MEDIA ADVISORY

Minnesota Power crews working to restore power after worst storm of season

Minnesota Power line crews have been very busy in the utility’s western service territory after major storms hit the towns of Brainerd, Baxter, Pillager, Nisswa, Little Falls and surrounding areas last night. At around 3 a.m., there were about 8,000 Minnesota Power customers without power, with the Nisswa/Gull Lake areas being hardest hit.

As of now, they have about 5,200 customers without power and are working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. The biggest obstacle is removing all of the large trees that have fallen and broken an estimated 100 power poles which all need to be removed and replaced. The number of broken power poles could grow as they continue to assess the damage in the region.

Minnesota Power line crews are supplemented by contractors helping remove downed trees and are focusing on the Nisswa and Gull Lake areas. The current estimate for power being restored in these areas is noon on Thursday, July 16. Minnesota Power has dispatched all available line workers from the northern and central area crews to the Brainerd area and has called in an additional 40 line workers out of the Twin Cities to aid in the tree clearing and power restoration efforts.

Power restoration in this situation is a phased approach. Public safety and critical infrastructure is their first priority. They begin with the larger transmission lines, move to the primary distribution lines, then move into neighborhoods to repair individual services.

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

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

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

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