the fuse on...

Halton Hills Hydro: Today we have some crews doing nothing but restoring power to individual services. We have several hundred of these services to get to. Please call 1-855-226-4173 to have your service restored.

* 4:30 p.m. Jody Johnson tweets: Lots of activity in the kitchen at Bethel church Acton getting dinner ready for hydro crews!

* 5 p.m. Dandridge Cres resident Joanne Schmidt to Mayor, Skidmore and The IFP: Do you know how many individual customers are without power because of downed lines to their homes? Do they know that they need to have their house inspected before they will be placed on a list for service? I only found this out today and only because I phone Hydro. We advised the 3 other homes on our street that they now need to have an electrician come out and have any work inspected by ESA to get on a list to have their homes reconnected. None of them knew this. How many days or weeks would they be sitting there in the dark before this information would get to them?

* 8:27 p.m. Skidmore replies: As you know the storm took a significant toll on the electrical distribution system of Halton Hills Hydro. Our community has almost 900km of distribution lines and at the height of the storm every customer in Halton Hills was without power. As you can imagine the utility was put in Emergency mode. Our focus from the beginning of the event was to restore the distribution system as quickly and as safely as possible. It was a team effort between our crews of HHH, the Town staff and the significant additional resources that bolstered our restoration team from HHH line staff of 12 to almost 100. Our website information was updated yesterday to discuss the responsibility of the customer. Regrettably there are gaps and this was one of them. We should have provided the information on our website sooner. We have five service crews on the road connecting customers with ESA inspection forms. In our post mortem discussions of this storm and our response we will certainly address the issues you have raised.

* 5:30 p.m. Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: We are down to fine strokes to restoring power to HaltonHills. It's been an amazing day and we are getting there. Lots of one offs to be hooked

* 6:01 p.m. Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: Kudos to HHHydro President Art Skidmore + staff for a dedicated week to restore power. Art has been 7am 2 midnight all week.

* 6:13 p.m. Acton BIA tweets: Art Skidmore the President of Halton Hills Hydro has been amazing thru this crisis! Thanks Art and your dedicated staff

* 7:29 p.m. Councillor Moya Johnson tweets: ALL DONE! Everyone back up and running? Amazing feeling! It's been a long week. Well done all!

* 11:25 p.m. MPP Ted Arnott tweets: Thank you Mayor Rick Bonnette for all the updates via Twitter, and for your and Council's outstanding leadership throughout the past week.

* 11:28 p.m. MPP Ted Arnott tweets: Special thanks also to Halton Hill Hydro staff, superbly led by Art Skidmore, and all the volunteers. Everyone of you made a huge difference

* 11:47 p.m. Joanne Schmidt: Thank-you both (Skidmore and Bonnette) for your attention and detailed response to my concern. I am indeed very grateful to learn that our house will have power restored. I hope that others in our situation will learn of their responsibilities quickly so that they too can receive assistance.

* 12:03 a.m. Mayor Bonnette: Joanne it was trying times for many including you. It was a storm of many decades. You were a trooper. There are lessons learned. Very happy you are powered.

Sunday, Dec. 29

* 5:20 a.m. Environment Canada predicted mild temperatures but 40 per cent chance of flurries this evening and after midnight. Winds southwest 20 km/hr becoming northwest 30 km/hr, gusting to 50 km/hr this evening.

* 8 a.m. Halton Hills Hydro social media rep signs on for the day, informing customers of power restorations done overnight.

* 8:43 a.m. Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: Good morning Halton Hills What a difference a week makes. Last week no one had power. You were patient, supportive to each other. Good job.

*8:45 p.m. Art Skidmore Halton Hills Hydro tweets and on Facebook, website: Halton Hills Hydro outage update for December 29. Halton Hills Hydro is pleased to report that all distribution lines have been fully restored. If you are still without power please contact our office at 519-853-3701. We continue to work on reconnections. Many customers who are without power suffered damage to the equipment that connects their home to the power lines. These repairs must be completed by a licensed electrician. Customers who have had damage to their service stack and meter base can call our Customer Care Centre at 519-853-3701 for a more detailed explanation or check the following websites: www.haltonhillshydro.com or www.esasafe.com. Our Customer Care department will open today Sunday December 29 @ 8:30 am

* 8:45 a.m. Mayor Rick Bonnette tweets: Good bye #icestorm2013 may you never return. Next time I hear the word ice it better be the sound in my glass.

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Wednesday, January 01, 2014 - 9:09:20 AM

'We survived the ice storm of 2013!'

A Ted Bit

By Ted Brown

After this past week, I'm fully expecting to see some entrepreneur produce a line of T-shirts that say 'I survived the ice storm of 2013'— and make a fortune.

I do however think a line of insulated hoodies might be a bit more appropriate.

Having said that, The Sidekick and I 'did' survive the ice storm, just like thousands of others across Ontario.

We were without power for one week, plus seven hours— a time that saw us moving the tractor-powered generator from the barn (to water the sheep) then to our house to run the furnace and water pump, then to our rental house to run the furnace there as well— then back to the barn, and so on.

It was a full-time job— cold, slippery and eternally dark. When we weren't doing that, we slept in our living room, keeping a fire in the fireplace to maintain one room in the house that was above 12C. It was a tiring schedule, made doable because I had some time off work, so I could focus on keeping the cold from freezing the water pipes.

Two nights the tractor ran all night, as the temperature dropped to -17C. I couldn't shut the tractor down, because at that temperature, without a block heater, it was doubtful it would start in the morning— diesels are like that, they like to be warm.

The tractor ran all night Christmas Eve as the farmhouse was freezing. At 6 a.m., Christmas Day, I snapped awake, as a dead silence suddenly descended upon our darkness.

The tractor had run out of fuel.

For those who don't know, when a diesel engine runs out of fuel, the fuel lines must be bled, to remove all the air from them. Otherwise, it won't start.

It wasn't my idea of a typical Christmas morning, to be outside in the dark, bitter cold, with The Sidekick holding a flashlight, while I bled the lines.

Fortunately, I got it running and we huddled in our blankets and waited for the house to warm up.

It's been said 'necessity is the mother of invention,' and it occurred to me that I was ignoring an existing source of warmth to keep the tractor warm enough to start.

In the barn, the temperature was a balmy 3C. I was able to park the tractor and generator where it was kept warm enough to start— the sheep were keeping it warm.

We were to host Christmas on Boxing Day, as well as our family Brown Christmas December 28, but it wasn't feasible. Thankfully, my four daughters stepped in and moved both events to their homes, allowing me to focus on watching over the three buildings on the farm— a full-time gig.

I made a daily run to the gas station to purchase more diesel fuel in 20-litre containers. I had used up the fuel in the tank at the farm and no fuel truck would brave the icy roads to deliver diesel fuel to the farm.

It cost me about \$60-70 a day in fuel to keep things warm— well, warm enough to not freeze— a small price to pay, compared to having to repair all the water pipes. But we made it, we survived. And I'm not suggesting our situation was unique— there were others much worse-off than us.

One morning as I grabbed a fast food breakfast, a guy in line complained how Halton Hills Hydro was 'taking their sweet time getting us back up and running.' He then whined that Georgetown South had power and he didn't, suggesting they were getting preferential treatment.

I couldn't hold my silence— I explained to him Georgetown South wasn't affected because that area has underground service, so ice storms have a minimal effect.

"Well (Halton Hills) Hydro should just put it all underground— they charge us enough!" he grumbled. "And those crews sure take their sweet time getting those (power) lines back up and running."

At that point I knew I was talking to a moron. In my world, no one is going to get away with bad mouthing our hydro crews. The balance of my conversation with this guy is unprintable— you get my drift.

It's been said if something doesn't kill you, it will make you stronger, and after this Christmas of 2013, I believe we are all a lot stronger for it.

Our Christmas was simplified dramatically, but in doing so, it became that much more precious.

And I cannot extend enough thanks to all the crews who worked through their Christmases— both our local guys and those who responded from across the province, pulling in 16-hour shifts to get our power back. They were our saviors.

Yup, I survived the ice storm of 2013.

And I know that I'm stronger 'cuz of it.

—Ted Brown can be reached at

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