

## December 2008 Ice Storm Comments Received

88 comment forms received to date (3/6/09)

*Question34. Please use this space for any additional comments you may have.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The reason I had no telephone service was because the Comcast interface only lasts for 2 hours without power. However, I did have my cell phone so I did have a phone service. And I do understand that in an emergency, I could have hooked up my wired phone to the Fair Point line connected to my house even though they are not my service provider. I must also commend a Fair Point lineman for reconnecting my Fair Point line back to my house on the 3rd day of the outage (the line was still connected to the pole and my interface - it's bracket had just pulled out of my house as it is designed to do so I still had their service available the whole time).</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question #33 makes no sense at all being given a yes or no answer!  The most disturbing thing about this event was the communication between the utilities and their customers. My power was restored to my entire neighborhood after 5 days but the lineman hooked my home incorrectly to the pole at the street. Phone calls were placed everyday trying to seek assistance and the customer service at PSNH would tell us they would be out the next day. When speaking with them they had no way of telling if our home was back to normal service. They told us we had to go home and turn on the main breakers and test the power. Every time I did this I would break light bulbs and it was a concern because I assumed it was a fire hazard. After a week of doing this a customer service person told my wife we should not be turning anything on and the next day the meter was pulled off the house. It took them 7 more days to return to my house and repair the problem. Of course we never knew it was fixed so we had to do what they told us not to do and turn on the main breaker and start testing the power ourselves. I ask that PSNH create a system so when someone does a service call at your house then you are notified that things have been done. Also.. When restoring power to an area and finding out that one home was restored incorrectly or still without power then they need to return to that one home rather than on to the rest of the state only to come back a week later. According to several local electricians they said it was a bad neutral or ground at the pole and would take minutes to repair. One of them offered to climb the pole themselves but I denied the offer do to safety reason. The extent of damage to my home could have been prevented if PSNH has been honest with me and told me there was a good chance that since the crews have moved on that my home would not have been fixed for another week. The false hope of them returning the next day caused me to wait to drain all the heating and water pipes. The high voltage destroyed my boiler and several other electronics so the generator I had</li></ul>

	<p>purchased was rendered useless. See our story at this link:  <a href="http://www.necn.com/Boston/New-England/2008/12/29/Familys-struggle-continues/1230593562.html">http://www.necn.com/Boston/New-England/2008/12/29/Familys-struggle-continues/1230593562.html</a></p> <p>I sent a request to PSNH asking that they assist me in paying for my 500 deductible on my insurance. A small price to pay for the \$6,000 the experience cost my insurance between the plumbing, hotel, and living expenses for 20 days.. Thanks and feel free to contact me.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Overall, a heroic effort by town resources &amp; PSNH. I'm very appreciative. I didn't know our HS gym was a shelter until I saw people there - should publicize better. First days of confusion were frustrating, but understood in hindsight. Having a generator made a huge difference. Most people were great and stepped up. I have no patience for those who did nothing to take care of themselves and then complained when someone else took too long to do it for them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Town agency was giving out vouchers for food, however they weren't qualifying people so some who drove expensive cars received help and some without resources(who happened to take a lot of people in their house didn't receive any vouchers). We had up to 25 people living at our house, and received no help. Some of the people who lived at our house and ate our food, received these food vouchers, so we spent a lot of money feeding these people and got no help. Some of the people who received these vouchers probably had power the whole time. I spend close to 500 dollars to help thy neighbor and got nothing in return.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>This was an ice storm, not a terrorist attack. I shudder to think how the state may respond to something less likely than an ice storm during a New England winter.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Considering the amount of damage in our area, the Town of Wilton, PSNH, and TDS did an outstanding job of cleaning up and restoring power. We didn't have power for six days, but with the amount of lines down and poles broken, this was not unreasonable. PSNH did come through in the fall and cleared tree branches from the transmission path, but they couldn't prepare for whole trees falling across the wires. They only way they could have prevented damage from this type of storm would be to clear 75 to 100 yards on either side of the wires. I am very satisfied with PSNH's preparation and response to the storm.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>We suffered catastrophic loss of electricity, cable and telephone when a branch fell and severed these lines at the pole at 10:15PM on Dec 11th. Thus, restoration of service required reconnecting these lines at the site. Electricity was restored on Dec 22 and cable on Dec 23. The telephone land line has not been reconnected but that's no problem because we have VoIP.</p> <p>We were able to stay at the house until Monday night, Dec 15, when the temperature of the house dropped to 42 degrees (we have a very well insulated home and had drinking water and could use the stove because it's fueled by</p>

	<p>propane. We used water from a local brook to flush the toilet)</p> <p>During the entire outage, we visited the shelter at Hampstead Middle School for showers and meals. The volunteers deserve our eternal gratitude for the warm and efficient services they rendered to the citizens and excellent food they served.</p> <p>All in all, it was an inconvenience but we did not suffer.</p> <p>What was most frustrating was the lack of verifiable, reliable information. While the TV would say that electric service for Hampstead was 90% restored, a quick drive through the town and conversation with the police chief would disclose that no PSNH trucks had been in the area for a couple of days and the town was mostly dark.</p> <p>It was not until neighbors started an informal telephone tree to keep tabs on the restoration efforts that we were able to get reliable information.</p> <p>Hampstead Emergency Preparedness group did a great job. There were a couple of things that could have been done better; we already pointed that out.</p> <p>We are now totally self-sufficient and fully prepared for the next emergency: we bought a generator and keep 36 hours worth of fuel on hand. Thus, we have electricity, heat, water, Internet, cable and telephone. The only unknown is how hard it will be to get additional fuel when that reserve runs out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I would have liked to see radio stations (like NHPR) have been more prepared to broadcast repeated and updated info on morning one. WMUR does this routinely. But with no power, TV is no option.</li> <li>2. Don't scapegoat the power companies. I was in Quebec after the '98 ice storm and it was so bad there and took them longer to recover than it did us this time. The devastation &amp; damage to the poles, wires and trees was unprecedented. They did a great job given the situation.</li> <li>3. People need to be prepared to take care of themselves.</li> <li>4. Our local fire dept and telephone company did a great job in opening the roads and taking care of some of our elderly people (providing generators, etc.) they were very prepared and executed well.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<p>We didn't lose power during the initial event, but we did for a few hours a week later. I was afraid we would be at the bottom of the list and buttoned down for a long outage. We communicated with PSNH via Twitter in real time and this was great. I still follow the Twitter notices to be alerted in real time of any conditions. More utilities should use this service.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<p>I think if "public officials" kept their mouths shut and out of the way and let the power companies do what they know best the whole operation would run more smoothly! Their plan to fine them is the dumbest idea they have come up with</p>

	to date. No one wants the power back on and making income anymore then the power company.
•	The Civil Air Patrol provided physical help, Geo referenced photos to FEMA and could have provided early evening photos that when laid on a geo referenced street map could have pinpointed areas that were without power.
•	<p>I know that burying lines is very costly, and is not the complete answer, and I know that it can't be started immediately, or all done at once, but we can decide where it is practical, and how much we an spend, and then proceed with so many miles of lines each year. Doing so will decrease the lines to check, fix, and replace.</p> <p>Of course tree trimming should be a major effort. It should be done on a town by town plan, not a statewide approach. We must prioritize the needs to create short and long term solutions for different parts of each town by analyzing which lines had the most outages. We need hold public meetings with residents, business owners, power company management,and the PUC using questionnaires about problems experienced, and providing info for suggestions for improvements.</p> <p>We should emphasize effective tree trimming programs. We must all work as partners, with towns, home and business owners supporting these programs, and towns must intercede when property owners don't cooperate; towns must spot check lines to identify impending problems, and require home and business owners to allow tree trimming near power lines. We need specific studies to determine which lines have the most critical problems, and also determine the actual cost of putting them underground.</p> <p>The town of Merrimack is now starting this type of program, and they are using the town's cherry picker to do so, and not just using it to change light bulbs.</p> <p>Public Service must concentrate on tree trimming and increase its budget for tree trimming even more than it has already. Local conservation commissions must be encouraged to contribute to the tree trimming efforts.</p>
•	Other than the obvious, our main complaint was lack of communication and/or info. The utilities or the local officials didn't seem to have a handle on who was doing what - where crews were - or could predict where they would be next, etc.
•	the only notice i recieved on anything was provided via the USPS. Nothing was done to keep me or any of my neighbors informed during this period from any source - Federal, State or local governments. The Town of Derry does have an AM radio station, which cannot be picked up at my residence.
•	Question 33: because we purchased a generator, we are now "more" prepared, however during the storm we could not find a generator that would operate the well water, heat, and hot water at the same time, so it would still pose a problem.

	<p>The Federal and State governments could have made a huge impact if they could have found generators for residents to borrow during the extended outage. Initially, generators were in a short supply, and many individuals could not afford to purchase one. Generators were sitting, unused, at Pease Air Force Base, which was a travesty.</p> <p>I understand why deregulation took place, but does it really make sense for so many utility companies to service such a small area (PSNH, Unitil, Granite State all within 5 miles) or a company like Unitil to manage to areas so far apart: Lunenburg/Fitchburg and Seacoast NH. I think that also contributed to the lengthy restoration time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Displeasure is only with Pennichuck as they were less than helpful during the days without water. No compensation for that week without water. PSNH was wonderful as were the tree services that were working to clear our neighborhood during cold and snow. Comcast was quick to react as well restoring wires to my house within 2 days. No power but the lines were up.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I personally felt prepared for the situation however as a small business owner my loss was intense because of the lack of preparedness of others.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>We lost electricity, heat, landline phone, internet/email (essential for business) for just shy of 5 full days Observations: (1) Verizon/Fairpoint FiOS landline phone service dies after 6-7 hours without power. Cellphones were only working communication. (2) Best timely information was thru NH Public Radio., Nashua Telegraph good but not timely and couldn't publish first 2 days. (3) PSNH maintenance of trees would have cut storm impact dramatically. (4) PSNH communications were poor to nonexistent. Realistic estimates of repair timeframes would have helped us make better decisions and avoid loss of business. (5) Eternally grateful for out-of-state help - our neighborhood's power was finally restored by Baltimore Gas &amp; Electric crews (6) **** PUC should look into another threat to grid - see <a href="http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2009/21jan_severespaceweather.htm?list16159">http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2009/21jan_severespaceweather.htm?list16159</a> -- Per this NASA story, New Hampshire is by far the most vulnerable state at 97% (NJ, SC and PA are only other states above 50%). See <a href="http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2009/images/severespaceweather/transformer_map.jpg">http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2009/images/severespaceweather/transformer_map.jpg</a> for a map of risk by state. Why is NH worst in nation for this?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I had a generator at one time, but it was stolen several years ago and I have not been able to afford a replacement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I suggest that Unitil better prepare themselves for another emergency. They were MIA for 7 days in our town of Plaistow.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>The only reason this storm did not cause a serious life and safety issue for our family is because we own a generator, connected to our propane tank and to a transfer switch. It runs our well, furnace, water heater, refrigerator and a couple electrical outlets. While we were inconvenienced, we were not in danger. We</p>

	<p>were prepared through our own initiative. If people have the resources (health and means) to provide for themselves, they should do so, and the government should tell such people that they are on their own. The help should go to people who need assistance. The government should then educate the public about what to do in emergency events and how to be prepared if they are among the people who will not get help unless they cannot help themselves. Also, the utilities should be held accountable for providing much more accurate and timely information to help people make informed decisions. Neighbors should help neighbors and rely less on the government except when major relief and assistance is needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<p>See the comments in the previous entry fields.</p> <p>I would like to note for the record ... out of the five years I've lived in NH, I have been forced to use a back-up generator for at least 3 consecutive winter days in four out of those five years. I live in a populous portion of the state and find that high (80%) of a rate to be a poor reliability for utility power through the winter.</p> <p>I would further suggest that the power companies (or perhaps government home construction/wiring standards) establish mandates for homes to be built/provided with circuit breaker / feeders which are configured for back-up power supply sources (including the feed line to an approved external pad for portable/permanent back-up units). Normal power feed (from the utility) supplies all circuits in the home/business/facility but when switching to back-up power the switch unit should isolate the power company feed and provide subsequent "emergency back-up" power to a limited subset of circuits for primary needs such as furnaces, sump pump, well pumps, refrigerators, and a small dispersed group of receptacles for microwaves/toasters/hotplates and minimal lights. The switch unit would consequently need to identify the minimum power/amperage rating of the back-up unit to handle the "authorized minimum" load of the emergency circuits. If the homeowner opts out for back-up power, that is the homeowner's choice - but at least the home is capable of safely incorporating a back-up source.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	<p>We were very fortunate at home to have only lost power for less than an hour. I work for a local area police department though and we had a very tough time getting answers for the residents. At one point we were telling residents to expect power back in roughly a week or longer after they had already been out for 4-5 days b/c we couldn't get information. It makes me worry about how we would handle any type of mass disaster in the future. I was left with the impression that the agencies were not communicating and that as a result no one really knew what was going on. Our state as a whole both public and private sectors failed the people of New Hampshire in a major way. I am also VERY ANGRY that PSNH wants to pass THEIR expenses onto the bill payers, especially at a time when everyone else is reaching into our pockets to pay THEIR bills, how are we supposed to continue to pay OUR own bills?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How about rewriting question 33. You people and the PUC are pathetic. Please provide me with the after action report on this outage from the PUC. Have they ever done a root cause analysis on outages? What was the result of the problem solving efforts from past outages. I've lost power every year for more than one day and have never heard anything on corrective actions initiated by the PUC. I do not see any evidence of any improvements done over the past 30 years to mitigate power outages. In fact, it has gotten worse over the years. Higher cost, lower performance is the norm in this mismanaged industry. The PUC is asleep at the switch - I am not aware of anything positive they have done. Maybe this presents an opportunity to get someone in there who can do the job and get rid of the deadwood. Time for serious changes in how this business is done.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has to be more communication. Even if it wasn't what I wanted to hear, I wanted to know "how much longer I would have to go without power." I called Unutil every day and heard the long recorded message, but I wasn't able to speak with any one. The level of frustration just kept increasing. It was especially frustrating to be so cut off from the world. We love the news and weather reports on TV and to be without them when we really needed them was uncomfortable. It was also terribly frustrating to not hear any news from the one source we had-the radio. I didn't even know there was an 800 number to call or that any of the agencies in question 31 were doing anything. (How would I have known?) I thought there was a special emergency radio station to turn to, but we never found it and I'm sorry to say, I still don't know if there is one. I'd be in the same situation if the power went out tonight! We're very glad we had cell phones-they were are only way to communicate with the outside world. I'm a teacher and the school realized that as a result of the ice storm we need to list our cell phone numbers at work in addition to our land-line numbers because in such an event, the cell phones are the only ones that work.  Thank you for asking.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unanswered questions are those that do not apply to me. As I mention above, my greatest frustration was the lack of a working 800# for Unutil. I understood that we needed to be patient while repairs were made across the region. But to not be able to communicate at all with Unutil was unacceptable. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input!</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of my family had to pay for a hotel which was at a time that we did not have extra money - we also had to eat out and we had to throw out all of our food from our refrigerator and freezer in addition to the veterinary bills - so if you know of a way we can be reimbursed for all of these expenses during one of the worse winters of the year that would be a great help!</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As you are aware, lack of any meaningful communications is by far the biggest complaint. No radio stations broadcasted any information about the storm or</li> </ul>

	<p>what we were to do to get help. The emergency broadcast system that runs tests was non existent. What happened? Everything we were trained to do for years never happened. Why.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>luckily I didn't need to utilize any state or town agencies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>We still do not own a generator as we have lived in NH for 22 years and this was the first time we would have needed one. The extended outage created great anxiety for my wife to the point that any forecast of an ice storm since that event have caused her great concern. I could deal with the great inconvenience of the outage, but the lack of any communication of any value was most frustrating and left me with no ability to plan for the its length.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Thank God we bought a generator in Feb. 2008!!! We were self sufficient except for finding gas for it. We bought extra when we found open gas stations. We would not have done as well as we did if we didn't have the generator. It's important to us to remain in our own home to protect it.</p> <p>Our road is the part of Landing Road on the end closest to the Hampton River. When Unitil finally was able to restore power to the part of Landing Road nearest Winnacunnet Road, they never crossed Route 101 to finish their work on our end.</p> <p>I do not lay any blame for the outage on the very fine repairmen and women who got all utilities up and running again. They were the messengers and you don't hurt the messenger. They did a wonderful job in very bad conditions. I do put responsibility on managers and supervisors who do not institute proper maintenance programs for the utilities. For cable and electricity this involves wire and pole maintenance, tree trimming and alerting residents to potential problems on their property that could have an adverse effect in foul weather resulting in loss of utilities. Prevention and maintenance are important and much easier to accomplish than repairs in adverse conditions.</p> <p>All of our Comcast components (phone, cable and internet) were down for 5 days. But...since we had the generator we were still able to watch TV because we also have DirecTV and the satellite service remained strong and functioning at peak performance the whole time we were without cable and electricity.</p> <p>The best way to prevent utility outages is to bury the utility lines. This is done very successfully all around the country. It also gives a more pleasing look of all neighborhoods.</p> <p>Some Hampton residents are all gung ho to create a town run electric company. This is a very stupid idea. First, no one in town has the skills and qualities to set this up either physically or logistically. It would be too expensive and cost more to the town than public utilities. These people can't even get through a town meeting without nit picking the wording in warrants so they could never</p>

	<p>run a utility!! Also, many people don't realize that if there is a municipal utility the town has no protection from the PUC. Please make any town considering this foolish move totally aware of all potential problems.</p> <p>Thanks! I'm glad I had a chance to write this dissertation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>In question #25, there was NO shelter open in our town (The Red Cross was irresponsible in not making the decision to open it - it was their responsibility, according to their contract with the town).  In question #31, how do you rate "effectiveness" in terms of "impact?" You need better wording.  UNITIL was grossly unprepared for this event, but has yet to admit that. Instead, they tell how hard they worked to fix things. As far as any resident can tell, however, nothing has changed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>We are prepared for the storm; Unitil is not prepared for the next storm. What was most disappointing to us is that the root cause of our power outage was trees and tree limbs on our power lines. We had requested the trees to be trimmed for six months PRIOR to the storm, with an alarming lack of response from Unitil. Two homes on High St. were ones of the last to have power restored, and yet, our neighborhood had power restored on the second day. We, however, had to wait much longer first, because our line was out due to trees not being trimmed, and secondly, because the work crews did not realize that if they had taken an extra fifteen minutes while in the area, they could have cleared the branches and reset the fuse. The line was not disconnected from the pole. The issue was much simpler than that.</p> <p>Work crews are not well-informed, Unitil is unresponsive to intelligent requests made in the summer and fall months, and although some tree trimming has since been done, it is neither complete nor extensive enough.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>MY TYPICAL ELECTRICAL BILL FOR A VERY LONG TIME IS AROUND \$135. SINCE THE ICE STORM IT HAS JUMPED TO \$208. UNITIL HAS MADE EVERY EXCUSE POSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY THIS INCREASE. RECOMMEND THE PUC SOLICIT ANOTHER SURVEY OR INVESTIGATE THESE LARGE INCREASES IN ELECTRICAL BILLS. UNITIL COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE IS USELESS !</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I sincerely hope that we have all learned something from this experience. What I learned primarily is that when the chips are down relying on emergency services from government or any corporate entity is useless and that we must all be prepared to fend for ourselves and our neighbors as individuals.</p> <p>Things do, eventually, get straightened out but it takes time and emergency response is SLOW!!!! I know that UNITIL threw everything it had at the problem and did absolutely the best job it could do. I understand that the magnitude of the disaster was daunting and that our expectation of having things fixed immediately was totally unreasonable. As I said, we all learned something.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>	<p>I'm not sure what else could have been done. I followed the PSNH progress on their twitter web site from work. While I would have liked more frequent updates, and more specific details (this street in this town...) that may not have been practical. I think they did a fantastic job when you consider how many people lost power in the ice storm.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>	<p>My little dog suffered seizures from the extreme, prolonged cold in my home and we were featured on the front of the Union Leader. It was only by putting ourselves out there in that way that we were able to get offers of a generator to borrow...the day my electricity came back. The cold and the seizures were too much for my little dog and she has since died. I am angry and heartbroken at how this incident contributed to her death.</p> <p>The response from PSNH with regard to this power outage was horrible. Calls went unanswered. Then when answered, no information was EVER given about progress being made in either evaluating the situation or in restoring electricity. Staff at PSNH was unfriendly at best and angry at worst. With so little ice in my town of Bedford and so few trees down, there was no excuse for not having power for seven days and six nights.</p> <p>There should have been specific emergency information on the radio through the emergency broadcast system. Isn't that why the system is set up in the first place? Places to get warm. Places to get water. Places to shower. Places for a warm meal. Places to purchase/borrow generators. Working phone numbers to call. Updates on progress being made. The general information on how many people had been called in to work on the lines was not useful information to securing heat and water.</p> <p>Assistance could have best been provided at the local level. Four days into the cold I had the local fire department check on me, but they were unable to do anything to provide or coordinate generator use to provide me with heat. By the time I was aware (via neighbors) that there was shelter at the local high school, it was closed. Maybe we can survive 2 - 3 days in the cold, but by day 4 we were freezing...at the very time when shelters were most needed, they were shut down.</p> <p>There should have been local postings via signs at major intersections and postings in local grocery stores, coffee shops, banks, post offices. These posting should have provided useful information on where to get warm shelter with a pet and where to purchase/borrow a generator, electricians providing service. There should have been a place for neighbors to offer assistance to those who needed it. Please remember, if we had no electricity we had no TV, internet service, no way to recharge the cell phone (and some had no phone at all).</p> <p>The PSNH customer service response was a demonstration of how to anger a very cold and desperate public. It was actually downright mean and cruel.</p>

	<p>PSNH should have been able to tell its customers something. And if you know anything about customer service, just being given some specific information on progress that is being made goes a long way to calm customers and assist them in providing for themselves. Up until just a few hours before my electricity was restored, PSNH told me that they had no idea the damage in my area, they had no information when evaluation of the damage would be conducted</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="284 430 308 462">•</li> </ul>	<p>I am still outraged by Unitil's performance during this event. It was -- I believe - - 7 days before anyone even approached our neighborhood to begin to make repairs -- which began earnest on day 8 thanks to pressure from local officials. The effort was disorganized -- the workers who arrived on day 7 had no idea of the extent of damage in our area -- one worker on the pole crew told me they were relying on notes taken by tree crews to advise them of where work needed to be done. He commented that their work was slowed by needing to determine which pole belonged to which utility provider. It seems to me, in this age of computer technology, that much of this process could be sped up by installing bar coding on poles and creating a digital mapping of poles where workers could post comments about areas that needed work and the type of work required. The effort seemed disorganized and poorly managed. It is also infuriating that Unitil posted an ad in the local papers that was more or less a thank you to their workers (who no doubt deserved it), a half-hearted apology to their customers, without claiming any responsibility for their own inefficiency or offering any kind of rebates or other compensation for hardship. For the very first time in my life, I doubted my ability to keep my children and pets alive. I hope I'm never in that situation again.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="284 1108 308 1140">•</li> </ul>	<p>This summer PSNH paid a subcontractor to trim the trees in Newington to clear the power lines. I walked with the contractor along 1/2 mile of road frontage on our property pointing out trees that could be cut or trimmed. The problem was that the contract was only to trim branches within 3 feet or so of the power lines. Branches or larger limbs that were overhanging the lines they were not touched because the contractor would not be paid to do the work. Dead trees were not touched. It made no sense at all. It is like getting a hair trim instead of a hair cut. I think a lot of the problem arose from PSNH not keeping up with the required maintenance of the greenery around the lines. This property owner was certainly willing and wanted more trees/limbs to be cut. The damage from the ice storm could not have been a surprise to PSNH given their instructions to their subcontractors about what to cut and not to cut.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="284 1570 308 1602">•</li> </ul>	<p>No, I don't feel any more prepared for the next ice storm. I remain at the mercy of Unitil!</p> <p>Unitil's emergency management system &amp; their senior management's communication plan and capabilities platform to disseminate real time info is a disgrace. If I treated my customers the way Unitil treated theirs, then I would definitely be out of business. My customers have the choice of voting their pocketbooks in a free market. Utility customers do not have that choice. If we</p>

	<p>did, Unitil would be out of business because we 'd have switched to another provider such as PSNH... who had a much higher volume of home outages to fix, and yet communicated better and restored much faster than the keystone cops at Unitil.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>The individual work crews performed magnificently and should be recognized, but those who made decisions as to where they went made critical mistakes and caused a lot of needless suffering.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Please have the Utilities cut down any Tree that has may hit the lines and take out the power! and start with trees that have been a problem in the past the Crews should know the "bad" Trees the same Pine Tree on my street takes out the power every time we have an outage because of poor trimming.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>2 Comments. 1. There should have been more help from other states. The Governor's office quoted what states had sent volunteers; I think after 2-3 days even more assistance should have been brought in. 2. I have heard that the volunteers that were here from out of state were not used but held at sub-stations while Unitil workers worked overtime. I wish someone would address that rumor. I heard that from the step-father of a PSNH lineman.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I live in a condominium complex and one of our transformers exploded during the storm. This caused half of each apartment's power to be gone for a few days, heating systems to stop working and the electric company did not realize this until they received a few calls from residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>For long periods of time ( at least 2 days), no Unitil trucks were seen in Hampton. Where were they? Restoration didn't seem to have any rhyme or reason. One street would have electricity and next was out for seven days. Additionally, power in some areas could have been restored with the flip of a switch on the pole which is what Unitil finally did.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Unitil consistently gave incorrect information during the outage. At one time, I heard from a town official that Unitil had to wait for a transformer to arrive that had been ordered. Earlier that same week in our local newspaper, Unitil's communication person denied that they were waiting for any replacement parts. I was very disappointed with local radio station, I believe WZID. They were most focused on PSNH customer updates, Unitil was hardly ever mentioned. Maybe this was due to PSNH providing them with more updates than Unitil. This was a very difficult period, falling right at Christmas time, losing a refrigerator full of food, having to take showers at work and relatives' homes but we made it through. No pipes froze for which we were very thankful. We did make the unplanned generator purchase but we are now prepared for the next natural disaster. Get on Unitil's case!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>In the past, I have considered Unitil very good at providing its service. I do not know the changes management has undergone, but the grade for the December storm is incompetent. My neighbor to the East had power on Saturday late afternoon. I was without power until the following Tuesday. At some point the</p>

	<p>utility teams were pulled out of Stratham and not all the town's power had been restored. Hard to give Unutil any credit for this one.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>The biggest problems were related to communication: Where to get it; the difficulty of being able to get it; the time it took (on the phone) to get through to anybody who had any information; and the inaccuracy of the information provided. When a deadline we were given related to the return of service came and went, it was a challenge just to muster up the energy to go through the process and frustration of trying to get answers all over again.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Basically, we are always prepared to be self-sufficient for the most part. Primarily, I think individuals are lacking basic survival skills and for-thought. Every home should have a safe, practical, alternative heat source (something you did not ask about in survey) in a climate where it is essential. Fireplaces are not sufficient. Woodstoves are OK, but need to be tended frequently and a wood supply must be planned for BEFORE disaster. Knowledge of safe food storage alternatives is essential and management of it a constant throughout a disaster. After several days without power, one should know to start questioning the safety of the public water supply and start boiling or use bottled water. If a home relies on a sump-pump, they had best have a generator and know how to use it. We put in a gravity drain. Yes, Unutil (&amp; state agencies) dropped the ball, however, I give them tons of credit for the sheer volume of work that was done in a short period of time. Communication/survival information from ANY agency would have put most at better position to help themselves and others around them. We were perfectly understanding of the concept of prioritizing the repair of lines where it restored larger numbers. Knowing where one could get a reliable gasoline supply or communication with the supply chain to keep up with demand from those stations that were open would have alleviated unnecessary waste of resources due to folks driving to Boston for gas and generators or elsewhere for hotels. The rest of us should not have to bear the cost in increased insurance premiums for folks too spoiled to prepare and work to safe-guard their homes and families. However, insurance companies telling someone that their house was livable at 38 degrees is not responsible either. Perhaps building code needs to be more pro-active and dwellers need to pass a survival skills test. Thanks for this forum to vent.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>In response to 33, I rent an apartment and could not afford to purchase or have a generator wired into my panel. Therefore, unless someone lends my landlord a generator, I am at the mercy of the elements. Fortunately, I had running water (hot/cold) and could boil water on my stove for tea and to heat canned goods. I had heat and one usable light after 4 days. I think I was much luckier then some if not most. Unfortunately, Unutil was ill prepared and could not provide any answers to my questions and I waited patiently for 4 days before I called them thinking that they were doing the best they could. The street I live on and one half of the next street over was without power for 5 days longer then all of the neighborhoods around us. Very frustrating.....Thank goodness I had a cell phone and a car charger for the cell battery.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like others in our position, we were forced to spend funds at Christmas to eat at restaurants, buy gasoline and kerosene, in order to preserve and protect our property from further damage, and to restock our refrigerator after the power came back on, as all the food was spoiled. These were funds totalled nearly \$1,000., which we were not prepared to spend during the Holiday season, creating a hardship for us. When we filed formal complaints with Unitil, they provided the same surprising response they gave throughout the entire power outage. "ACT OF GOD!" This language is continually used in Unitil's communications with its Customers, as though the use of these words somehow absolve them from their responsibility to respond in a timely and effective manner, in an emergency situation. We have a FORM letter received from April Burnham, Claims Administrator, basically claiming that Unitil's Tarrif allows them to use this excuse for any reason at any time, for events over which they "have no control." From our perspective, Unitil DID have control over how they responded AFTER the storm. We do not believe Unitil should be permitted to hide behind the "act of God" defense to defend it own ineffective failure to be prepared for, and/or properly respond to its Customers needs in the aftermath of a serious storm, which caused significant hardship. The form letter we received is just further demonstration of Unitil's cavalier and reckless disregard for the duty it owed to its Customers.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The utilities should cut back tree limbs from the power lines. We also own a house in Barrington, NH that we are selling.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The utilities should cut back tree limbs from the power lines. We also own a house in Kingston, NH, and are selling the house in Barrington.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To answer #33 (which cannot be answered with the choices given), I would say that we know better how to use the generator than we did before the storm. We tried to do what we could on our own, so did not contact the state or the town officials. We just hoped that we would find out by calling Unitil or checking their website (by driving around town and hoping we would find access for our laptop to the internet via someone's wireless access that was available) but we never did actually talk to anyone and only found out from the website that the area around the Unitil office in Kensington had been taken care of...and not Hampton.</li> </ul> <p>We stayed warm during the day at our daughter's house because her husband was able to connect the heat to the generator. We slept at home. One night it was 39 degrees in our bedroom. We nearly had a frozen pipe that night, but it did not break. The weather warmed up. We had phone service the entire time, but our daughter did not (they have Comcast). We both had hot water from natural gas. We both had water because we have town water. They had a gas stove to cook on. We stretched electric wires to their refrigerator and ours, so we did not lose food.</p> <p>All in all, we were fairly fortunate. We do still wonder, however, because there</p>

	<p>was power at the condo right next door and a street light was on in front of the motel next door, if we could have had power 3 or 4 days earlier. We really would like to know if someone simply did not pay attention or if there was no possibility of our having power sooner. A map of where electricity comes from for each street address would certainly help folks to understand the situation. If our power comes from an area where there is a lot of destruction, then it is easier for us to understand and be more patient.</p> <p>Thank you for making it possible for folks like us to let you know how we feel.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>After 5 days without power, it only took PSNH 1 hour to restore power to my street. They showed up at 8 am and the lights were on at 9. I don't understand why they were working just one street over from my street, the night we lost power, but it took them 5 days to get to my street. Also, the people working on the phones at PSNH were not trained to deal with folks that are on edge and calling them looking for help/information.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Unitil CEO's October 24, 2008 letter to shareholders stated the following: "Your Company provides an essential service for our economy and the communities we serve. We take our obligation for safe, reliable, and cost-effective service seriously. We have proven our ability to weather uncertain economic times throughout our history. We are prepared to do so again." After 6 days with no power, service was finally restored to 40 homes in a compact neighborhood in 2 hours by a crew from Tenn.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>It has been obvious for several years that the utility companies have not been maintaining distribution power lines by trimming back trees close to or even touching wires. There used to be a regular maintenance program and we had fewer outages than we do today. The utilities say they are unable to do maintenance because the "tree huggers" won't let them. I don't believe that this is a realistic excuse.</p> <p>I also don't feel the rate payers should be footing the bill for these recent repairs because of the utilities lack of maintenance is the real problem.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>For all the homeland security funds provided to various organizations in and out of government to address disasters following 9/11 we expected a far better more organized and efficient response than was evident at any time during this incident. The American Red Cross was the sole organization that appeared prepared to address this incident: it was on hand almost immediately and performed admirably throughout. We are left with absolutely no confidence in the ability or intent of Unitil to provide reliable electrical service in emergencies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>My plan has always been to survive....no matter what the nature of the problem. It is hard to ignore over 30 years of training and experience as a Special Forces soldier! So, my family had the right clothing, the right gear, plenty of food and water stockpiled in advance. We have a wood stove for heating the house, and lots of gas camping stoves, lanterns, head lamps, flashlights, and batteries in all kinds of sizes. My immediate neighbors were also fairly well prepared, with</p>

	<p>wood stoves or back-up generators to keep warm. We filled 5-gallon buckets with water drawn by hanging the buckets off the bridge into the dam outlet to use to flush the toilets. That was a daily chore, and you get 2-flushes from 1 bucket. We used about 1-5 gallon can of water for drinking per day for my family of 5 plus a dog and a cat. We used waterless handcleaner, baby wipes, and waterless camping suds products for personal hygiene.. I have plenty of first aid and medical supplies, but they were not needed for this storm. I had enough water/food and supplies in the house to continue to survive without the power being restored for at least another 30 days.</p> <p>However, this is America, not some Third World country that I have been to with the military or when working overseas as a security consultant.. I do not accept the premise that the power companies did all that they could to plan for such a contingency. If that is so, then they did a piss-poor job of planning. They did not have enough crews to restore power in a timely fashion. In my case, it was 12 days before power was restored. That is not timely.</p> <p>Also, there was not enough materials on hand to replace damaged equipment. They claim to have used 4 years worth of supplies, but that just demonstrates their inept planning considerations. I think that I saw a number that said that 120 miles of wire was replaced. Well, that breaks down to about 2 miles of wire for 60 rural towns. That is not much at all, when one remembers the amount of broken wires along the roads and highways.</p> <p>The biggest problem is that the power companies are still in denial as to the cause of the scope of the disaster here. Trees are growing directly under and in contact with the power lines along virtually every street and road in every town in NH. Even though the companies stated that they have doubled their tree trimming budget since the ice storm of 1998, it is still not enough. They probably spent more on their landscaping and lawn maintenance budget around the main office and their power generation plants! Ice can come during ANY winter, and there is little that you can do to remove the ice build-up from the wires and poles.</p> <p>But, you can do something about the ice on the trees and limbs that hang directly on or over the wires. Get serious about cutting along the roads. Most of the trees are along the "public ways", not on individual property owners' land. I still see trees today that are growing up into the wires or dea</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>There was a general lack of intelligent information available. Without power there is no heat, light, water, toilets, TV or internet. PSNH may say "check our web site" but there was no way to do so, and information was unhelpful. They need to establish a central phone number with reasonably updated information based on street address. State or local officials need to publicize what numbers to call in such an emergency. This was a costly and potentially harmful outage, especially for a family with recent job loss. Hoem owner's insurance does not ocver losses unless there is damage to the home. PSNH refued to cover loss of food in refrigerator. Their rates becme much higher following the December storm. I'm paying over \$112 per month when recent bills were in the .....</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Overall, I was impressed with the responsiveness of PSNH, state agencies, and</p>

	<p>the federal government to this emergency. My biggest pet peeve are all of the people that complain and feel we should cut down trees, etc. to try to avoid a similar even in the future. Stuff happens, regardless of what anyone does to try to avoid an "event". To make all of the power lines totally safe would pretty much require cutting back all trees to 60 feet or so of the road. That thought is totally absurd. Instead, people should prepare themselves better for potential future emergencies.</p> <p>Any number of emergencies can happen anywhere in this country. We live in a state that is heavily forested and with many streams, rivers and lakes. Power outages and flooding are common occurrences in such an area. In addition, we have a port, and are close to a city, that are potential terrorist targets. Also, we have the Seabrook nuclear power plant, and the potential for the rare hurricane or tornado to strike. In an emergency situation, people need to take responsibility for themselves and be prepared to survive 10-14 days (5-7 as a minimum) without assistance from anyone. The government and utilities can only be expected to provide so much, and a major emergency can overwhelm even the best prepared emergency response efforts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>I appreciate your request for citizen input. I was appalled during &amp; right after the storm at almost a total lack of status from the state. Governor Lynch became a whiner. Radio News basically said regularly "xx,xxx NH homes remain without power .. now for exciting Sports News". Some Legislators simply threatened utilities as did at least one PUC official, as reported by the M/U/L</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Overall I expected most of what happened because I saw the pictures on the news during the storm and knew that others had it worse than i did or who had it the same as me, we live in a society where everyone lives at a fast pace and expects things to get done fast as well this is the 20th century I feel everything was handled in a somewhat timely manner of course it would have been nice to be up and running right away but i live in the real world and know that it takes time to put up poles, run new wire, clean up ect....., my question to you is when or if this happens again how do you plan to get your info out via the media which I counted on (and am sure i was not the only one) because when we switch to digital tv our analog battery powered tvs won't be any good to us and no one makes a digital battery tv how am I going to get your information then!!!!!! A picture is worth a thousand words.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Since the storm I have bought a generator and paid to have it hooked up to my system so I will not be dependent on Unitil again. I would like to force them out of NH if I could. PSNH was more responsive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>My biggest question I have is why it took PSNH 7 days to send work crews to my town? My street was one of the last in town to get power restored. I live less than a half mile from their brand new sub station. Being this close to a major part of their power grid I thought they would have some work crews in the area. Once the crews showed up in town I think they did an OK job of restoring power.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While I feel I am ready for another ice storm event, I do not believe the NH Electric Coop is. I found them to be under prepared and, more importantly, unable to cope with outages of this magnitude. I believe they should relinquish a large portion of their southern NH service area in favor of a larger, more capable utility such as PSNH.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People need to take on responsibility for themselves, not always to expect free help from the government. I think the state did very well and people were for the most part OK. Comcast cable was very unreliable and the customer service was bad in that they gave out misleading information and didn't except responsibility for cable outages.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You, as commissioners, should be exercising better oversight regarding a utility's capability to provide service. Unitil services towns in both NH and MA with only 6 crews? (PSNH supposedly has 190.) You need to require an upgraded repair and response capability for any utility operating in this state or they should not be allowed to provide service. You also need to work with legislators to set up laws requiring removal of all obstacles adjacent to power lines. I look forward to participating in your local public hearing in March.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think the only thing that is going to generate or was the cause of negativity is the fact that the staging of vehicles left large groups of trucks sitting idle in very public places while waiting for orders or assignments. These comments could be heard all over the west side of Milford due to the PSNH center and the parking lot at Granite Town Plaza being on that main road. I for one think you folks did the best you could with what you had given the situation we faced. I mean come on we live in New England. Most of your complainers will be those flat land transplants and I say let go back to where they came from anyway.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unitil did a fine job under the difficult circumstances, we were fortunate to have our power back after 4 days. Could the response have been better only Unitil can answer , however I am satisfied with their efforts dealing with the enormous task they were charged with.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In our area people had to drive 40 minutes away to find gas, an open pharmacy to get medicines, an open grocery store or food mart to get water, or any other open business b/c so many towns surrounding our town were without power. That was scary b/c you would drive to businesses a few towns over and they had no power so they weren't open, or if they had power and were open, then they were usually out of stock of the necessities (jugs of water, batteries, other basics, etc.). So you then had to drive even further not knowing if you were going to use up all your gas trying to find a place that was open and/or had the basics that everyone needed.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Electric companies did a great job at restoring power while being under the gun. Great JOB</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheers to the line crews that went above and beyond thru this event. Jeers to management for not being on the ball.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSNH did a spectacular job restoring power to the 400,000+ homes and business (over 1,000,000 people) all over the state. The power outages were widespread and the damage was just incredible - anyone who criticizes how long it took to get power restored does not have a clue as to the magnitude of this event. Seems that the focus of any investigation should look into the lack of coordination between local and state officials. A generalized boilerplate response should be put in place for all NH towns so that one town is not responding in a completely different manner than a neighboring community.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This storm caused many seniors financial loss that has not been covered by anyone. In our case we had to pay for hotel room, and loss of food in freezer. We rented small generator to keep cellar from flooding. The generator didn't do anything to provide heat, electricity for furnace or well. Why has FEMA helped folds with some of these costs? Can anything be done to help folks with the financial loss? Without electricity we have no heat, no well. The best seniors can do is hopefully be able to afford a hotel because spending long periods of time in a shelter is difficult.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We were one of the few lucky ones with only 12 hours loss. We were able to provide housing for friends living near us who lost theirs' for 6 days. We live on a designated "scenic drive" in Newmarket. I had a conversation this fall with the Asplundh (sp?) right of way tree maintenance people. I was told they can only clear within 4 feet of the wires on our road because of it's scenic designation and 8 feet otherwise. I would suggest that this policy needs serious reconsideration upwards. Greater clearance is probably needed. Having lived for 8 years in Raleigh, NC where ice storms are pretty much the norm in winter, I do not remember any that resulted in such long outages. Weather prediction is very difficult, but with "global warming" these ice storms may be occurring more often than the past. You can not allow the disaster that befell us happen again. Good luck and thank you for this format.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Question # 33 is not a Yes / NO answer question as it is written. How about removing the words "more or less" from the question.  Who prepared these questions. Not very well done at all.  This survey is vague enough to not be very useful for future planning purposes.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total lack of useful information during this event was unacceptable. I called Unutil about 10 times per day to try to get some kind of idea when my power was going to be restored and came up with nothing. I also question how the priorities to get power restored to the various areas were determined. We had no poles or trees down on our road. There was power on both cross streets for 2-3 days before we had ours back. There were 2 housing developments, a mobile home park, and our street without power for 8 days. It is my understanding that once a crew did show up that it only took a few minutes to get the power</li> </ul>

restored. Just to add insult to injury, my electric bill for December was significantly higher than for November or January - what's up with that?? Also, because of Unutil's poor communication with us I was out approx. \$800 for hotel and food plus another \$200 for food lost in our refrigerator ( I would have made less expensive arrangements if they could have given a relatively accurate estimate, but they kept saying that power would be restored by noon the next day when in fact it took 5 days longer) - can I send them a bill??