



MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 8, 2017
TO: Public Utilities Board
FROM: Brent A. Heath, P.E.
SUBJECT: Puerto Rico Response

Update regarding an October 23rd Public Utilities Board (PUB) Meeting inquiry from a Public Utilities Board (PUB) Member about possible DME assistance with Mutual Electrical Power Restoration Assistance for the power grid on the island of Puerto Rico.

Subsequent to the PUB inquiry, DME reached out to Wendell Bell with Texas Public Power Association (TPPA) and Michael Hyland with American Public Power Association (APPA) to provide their knowledge and insight related to Puerto Rico.

Sue Kelly, President of APPA, sent out the following email immediately following the September 20th Hurricane Maria landfall on Puerto Rico:

Puerto Rico took the full brunt of Hurricane Maria earlier this week. Power is currently out to 100% of the island, and communications are very bad as cell towers are out of service as well. In addition, the island of St. Croix in the (United States Virgin Islands) USVI was also badly hit. Ironically, when Hurricane Irma went through a few weeks ago, it hit the islands of St. John and St. Thomas very hard, knocking out electric service to most of St. Thomas and virtually all of St. John, but largely spared St. Croix. Between the two hurricanes, however, the electric infrastructure of all three of the US Virgin Islands is substantially compromised.

We here at the (APPA) Association are once again working on mutual aid for our members, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) and USVI Water and Power Authority (WAPA). We know that many of you are deeply concerned about PREPA and USVI-WAPA and its customers, as we are. Recovery is not going to be easy or quick.

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Integrity • Fiscal Responsibility • Transparency • Outstanding Customer Service

Our mutual aid team, headed up by Mike Hyland, is fielding many, many calls and inquiries, as well as dealing with our government and industry partners. We will keep you apprised periodically as events transpire, but if you have questions, contact me at suekelly@publicpower.org or 202-467-2901

In a September 27th email Mike Hyland with APPA noted that Brock Long, administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, traveled to Puerto Rico earlier in the week where he “made it quite clear that they are giving the mission to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take over and begin and oversee the restoration process of Puerto Rico.”

Mike Hyland noted that as of the morning of Sept. 27, “it went from being something possibly being led by the Department of Energy to now something being led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers”.

As of October 19th the Department of Energy reported that approximately 19.1% of the normal peak load has been restored on the island of Puerto Rico. As of October 17, an estimated 1.27 million customers remain without power. Other Oct 17th statistics are that 25.4% of the transmission lines have been energized to reach approximately 36.5% of the 339 total substations located on the island of Puerto Rico.

Florida-based public power utility Jacksonville Electric Authority has sent linemen and assets to assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Puerto Rico in restoration efforts. Currently Florida-based Kissimmee Utility Authority and JEA are in Puerto Rico under contract with Whitefish Energy Holdings working on the transmission system restoration.

Mike Hyland indicated on October 26th that Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) signed an agreement with Whitefish Energy Holdings for all restoration of transmission and distribution. Whitefish is subcontracting everything since Whitefish has two employees. The PUB may have seen on the weekend news that PREPA has just cancelled the awarded contract with Whitefish. The subcontractors for Whitefish did not go through the APPA network for Mutual Aid Assistance.

Mike Hyland indicated last week that there is still a need for a team of about 20 line workers in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) particularly on the island of St. John's. Due to the extensive damage on several of the USVI islands, some crews are having to stay on Cruise Ships and be shuttled to and from the daily island worksites to utilize their trucks and equipment that were literally shipped over to the islands via cargo vessels. The commitment time for lineman crews is typically at least a 30 day long period and could be as long as 6 months in order to try and minimize some of the vehicular and equipment mobilization and logistical impacts.

As of the end of October, neither APPA, nor DME had been contacted about possibly considering providing mutual aid power restoration to Puerto Rico. However Friday November 3rd, APPA just received an official request that pending an upcoming meeting in San Juan with PREPA/DOE/FEMA/USACE/Flour/Power Secure/JEA, all in one room that they may be reaching out to APPA to see who might be able to provide mutual aid assistance. However, as of now, they are uncertain if and how any participating utilities might be financially reimbursed since it is being handled differently using a governmental contracting clearing house firm under USACE oversight.

DME is always willing to provide Mutual Electrical Power Restoration Assistance and help our neighbors and others around the country during emergencies and in times of need whenever asked or called upon. However, the extended time commitment and logistics associated with the USVI and Puerto Rico being located off the continental United States would present many challenges and potentially impact, delay, or disrupt existing electrical construction projects and maintenance activities that are being performed in Denton to serve our citizens and customers.



Lakeland Electric linemen leaving for Puerto Rico

By **Christopher Guinn**

Posted Oct 20, 2017 at 10:30 PM

Updated at 9:17 AM

LAKELAND — Lakeland linemen are headed to Puerto Rico to help rebuild the power system torn to pieces by Hurricane Maria a month ago.

Lakeland Electric is sending 16 linemen, an engineer and a supervisor and the city is sending two mechanics who volunteered for the task. The 10 or more vehicles will leave on a cargo ship from the Port of Jacksonville over the weekend.

The volunteers will arrive early next week for a minimum 30-day commitment, Lakeland Electric's John McMurray said. McMurray is the head of the division responsible for energy delivery — poles, wires and substations.

"This is a complete rebuild," McMurray said. "It's all new materials: new poles, new wires. ... They're really needing a replenishment of new materials.

"They are in short supply of poles because many of the poles snapped. We had a windstorm that took down trees here," McMurray added, referring to Hurricane Irma, "but they had a windstorm that took down trees and snapped poles and took down lines and threw them in some cases a mile into the countryside."

The fewer-than-needed number of crews currently working on the island are scrounging scrap to do what they can, The New York Times reported Friday.

"It's complete devastation of the electric grid," McMurray said.

Lakeland Electric will be taking materials to Jacksonville Electric Authority linemen who have already been at work on the island. Other publicly owned utilities are also joining.

Lakeland Electric will act as a subcontractor under Whitefish Energy Holdings, a small Montana company that was among the first outside companies to respond to Puerto Rico. The entire rebuilding project is under the authority of the Army Corp of Engineers.

Lakeland Electric and other Florida utilities are trying to step up the response, McMurray said, especially because Florida utilities have a lot of experience dealing with post-hurricane disaster areas.

"We're just going to stay humble, work hard and hope that we can help our fellow Americans out there in Puerto Rico," McMurray said.

The storm's effects will be felt for a long time, said Ana Rivera, a Puerto Rico native who is organizing aid through the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Polk County.

"That island's not going to be on its feet in a year, I see it's going to be five years minimum," Rivera said. "There are roads that have been washed away, literally."

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N.Y. Power Company Sends Crew to Aid Puerto Rico After Hurricane



Workers use backhoe loaders to remove damaged electrical installations from a street after the area was hit by Hurricane Maria in Salinas, Puerto Rico September 21, 2017. REUTERS/Carlos Garcia Rawlins Reuters



(Reuters) - The New York Power Authority (NYPA) on Friday sent 10 engineers, planners and technical supervisors to Puerto Rico to help with the assessment and reconstruction of the island's power grid, which was completely shut down by Hurricane Maria.

The NYPA workers were part of a group that traveled to Puerto Rico with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo on the first flight to depart for Puerto Rico's capital San Juan since the Category 4 hurricane hit the island on Wednesday, according to a statement from the governor's office.

"We have assembled top emergency response experts to support Puerto Rico and help repair its devastated power structure, and we are providing supplies and any additional assistance we can to support the island as they recover from this unprecedented natural disaster," Cuomo said in a statement.

In addition to the 10 NYPA specialists and translators, New York also sent drones and two drone pilots from the Department of Environmental Conservation to assist with the reconstruction of Puerto Rico's power grid.

The Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), which owns and operates the power system serving the commonwealth's 3.4 million residents, filed for bankruptcy in July, after years of underinvestment that yielded a grid it called "degraded and unsafe."

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello has said PREPA was so severely hit that it could be months before electricity is restored to all customers.

The NYPA workers are some of the first utility workers to go to Puerto Rico from the mainland after Maria.

The American Public Power Association (APPA), which is helping coordinate the utility response, has said it was also planning to bring in crews from other parts of the U.S. mainland to help with recovery efforts on both Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

There were some specialists from the Western Area Power Authority, which serves much of the U.S. West from Montana to Texas and California, already on Puerto Rico when Maria struck the island.

The Western Area workers had been on their way to the Virgin Islands to help rebuild and restore power after Hurricane Irma when they got stuck in Puerto Rico.

Irma grazed Puerto Rico on Sept. 6, knocking out power to more than 1 million of PREPA's 1.5 million customers. PREPA said it restored power to all but about 60,000 homes and businesses by Tuesday before Maria hit.

(Reporting by Scott DiSavino; Editing by Marguerita Choy)

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