

1 STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
2 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION AND  
3 NEW HAMPSHIRE HOMELAND SECURITY  
4 & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

5  
6 March 18, 2009 - 7:00 p.m.  
7 ConVal Regional High School  
8 184 Hancock Road  
9 Peterborough, New Hampshire

10 RE: DECEMBER 2008 ICE STORM REVIEW  
11 Hearing to receive public statements.

12  
13 PRESENT: Chairman Thomas B. Getz, Presiding (NHPUC)  
14 Commissioner Graham J. Morrison (NHPUC)  
15 Commissioner Clifton C. Below (NHPUC)  
16 Director Christopher Pope (HS&EM)

17 ALSO PRESENT: Reptg. the New Hampshire PUC Staff:  
18 Thomas C. Frantz, Director - Electric Div.  
19 Randall Knepper, Director - Safety Div.  
20 Debra Howland, Executive Director  
21 Amanda O. Noonan, Director - Consumer Affairs

22 Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:  
23 Stephen Eckberg  
24 Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. NH Homeland Security & Emergency Mgt.:  
James C. Van Dongen, Public Information Off.

23 Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

24

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

I N D E X

PAGE NO.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY:

Charles Parry	13
John Hayes	14
John Lewicke	18
Lois Walen	21
James Clark	24
Donald Carle	27
Nicole MacStay	32
Andre Wood	40
Ken Young	44
Anne Richards	48

## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Good evening,  
3 everyone. My name is Tom Getz. I'm the Chairman of the  
4 Public Utilities Commission. And, also here this evening  
5 from the Public Utilities Commission are, on my right, is  
6 Commissioner Clifton Below; on my far left is Commissioner  
7 Graham Morrison; and to my left is the Director of the  
8 Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management,  
9 Chris Pope. Also, here from the Commission, in the front  
10 row, to my far right, is Tom Frantz, who's the Director of  
11 our Electric Division; and Randy Knepper is the Director  
12 of our Safety Division. Behind them, near the door on the  
13 left, is Debra Howland, who is our Executive Director; and  
14 Amanda Noonan, who is the Director of our Consumer Affairs  
15 Division. I'll also point out that, in the middle of the  
16 second row, from the Office of the Consumer Advocate, is  
17 Steve Eckberg.

18 The public hearing this evening is a  
19 joint effort by the Public Utilities Commission and  
20 Emergency Management as part of our after action review of  
21 the ice storm, which will review the preparedness and the  
22 response both of public utilities and state government to  
23 the ice storm that began on the evening of December 11,  
24 affected approximately 60 percent of New Hampshire

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 customers at its peak, and resulted in some customers  
2 going without service for as long as two weeks.

3 In very general terms, an after action  
4 review is focused on analyzing what happened, why it  
5 happened, and how it can be done better. And, in order to  
6 effectively analyze what happened, we have begun by  
7 systematically and comprehensively gather data and  
8 collecting information. And, that data gathering effort  
9 started during the ice storm, with the records and notes  
10 kept by the various individuals involved in responding to  
11 the ice storm.

12 In addition, the Public Utilities  
13 Commission has submitted a set of 50 requests to the  
14 various utilities asking for documents and answers to  
15 particular questions, which were answered on February 27.  
16 And, you can see the questions and answers on our website,  
17 at [www.puc.nh.gov](http://www.puc.nh.gov). And, on our website, there's an  
18 extensive ice storm section that has a lot more material  
19 that I think would be helpful for folks to take a look at.

20 Some utilities have also submitted  
21 information or reports on their own, and that can be found  
22 on our website as well. We have also posted on our  
23 website a comment form for public input that seeks  
24 specific -- answers to specific questions about the ice

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 storm and asks for general comments in a number of areas.  
2 And, we have posted on the website the answers from 110  
3 comment forms that we've already received.

4 The hearing tonight, and nine others  
5 that are scheduled around the state, are another part of  
6 the information gathering effort. And, we expect that  
7 hearing your experiences during the ice storm, and your  
8 recommendations for corrective measures going forward,  
9 will help us both in identifying issues and deciding on  
10 specific courses of action. Your analysis of what went  
11 wrong and what went right, and your recommendations about  
12 how things can be changed for the better, are critical  
13 inputs to our process.

14 Now, let me point to some other steps  
15 that have been taken over the past few weeks. Director  
16 Pope has held a series of meetings with local, public  
17 safety, and community officials, which he will explain in  
18 some more detail. And, in addition, he has initiated a  
19 review process for a State agency, which he will also  
20 describe.

21 One other effort that will occur this  
22 spring concerns the issue of undergrounding of utility  
23 lines. Chairman Naida Kaen, of the House Science,  
24 Technology and Energy Committee will be holding an

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 informational session in her committee seeking to better  
2 understand the costs and benefits of undergrounding  
3 utility lines.

4 Now, as we collect what is obviously a  
5 large amount of information, we will be analyzing the data  
6 to identify issues that need attention and remediation.  
7 While it is not our intention to prejudge anything, I  
8 think there is no serious debate that communications on  
9 many levels must be improved. That is why the Director of  
10 our Safety Division, Randy Knepper, will be facilitating a  
11 review of utility communication practices, and this effort  
12 will include communications to the PUC, to the State  
13 Emergency Management, to local Emergency Management  
14 directors, and to the public generally. The goal of this  
15 effort is to identify practices that should be adopted by  
16 all utilities going forward.

17 At the same time, there are other issues  
18 that require a closer look before we can come to  
19 definitive conclusions. In general terms, from the PUC's  
20 perspective, we will be looking at whether the utilities  
21 were reasonably prepared, that is, did they plan properly,  
22 and whether they responded reasonably, which means did  
23 they execute their plans effectively.

24 Within that framework, we will be  
{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 looking at particular issues, which include, among other  
2 things, the effect of tree-trimming on customer outages,  
3 the status of mutual aid arrangements among utilities,  
4 protocols for prioritizing restoration, and decisions on  
5 how best to allocate work crews. Depending on what  
6 emerges during this after action review, the PUC can then  
7 proceed in a number of directions, which may include  
8 rulemakings or formal adjudicative proceedings to address  
9 any particular issues that need that attention.

10 Now, to assist us in our review, both  
11 because of the sheer amount of data that must be sorted  
12 and analyzed, and because there may be certain subjects  
13 that require specialized expertise, the PUC has issued a  
14 Request for Proposals for consulting assistance, and we  
15 are reviewing those proposals at the moment.

16 As I noted earlier, we have not reached  
17 any specific conclusions at this point, and that is  
18 because it is our job to take an objective look at all of  
19 the facts. But I can assure you that we will follow the  
20 information we receive, wherever it leads.

21 We have a couple of goals in mind  
22 through this process. One is to issue a report in  
23 September that will set forth the results of that after  
24 action review, including recommendations for specific

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 proceedings that may be required as a follow-up. And,  
2 another is to make sure that the utilities have improved  
3 their planning and response protocols, especially as it  
4 concerns communication for next winter.

5                   And, that concludes my opening remarks.  
6 I'm going to turn to Director Pope in a moment. But I  
7 just want to make sure that anyone who would like to speak  
8 tonight, if you could come to the podium. And,  
9 Mr. Patnaude is our court reporter, he'll be preparing a  
10 transcript of everything that occurs tonight, and that  
11 will be also posted on our website. And, we have some  
12 forms that you should have seen on the way in. You can  
13 either elect to speak, you can put something in writing to  
14 submit to us, or you can also fill out the full comment  
15 form. It's at the election of each individual how they  
16 would like to proceed this evening.

17                   Would you like to collect, you have --  
18 if anyone who would like to speak could hand in the  
19 sheets, and then I'll just call on people as I get them in  
20 whatever order, and then we'll provide folks an  
21 opportunity to speak.

22                   But, right now, I'd like to turn to  
23 Director Pope.

24                   DIR. POPE: Thank you very much, Tom.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 And, welcome. I would like to introduce one other person,  
2 Jim Van Dongen, from the New Hampshire Division of  
3 Homeland security and Emergency Management, is here also.  
4 He is our Public Information Officer and was involved in  
5 the response phase of this incident.

6 In addition, I would like to add to what  
7 Tom said about the overall State After Action Report, and  
8 then illuminate on a couple of specific pieces. But I  
9 will be brief, because, rest assured, the primary reason  
10 we are here tonight is to listen, actively listen to what  
11 you have to say.

12 The Governor and Tom and I met  
13 somewhere, I believe, Tom, was around the first week of  
14 January, to discuss what approach we would take to  
15 essentially finding out, from a big picture perspective,  
16 what can we, in the State of New Hampshire, do better when  
17 we're next confronted with a major disaster of this type.  
18 So, essentially, it was a matter of collecting  
19 information, finding out what we did well, finding out  
20 what we did not do well, and identifying solutions.

21 The first part of that is the  
22 information collection process, and we are doing that, in  
23 addition to the means that Tom reported on, by collecting  
24 After Action Reports from local communities, and thus far

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 we've collected more than 40, from collecting After Action  
2 Reports from other state agencies and non-governmental  
3 agencies that were part of the emergency response. By  
4 meeting, as Tom said, with public safety officials and  
5 local government officials in a workshop format, which we  
6 have done in four locations around the state, with our  
7 last one occurring, excuse me, last Monday. I would  
8 report that they were very well-attended. A couple of  
9 folks in the audience tonight I recognize as having been  
10 at those. And, we found them to be extremely beneficial.

11 We are also conducting a debriefing  
12 session with the proximately 150 or so staff personnel who  
13 were at the State Emergency Operations Center for the two  
14 weeks, from -- actually beginning a day before the storm  
15 even hit, to about the 24th, 25th of December. We will be  
16 meeting with news -- state public information officers and  
17 news media folks and receiving input from them. We have  
18 met with business groups, and will continue to meet with  
19 business groups to get their input; State legislators;  
20 we've met with an engineering group; and other constituent  
21 groups. And, now, tonight, we begin the process of  
22 meeting directly with the public and listening to you.

23 The next step, after collecting this  
24 information, is to synthesize it, put it together, with

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 the intention of producing an After Action Report. Senior  
2 State officials will meet in another workshop-type format  
3 to develop an improvement plan. And, ultimately, a  
4 secondary product will be rewriting our State Emergency  
5 Operations Plan, where improvement there is necessary.

6 As far as the Emergency Management end  
7 of this incident, while we know that folks are here  
8 primarily to speak about utility-related issues, we  
9 welcome your comments about the emergency response parts  
10 of this incident. For us, this was our largest emergency  
11 response that we've dealt with in New Hampshire in many,  
12 many years. This is the seventh Presidential disaster  
13 that we've worked since the Fall of 2005. We had major  
14 commodity needs that we had to get to citizens, including  
15 potable water, food, shelter, equipment and generators,  
16 from which we received direct federal assistance from  
17 FEMA.

18 We stood up 59 shelters in various  
19 locations around the state, housing 1,500 people, many of  
20 them open for two weeks on a 24/7 basis. Seventeen of  
21 those shelters were pet-friendly. And, while you might  
22 think that's funny, I will tell you that there are people  
23 in our world who will not go to a shelter if they can't  
24 bring their pet with them, and I happen to be one of them.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 We set up, for the first time ever, an acute care center  
2 in the City of Rochester, designed to help people who had  
3 to leave their homes that had very special medical needs.  
4 That is just a very basic sampling of some of the first --  
5 of some of the records that our state set, if that's how  
6 we want to refer to it. The scope of this was large.

7 I feel good. I think many of us at the  
8 state level feel good about certain aspects of the  
9 emergency response, and we have certainly received many  
10 positive comments. And, while we appreciate those  
11 positive comments, I want to assure you that we very much  
12 want to hear where we need to improve what we're doing.  
13 This is about improving. We are a part of a team, a  
14 network of local responders, state responders, federal  
15 responders, nonprofit agencies, who work together as a  
16 team. We don't care if the uniform is blue, red, or  
17 camouflage, or no uniform at all. And, part of being able  
18 to work together is receiving comment from you and finding  
19 out what worked and didn't work.

20 And, with that, I'll turn it back to  
21 Tom. Thank you. And, I'll be available after this is  
22 over, if any of you have something that you want to share  
23 in a less public moment.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Chris. The

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 first sheet we have is from Charles Parry.

2 MR. PARRY: Good evening. I just had a  
3 question, actually.

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: It would be helpful if  
5 you came down here. I think everybody could hear better,  
6 and then the stenographer would be able to transcribe more  
7 easily. Thank you.

8 MR. PARRY: I was delayed by one of the  
9 gentlemen in blue on the way over here, so I apologize for  
10 being late. My question was, what is your standard for  
11 excellence? Are there public utilities that you look to  
12 as exemplars of best practices? Are we it? Usually, when  
13 you're engaging in improvement, one of the things you want  
14 to do is consider "who is the best and how close are we to  
15 that?"

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: We haven't selected any  
17 particular metric or exemplar of what excellent utility  
18 service looks like. One of the things we will be doing,  
19 as part of the process to look at communications, will be  
20 to identify "best practices" throughout the country, in  
21 terms of communications to the public, to states'  
22 emergency centers, to the PUCs. So, that will be a piece  
23 of what we'll be doing on the communications side.

24 MR. PARRY: Okay. Thank you.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1                   CHAIRMAN GETZ:  You're welcome.  John  
2  Hayes.

3                   MR. HAYES:  Good evening.

4                   CHAIRMAN GETZ:  Good evening.

5                   MR. HAYES:  Thanks for giving us this  
6  opportunity.  Oh, sure.  Thanks for giving us this  
7  opportunity.  At the time of the ice storm, I was a  
8  selectman in Hancock.  So, I had a personal perspective  
9  and a perspective from a local official.  I'm now off the  
10 Board, thank goodness.  I can lead a normal life again.  
11 But, at the time, I think the issue for the Town, let me  
12 speak to that first, the issue for the Town was really  
13 getting the communication from the utilities in a timely  
14 fashion, so the Town could keep everybody informed.  And,  
15 I think that was our issue.  And, I'm sure the  
16 circumstance was the main factor.  I mean, obviously, a  
17 disaster of this nature nobody was prepared for.

18                   But, in the future, I would think a more  
19 proactive approach to informing the towns, because most of  
20 the local people, without any internet or any phones or  
21 any other means of communication, really relied on the  
22 town government to get most of their information.  We kept  
23 our town offices open throughout the weekends and late  
24 into the evenings, and kept our buildings open to

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 accommodate as many people as we could. And, the whole  
2 time we really were searching for more information. When  
3 we got through to somebody, we got the information we  
4 needed. But it was -- it was more reactive on your parts.  
5 And, I think maybe some -- a combination in the future in  
6 this kind of a circumstance, where you were calling the  
7 towns or calling the Emergency Management Director of each  
8 town, and letting them know where we stood and what was  
9 going on and how many crews were in the Town and what they  
10 would be working on, and what we could expect, if it was  
11 at all feasible to expect anything.

12 From a personal perspective, I was  
13 without electricity for eleven days. Shut my house down,  
14 drained the water, took my mother, who had just had a  
15 stroke, to my inlaws in Jaffrey, who had a generator, and  
16 really had a fairly uncomfortable, long period of time.  
17 Commuting back and forth, we have horses. We went back  
18 and forth a couple of times a day. It was pretty much an  
19 ordeal and a big disaster.

20 And, from a personal perspective, if I  
21 hadn't been involved in the town, I probably would have  
22 had no idea what was going on. We just had a radio, and  
23 that's all we really had. My inlaws, at their place, they  
24 were fortunate enough to have satellite TV. Having

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 satellite TV available somewhere in every town is a really  
2 good idea, as it turns out. Because, at least with a  
3 satellite, you get communication. You can get -- You can  
4 get some information from the local television stations,  
5 like WMUR, and others.

6 And, so, you know, from an individual  
7 standpoint, I would recommend that people, two things, get  
8 a generator and get a satellite dish, so you can stay  
9 informed during a crisis like this. Thanks.

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. And, I think  
11 there's one thing that is unanimous about everybody who  
12 was involved in the ice storm was the need for better  
13 communications.

14 MR. HAYES: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, Chris, at the  
16 Emergency Operation Center, and myself, and Randy Knepper,  
17 who is our Safety Director, would be on a phone call every  
18 day with Emergency Management Directors from the towns and  
19 trying to share information that way. But the  
20 coordination of those communications with the State  
21 Emergency Operations, through the PUC and to the utilities  
22 really does need to be improved. And, I think it's  
23 unanimous among all the folks who were operating in this  
24 environment that there are better ways that need to be

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 pursued.

2 MR. HAYES: Yes. And, just along those  
3 lines, and I agree 100 percent. And, certainly, the  
4 circumstance dictated the response. You know, I mean it  
5 was just so unusual. But, you know, the response itself I  
6 think is -- you can drill down even further into the  
7 response, because for everybody, and I'll just speak for  
8 Hancock, for everybody in Hancock, the issue, of course,  
9 was "where the heck are these crews and when are they  
10 going to get to my house?" And, I think that was the, you  
11 know, that was the big stumbling block. If only we knew  
12 and only if we had some idea, on an ongoing basis, that  
13 "Okay, look, today these crews are in your town. Here's  
14 their goal. This is where they're going to be. This is  
15 what they're trying to get done. Just please be patient,  
16 we're going to get to you. Tomorrow we're aiming for this  
17 road and that."

18 I think, if you can drill down into that  
19 kind of communication, it just keeps people -- it helps  
20 ease their fears and gives them an idea of what they have  
21 to prepare for moving forward. So, if you can drill down  
22 into that level, that would be great. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Hayes.  
24 John Ludwick?

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 MR. LEWICKE: Lewicke.

2 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Lewicke.

3 MR. LEWICKE: Okay. I'm from Mason, and  
4 I had twelve days without power. And, I have a bunch of  
5 observations basically on how PSNH dealt with things.  
6 And, from the very beginning, the very first day, there  
7 was this guy, and I will admit, he stayed there till the  
8 end. He drove around that neighborhood, around and around  
9 and around. He was there every day driving around in a  
10 pickup truck. Other people drove around in pickup trucks.  
11 At times they were talking in front of my house, one from  
12 one direction, one from the other. And, of course, one  
13 would assume perhaps that some of these people at one  
14 point were linemen. And, I would have thought that  
15 perhaps, rather than driving around and looking at the  
16 same downed wires for twelve days in a row, it might have  
17 been more effective for them to be working on a truck,  
18 doing something about getting the wires back up.

19 And, then, in Mason, as you probably  
20 already have heard, people pitched in. We had our roads  
21 clear and were ready to put the wires back up, as much as  
22 we could, and there was very little that we didn't have  
23 taken care up within three days. After three days, I went  
24 over to Wilton, because they didn't seem to be doing so

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 well, and I cleared a whole lot of Mason Road in Wilton.  
2 And, then, I think it was Wednesday of the next week, an  
3 Asplundh truck came by, or actually a couple of them.  
4 And, so, I said "Well, what are you guys doing here? We  
5 need a line crew." "Well, you know, we don't know where  
6 they are, but we're here to clear the trees." And, I  
7 said, "Well, look, the trees are already cleared. The  
8 line crews are we need." And, it was very clear that PSNH  
9 had a whole lot more tree crews than they needed,  
10 particularly in the towns. I don't know what was going on  
11 in the cities. And, we don't expect to be first in line.  
12 We know that, you know, when you've got, you know,  
13 50 miles of road and a few hundred people, it doesn't make  
14 sense to put the crews there.

15 So, anyway, on Thursday, the day after I  
16 flagged down the Asplundh truck, I noticed another one who  
17 was stopped like this [indicating], talking to one of the  
18 pickup truck people. So, I went over and said "Hey, guys,  
19 you know, you're here again. You know, there was an  
20 Asplundh truck through here yesterday." And, the guy said  
21 "Oh, no. That was us. We were here yesterday." "What  
22 the H are you doing here again today? It was clear  
23 yesterday, it's clear today." And, you know, there was  
24 this armada of people. And, then, this, you know, the old

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1       guy from PSNH, who had been driving around all the time,  
2       finally, on the very last day, was leading a convoy of  
3       tree trucks through this same area that had been cleared  
4       for a week, almost a week and a half at that point. And,  
5       you know, I finally got him to say, you know, fix a thing  
6       on my house, which was my problem, not the power company's  
7       problem. But it was clearly a gross misallocation of  
8       resources. Way too many tree people; nowhere near enough  
9       line crews.

10                       And, one of the things I might suggest  
11       is, you know, getting the people out of the pickup trucks  
12       and putting them on. And, PSNH, rather than retiring  
13       their trucks, keep the old equipment, keep it maintained  
14       for a few years, so they have extra resources. And,  
15       perhaps they could do some cross-training with the tree  
16       people that they're working with. You know, you don't  
17       want the tree people necessarily dealing with the wires.  
18       But, on each of these things, there's a whole lot of work  
19       that could be done by less well trained people, which  
20       would essentially expand the ability of PSNH, the trained  
21       line crews to do the work. Let them handle the hot stuff.  
22       But, in terms of, you know, getting the wires up on the  
23       poles and so forth. You've got all these bucket trucks,  
24       all these tree trucks, let's get, you know, get them

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 working, and use the resources well, use them wisely.  
2 Multiplex the efforts of a lot of people, rather than just  
3 using a few people and bringing them in.

4                   You know, when we finally did, you know,  
5 the guys from Quebec-Hydro were great. You know, they  
6 came in, those wires went up, the electricity went on.  
7 But, the real thing was, that it took a long time, and it  
8 was very clear that there were not enough line crews.  
9 And, any way that they could have expanded those line  
10 crews, either by using less well trained labor for some of  
11 it or by, you know, having other untrained labor or other  
12 labor there, or even the trained labor. You know, one, as  
13 I say, would assume that the guys in the pickup trucks  
14 used to be linemen. So, anyway, that's what I have to  
15 say.

16                   CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Lewicke.  
17 Those were some -- I think those are some good issues to  
18 pursue. Some of which, you know, may be doable, some of  
19 which may not. But I think they all certainly should be  
20 followed up on. Thank you. Lois Walen.

21                   MS. WALEN: Hi. I'm from Red Gate Lane,  
22 in Rindge, New Hampshire, which happens to be a private  
23 road. We took down, "we" meaning the whole neighborhood,  
24 took down all of the trees that we could, but did not dare

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 touch the trees that were on the wires. And, of course,  
2 the broken pole that was across the road, with the  
3 transformer on, we did not dare to touch. We called PSNH  
4 daily ten times a day, saying "we have a pole across the  
5 road. Could we -- We're not asking for power. We're  
6 asking to please have the pole removed, so the road can be  
7 plowed, so that the people can get out of their houses, so  
8 the emergency crews could get in if we had an emergency  
9 situation." And, nothing happened.

10 Finally, my neighborhood went to  
11 Connecticut, got on the Internet, found out from the  
12 Internet that there was a substation in Fitzwilliam.  
13 Called her husband on the cellphone. He went to the  
14 substation and said "Please, please come down my road.  
15 Follow me." And, when we finally got the man, on the 22nd  
16 of December, to come down the road and see the wires that  
17 were covered with trees and the pole down, the next day,  
18 the 23rd, the pole was removed.

19 I think that, before people get power,  
20 poles should be removed from roads that are down across,  
21 for safety, if nothing else. And, I don't know why we  
22 weren't listened to, but I -- I called many times, and the  
23 person on the phone said "well, you know, people that deal  
24 with poles do this, and wiremen do that." And, I said

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 "I'm not asking for wires to be strung. I'm asking for a  
2 pole to be removed, so that we can have emergency vehicles  
3 get through, so we can have the road plowed, so that we  
4 can get out of our houses." And, I'd kind of -- And, I'd  
5 like to know why it was never done for two whole weeks.

6 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, I assume, when  
7 you're saying you "called", that the calls were to Public  
8 Service Company of New Hampshire?

9 (Ms. Walen nodding affirmatively.)

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: I'm certainly not in a  
11 position to know the answer to that particular question.

12 MS. WALEN: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, these are the types  
14 of things that --

15 MS. WALEN: Right.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: -- we're going to be  
17 looking into. But did you also have the chance to reach  
18 out to the local government in Rindge or anybody else, or  
19 the PUC, for that matter?

20 MS. WALEN: I personally didn't, but  
21 other people did.

22 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Yes. Okay.

23 MS. WALEN: It was kind of my job to  
24 call PSNH. Another person's job was to call Rindge, and

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 another person's job was to call your Commission. And,  
2 you know, another person actually called Homeland  
3 Security, because it was getting to a point where they  
4 were beginning to fear for their lives, because of noise  
5 that we were hearing about generators being stolen and  
6 stuff, but it was all word-of-mouth. We didn't know what  
7 was going on, because we had no power, no Internet, and no  
8 phone.

9 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, thank you. I  
10 mean, these are certainly many of the types of incidents  
11 we've heard about, and it's really what's pushing us to  
12 make sure we can do everything, in terms of -- and this  
13 seems to be another subset of the communications issue,  
14 how are communications improved so the right resources  
15 will get to the right place at the right time. But, thank  
16 you. James Clark.

17 MR. CLARK: Good evening. And, thanks  
18 for the opportunity. My major complaint would be with  
19 PSNH, in the way they handled the, you know, the aftermath  
20 of the storm. I realize, you know, that they're busy and  
21 this and that, but I thought they could be a lot more  
22 truthful and a lot more accurate for the information that  
23 we were getting. Between my wife, my daughter, and I, we  
24 must have made 25 calls. And, the shortest wait I think

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 was probably half an hour. And, you can imagine the  
2 anxiety of waiting so long just to talk to a person, and  
3 not a recording. And, we lost power, you know, on the  
4 evening of the 11th. Two days later, a couple of guys  
5 from PSNH knocked on my door and asked if they could cross  
6 my property to get to a transmission line that's up on  
7 Federal Hill Road, in Milford. There was a tree down on  
8 the transmission line, and it apparently had knocked out  
9 part of Hollis and Brookline. And, we said "By all means.  
10 You know, anything for the cause."

11 I'm disabled, but my wife and my  
12 daughter and my next door neighbor were out back with  
13 chainsaws, clearing a way for their equipment to get out  
14 to do the work on the transmission line. Two or three  
15 days later -- well, we were out of power for twelve days.  
16 At probably seven days after the outage began, everybody  
17 else on my street had power. The reason I didn't have  
18 power, because the line from my house to the street was  
19 taken down. One of the calls I made to PSNH was on the --  
20 I believe it was on the evening of the 18th, at about 6:00  
21 at night. I finally got ahold of a person. And, I was --  
22 I was pleading with him, pleading with him, to see if he  
23 could get somebody over to, you know, to hook up our  
24 power.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1                   We have eight horses, a number of dogs,  
2           I have two infant grandchildren, and my daughter all  
3           living with us. And, like the fellow to your left, I  
4           wasn't about to take my critters -- I wasn't about to part  
5           with my critters to go to a shelter. The answer I got,  
6           and I mentioned the fact that, you know, that we allowed  
7           the, you know, the crew to get out back. The answer I got  
8           was "Nice try." I absolutely couldn't believe it.  
9           Absolutely couldn't believe it.

10                   Like I say, between my wife, my  
11           daughter, and myself, we must have made 25 calls. And,  
12           five days after the rest of the street got their power, we  
13           finally got ours. There was one girl that was driving  
14           around in an SUV, sort of directing, you know, the  
15           tree-trimming crews and this and that. And, I chased her  
16           down. You know, I didn't jump on the truck or anything  
17           like that, but I did chase her down, and asked her if I  
18           could just talk to her, have two minutes to talk to her,  
19           and she kind of blew me off. And, sort of understandably,  
20           but all I was trying to do was be able to pump water out  
21           of well, so I didn't have to, you know, go downtown and  
22           lug the water. And, oh, it was a horror show. But thank  
23           you for your time.

24                   CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Clark.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 Donald Carle. Have I pronounced that correctly?

2 MR. CARLE: You hit it right. We're  
3 aware you experience a little difficulty with the last  
4 names, so it's okay. No, I'm Donald Carle. And, I live  
5 on Noone Avenue, here in Peterborough. And, again,  
6 communication seemed to be one of the problems. We've got  
7 sort of a story here. But, on the night of the storm,  
8 when the lights went out, they went out in our whole  
9 neighborhood, and we were -- there we were. And, very  
10 fortunately, we had heat through a very small coal stove  
11 that's in the fireplace. We had water, because we have  
12 town water, and we cooked with Sterno cans.

13 And, we went along without the  
14 electricity for about a week, and then the crews came.  
15 And, it was on a Thursday or a Friday night. And, I'm not  
16 just sure, from the storm till about that time, and in  
17 that neighborhood the lights all went on. And, all of a  
18 sudden, in 40 seconds, the lights on Noone Avenue, which  
19 there are four houses, went out. And, about five minutes  
20 later, three firetrucks arrived next door to us. And,  
21 they were there for about an hour and a half. And, I went  
22 out to ask, you know, "what's the problem?" And, they  
23 said "Oh, nothing, really." And, I said "Well, wait a  
24 minute. You were here for an hour and a half?" And, they

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 said "Well, there was a little electrical problem."

2                   And, so, the next day I went down to the  
3 Armory to see what was happening and what was going on,  
4 because all the rest of the neighborhood had lights,  
5 except the four houses on Noone Avenue. And, when I got  
6 down to the Armory, I went to get in, and they wouldn't  
7 let me in. The National Guard, a couple of National  
8 Guardsmen came up to me and said "Well, tell us your  
9 story, and we'll pass it onto the people inside." And, I  
10 thought, "well, okay. Fine." And, so, I told them the  
11 story, and they said "Okay, we'll do that. And, you'll  
12 probably hear from us either today or tomorrow." And, I  
13 said "Also, remember, I'm less than a half a mile from  
14 here." And, they "Oh, yeah? Okay." And, nothing  
15 happened.

16                   And, my wife, and the other neighbor on  
17 the other side, we called every morning, oh, 8:00, 8:30,  
18 the senior phone number to the Public Service. And, it  
19 was great. The person on the other end was very polite,  
20 was very nice, and made you feel good. But nothing  
21 happened. And, we'd call a couple of times a day, and was  
22 the same -- same thing "well, they will be in touch with  
23 you today or tomorrow."

24                   And, I went down to the Armory again in

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 a day or two. And, again, I was, what do you want to say,  
2 sort of caught up by the National Guard, and they wouldn't  
3 let me in the Armory, but they would pass the message on  
4 in. And, my next door neighbor there, Bruce, called.  
5 And, we just didn't get any kind of service whatsoever.

6 And, so, it was Wednesday night, the  
7 23rd, I went down to the Armory around 7:30, and there was  
8 no one outside. And, so, I went in. Well, right off the  
9 bat, I was again surrounded by a couple of National  
10 Guards. And, I had the very strong feeling that they were  
11 trying to edge me out. And, I just said "No way, no way.  
12 I've got to talk with somebody from the Public Service."  
13 And, so, finally, a young lady came out, and I told her my  
14 story. Oh. Oh, there was one other thing that I forgot.  
15 We kept getting back from the Public Service on -- that  
16 the computer says we've got electricity. "The computer  
17 tells us that your whole neighborhood has electricity."  
18 And, both Bruce and I kept saying, "Well, we're just human  
19 beings, I know, but we don't have any electricity." And,  
20 so, finally, and she came out again, and she said "Well,  
21 the computer says you have electricity." And, I said  
22 "Well, look, again, I'm a human being, and I know that now  
23 it's up to two weeks that we have had no electricity."

24 And, also, what was tough about part of  
{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1       this thing is that every night we'd look out and all our  
2       neighbors' lights were on. And, it was frustrating. It  
3       was very frustrating. And, we kept getting this from her.  
4       So, anyway, she found -- there was an electrician in the  
5       Armory at this time in the evening. And, he came with me  
6       up to the -- up to the house. And, the first comment was  
7       "You don't have any power, do you?" And, I said, "well,  
8       we've been trying to tell you this for a week, and we have  
9       had no result." And, he said, "well" -- and he looked the  
10      situation over, and he says "I can't do anything about it  
11      tonight. It's a bigger problem than this." And, so, the  
12      next day the crews were up.

13                               Well, what we finally found out, and I  
14      want to be careful about this, but what we finally found  
15      out, the people on the other side of us had just moved  
16      into the house. And, they got hold of a generator, and  
17      they hadn't set it up right. And, so, all of our problem  
18      on Noone Avenue was a faulty set-up of the generator that  
19      he had put in. But, the interesting thing was that, right  
20      that morning, and this was the day before Christmas, so we  
21      were out approximately two full weeks, and one whole week  
22      looking at everybody else enjoying a warm house and  
23      electricity and so forth.

24                               But, right after they finished fixing

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1       our lights and so forth, all of a sudden a part of the  
2       fire department arrived at our other next door neighbor  
3       again. And, we had electricity, but they didn't. And,  
4       so, something went on in that house. I don't know what.  
5       But we couldn't get any information whatsoever. And, I  
6       know there's this privacy and stuff that goes on. But I  
7       do think that, in the situations like this, the neighbor  
8       next door or something ought to know what's going on.  
9       And, so, it was a couple of days before they got  
10      electricity, but we did. And, the electrician said that  
11      they had bypassed this other house.

12                   And, so -- But that was our -- we were  
13      quite frustrated Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but we  
14      have cooled down, and things are fine. And, we do want to  
15      compliment, and I think a lot of people have, the crews.  
16      They were outstanding. They were outstanding. But we --  
17      the inner something of the Public Service we were quite  
18      frustrated over. Thanks very much.

19                   CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Carle.  
20      And, again, it's another example of the communications  
21      issues that have to be addressed. Thank you. Nicole  
22      MacShay.

23                   MS. MacSTAY: MacStay.

24                   CHAIRMAN GETZ: MacStay.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 MS. MacSTAY: I'm the Assistant to the  
2 Town Administrator here in Peterborough, and I'm also a  
3 resident of Peterborough. I basically lived this entire  
4 situation as an municipal employee. And, I don't really  
5 want to go into too much detail, and I don't want to  
6 belabor any points. But Peterborough is the health care  
7 and commerce center of this region, this part of the  
8 Monadnock Region. And, I'm sorry, I'm been sick recently,  
9 so my voice is a little -- we found that the east-to-west  
10 Emergency Management Plan that PSNH has, where they  
11 address the East Coast, and then work their way west in a  
12 case -- in an emergency like this, really ignores the  
13 important regional centers, like Peterborough and other  
14 towns and small cities across the state. Monadnock  
15 Community Hospital and nursing homes, we have a number of  
16 nursing homes in town suffered without electricity, which  
17 results in a reduction of services. Also, the local  
18 businesses suffered. Roy's Market, for instance, which is  
19 a small grocery store here in town, had to put out all of  
20 their refrigerated stock on the back porch because it just  
21 went bad. Also, as this was two weeks before Christmas,  
22 you can imagine what that did to our local shops.

23 Public safety was also compromised by  
24 fallen wires that were entangled in tree branches and

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 trees themselves, as well as poles. And, I'm not going to  
2 go too much into depth on that, because I know you've  
3 received the reports from Chief Lenox, our Fire Chief, and  
4 Chief Guinard, our Police Chief. But, to say the least,  
5 when the trees are wrapped in wires and they're down, we  
6 don't know if they're live or not. Of course, it made it  
7 very difficult for us to make access for our emergency  
8 response vehicles. And, so, the service that we provide  
9 to our residents was severely compromised.

10 Also, Old Street Road, which is where  
11 the hospital is located, also had a number of downed trees  
12 and wires, which made access to the hospital itself very  
13 difficult for us and for residents and for neighboring  
14 towns.

15 PSNH Customer Service Reps, for most of  
16 my experience, and the experience of most people that I  
17 spoke to, most of our residents, were always very polite.  
18 But, unfortunately, we were told repeatedly, both  
19 residents and municipal officials, that "Don't worry,  
20 we'll get to you tomorrow. We're going to be out there  
21 tomorrow." This did not help us. They weren't here  
22 tomorrow, or the day after that. Unfortunately, it took  
23 many days. And, that made us -- that left us in a  
24 position where we could not make informed decisions about

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1       our plans. What are we going to do? What are residents  
2       going to do? We had a number of people who called us  
3       saying "Should I shut down my house? Should I drain my  
4       pipes? Should I go stay with my sister? Should I, you  
5       know, leave early for, you know, my winter home? Should I  
6       purchase a generator? Should I purchase extra food?  
7       Should I purchase extra wood? More bottled water? What  
8       will I do?"

9                       Essentially, avoidance of making a  
10       difficult or unpopular decision and prediction is just not  
11       a good solution. That was a real -- That really slowed  
12       things down for us, and I think made things much more  
13       difficult for PSNH. I think, if we had been given some  
14       reasonable time frame, we could have dealt with that.

15                      Communication with town officials was a  
16       real problem. And, I know you've heard a lot about this.  
17       But PSNH chose, of course, to communicate by e-mail,  
18       except that, when you have no electricity, you don't have  
19       e-mail. And, when we did finally get our generator back  
20       up and when Comcast livened our line on Tuesday, following  
21       the original ice storm, our Public Works Director, Rodney  
22       Bartlett, had over 40 e-mails from PSNH, you know, with  
23       some status updates on what they were doing. But,  
24       unfortunately, the "no news is good news" policy doesn't

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 work in a situation like this. If they -- Many of the  
2 e-mails said "If you have problems, please, you know,  
3 respond back to this e-mail." Well, it was impossible.

4 One of our big issues was Peterborough  
5 Police Department called repeatedly about a downed power  
6 line at the top of Temple Mountain and on Route 101. If  
7 you know that route, that stretch of road right there, in  
8 front of Pack Monadnock/Miller State Park, it's two lanes  
9 of highway, but there's also a passing lane. The pole was  
10 down in such a way that it completely covered the passing  
11 lane and the right-hand lane of the highway, so there was  
12 only one way around. And, it's at the top of the hill, so  
13 you couldn't -- and also on a bit of a curve. So, traffic  
14 trying to get around this pole couldn't see what was  
15 coming up a hill in the other direction.

16 For three days that pole was in the  
17 middle of the highway. The Police Department called about  
18 just about every half hour for that whole three days.  
19 And, it wasn't until we had an 18-wheeler get tangled up  
20 in the wires itself, and Chief Guinard called PSNH and  
21 saying that "If you don't come out and clear up this pole,  
22 we're going to shut down Route 101", that we finally got a  
23 response.

24 It is our opinion that, if PSNH chooses  
{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 to continue using e-mail, which is fine, I mean, it's a  
2 great means of communication, it would be good to follow  
3 up with some kind of a face-to-face contact in these kinds  
4 of situations. I don't think it was clear to the State,  
5 to PSNH, to anybody else exactly how significantly  
6 impacted this region was by the ice storm for a number of  
7 days into the incident. If you could just stop by the  
8 Police Department, stop by the Fire Department, someone  
9 can just make sure that, you know, everything -- no news  
10 is good news, you know, that's fine.

11 One problem, I don't know if this has  
12 been addressed in any of your other sessions, but we  
13 obviously operate by street maps. When someone says that  
14 their power is out at 2 Main Street, we know where 2 Main  
15 Street is. PSNH operates by circuits and grids. And, the  
16 two do not seem to mesh particularly well. It was our  
17 experience, even after PSNH came out in force later, well,  
18 about a week into the event, that when we would say "The  
19 power is out on Lounsbury Lane." They would say "Okay,  
20 what grid is that in?" We couldn't tell them. We don't  
21 know where their circuits are, where their grids are.

22 Our GIS Coordinator, our Geographical  
23 Information System specialist, provided complete -- our  
24 complete layers to PSNH, that includes, obviously, our

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 street maps, all of our utilities, a topography, we even  
2 have really beautiful aerial photographs. We provided all  
3 those to PSNH. They didn't provide their grid or circuit  
4 maps to us, which, you know, we understand it's considered  
5 proprietary information. But we can't communicate to them  
6 in their language, which made it very difficult for us to  
7 tell them where, you know, there were great need. And,  
8 this is really a language barrier that probably results in  
9 a prolonging of the event for Peterborough, and I'm sure  
10 for all the other towns in the area.

11 We have a couple suggestions. Simply  
12 that there needs to be local representation on PSNH's  
13 Emergency Response Preparedness Team. We can contribute.  
14 We know our area, we know our needs, we know where the  
15 important -- where the primary focus goes first, then  
16 secondary, then tertiary. We need a way to bridge the  
17 streets versus circuits and grids divide. We need better  
18 communication, so that we can help PSNH and PSNH can help  
19 us.

20 We feel PSNH needs to address damage  
21 assessment protocol. Again, that brings us back to that  
22 Peterborough, while it's a small town, it's a health care  
23 center and a commerce center in this area. And, the  
24 east-to-west plan that PSNH followed during this event

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 really didn't address our needs. I'm not exactly sure,  
2 but our hospital was without power for a number of days.  
3 One of our nursing homes was without power for eleven  
4 days. Their generator was well beyond its safe run at  
5 that point.

6 Communication. A lack of information  
7 made small problems difficult or if not impossible to  
8 surmount. We need to know if -- how long it's going to  
9 take. We need to know where they are in the process. To  
10 be told, day after day, "we're going to be there  
11 tomorrow", doesn't help our residents and it doesn't help  
12 us serve our residents. And, in general, reassessment of  
13 the east-to-west strategy.

14 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. I just  
15 wanted to --

16 MS. MacSTAY: Absolutely. Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Two things. One was the  
18 issue of the circuits, and how that intersects with the  
19 local references to streets and avenues was an issue that,  
20 you know, came up very early on, and there is a  
21 significant mapping process that the PUC Safety Division  
22 and EOC, well, the Emergency Management, through the  
23 Emergency Operations Center, is really working hard to try  
24 to address that, so people are talking the same language.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 And, the second thing is, I mean, it's of little comfort  
2 now, but I just wanted to say that both Chris and I spent  
3 a lot of time on the phone with the officials from  
4 Peterborough.

5 MS. MacSTAY: Yes, you did.

6 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, I think that the  
7 Fire Chief, Police Chief, Town Manager, everybody involved  
8 on behalf of Peterborough did a heck of a job for the  
9 folks here.

10 MS. MacSTAY: Thank you. And, we  
11 appreciate that. And, you did -- you did help. I mean,  
12 I'm not trying to minimize what you did. DRED was the  
13 first responder from the State. And, they called up and  
14 said "What can we do for you?" As soon as we had phone  
15 lines working again, they were one of the first phone  
16 calls that we received. And, they sent out tree-trimming  
17 trucks, and they started working on the east side of town,  
18 and working their way inward to help with the worst  
19 impacted area. Our highway crews, we had three plowable  
20 events while all this was going on. So, our highway crews  
21 were really straight out and busy. It was very difficult  
22 for them to do all of the debris removal that needed to be  
23 done. So, DRED was fantastic. And, we really appreciated  
24 that, that offer of help and support.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 CMSR. BELOW: I have a question.

2 MS. MacSTAY: Yes. Absolutely.

3 CMSR. BELOW: You mentioned that there  
4 were poles or power lines that partially blocked access to  
5 the hospital.

6 MS. MacSTAY: Yes.

7 CMSR. BELOW: How long before those were  
8 addressed?

9 MS. MacSTAY: I'm not sure exactly, to  
10 be quite honest. I have all that information. I didn't  
11 bring it all with me. But I'm sure it's in Mr. Pope's  
12 report as well.

13 CMSR. BELOW: Okay.

14 MS. MacSTAY: Okay?

15 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

16 DIR. POPE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Andre Wood.

18 MR. WOOD: I'm from Greenfield. We were  
19 out of power for thirteen and a half days. My neighbor up  
20 the hill was out of power past Christmas Eve. So, we took  
21 the brunt of it. Now, I was in a unique position, in that  
22 I had a generator and an ISP, and I got incredibly lucky  
23 in the tree, at the end of my driveway, which took the  
24 power lines down further up the hill, who noticed, because

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 all the power is out anyway, left my phone lines. So, I  
2 actually had internet connectivity and I actually had  
3 phone connectivity, and I had a generator. I'm sitting  
4 happy.

5 But the unique position of it is is that  
6 I also got to see, through the internet, and through  
7 calling the phone company and through calling the power  
8 company, that a couple of things really stood out. One,  
9 communication was horrid. They're just -- The power  
10 company didn't really know where we were, didn't know what  
11 the problem was. Would give me status information back  
12 that said "Yes, we'll get to it tomorrow. Hey, we're in  
13 your town today." I drove around my town. They were not  
14 in my town. My town is not that big. I knew they weren't  
15 in my town. I told them they weren't in my town. They  
16 didn't seem to know.

17 Finally, about day 12, day 10,  
18 somewhere, it's hard to keep track, because I didn't get a  
19 lot of sleep, I figured out that they didn't know where my  
20 town was. I'm in Greenfield, not Greenville. If you live  
21 in either one of these towns, you figure out real fast  
22 that people get confused. But the power company, who  
23 bills me regularly, you should think they would know.  
24 They clearly didn't. People in both towns must have been

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 really frustrated, because we've got a lot of damage, and  
2 neither one of us was getting valid information. It was  
3 just bad communication.

4                   The other thing I discovered was is that  
5 every time you called up the power company, they do a  
6 great job of making you feel good, but nothing ever came  
7 of it. Well, part of the reason why nothing ever came of  
8 it, they would collect all this wonderful information and  
9 their system apparently flushed it, so they didn't have it  
10 for the next day. This is why we got into the habit, and  
11 it spread across like wildfire across those people who  
12 were on line and across the Twitter feeds that you had to  
13 call daily, because there was no memory of the prior day's  
14 call. This is really bad information management. It's a  
15 multiday event. Why would you flush information from a  
16 prior day out of your systems? It's still valid. I don't  
17 understand. This is just really not professional quality  
18 information management. And, I do this for a living. You  
19 know, PSNH should be better at this. And, they should  
20 know where the towns are.

21                   It would be really, really nice if you  
22 could access information, if you had connectivity, still,  
23 to find out where the problem really was, that you could  
24 get an accurate estimate as to when things were going to

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 be fixed. I had perfect connectivity. I couldn't tell  
2 you that the hospital wasn't up and connected. I should  
3 be able to find that out. The Twitter feeds should be  
4 able to tell me, at the very least. That was a great  
5 idea. Of course, it suffers the same problem with e-mail.  
6 If you have no access to it, what good does it do you?  
7 So, it kind of fails on that critical "last mile" issue.

8 So, my biggest complaint was the  
9 communication. It really was horrid. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: About the Twitter, could  
11 you tell me, how useful did you find it? I mean, and  
12 putting aside the issue, if you don't have connectivity,  
13 you can't see it, but did you find it useful?

14 MR. WOOD: I found it useful, because it  
15 confirmed that PSNH didn't know where I lived, and didn't  
16 know where the problem was, and me telling them had no  
17 effect. I mean, I would send off a Twitter, because  
18 finally I found somebody I could get to respond who might  
19 have a clue. And, they said "Yes, we're getting to you.  
20 Here's the town status report. See, we're in your town."  
21 Well, no, they're not in my town. You know. You came  
22 through my town, you brought up one line that went up 31,  
23 it went up to Crotched Mountain, whom I found out didn't  
24 actually have power at some point when they should have

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 had, but the circuit was there. And, then, you went on  
2 out, you know, Forest Road. Okay. Well, I know where the  
3 substation is. And, I found out through Twitter that that  
4 substation wasn't functional. So, the power obviously is  
5 coming up out of Wilton. Okay. Or, maybe it's coming  
6 down out of Bennington. It's hard to tell. But, clearly,  
7 it's coming from somewhere, because the center of town has  
8 got power, my selectman has got power. He's telling me  
9 things aren't that bad. Well, I'm sorry, he didn't have  
10 thirteen and a half days with no power, and I had to keep  
11 a generator going. And, trust me, you don't get a lot of  
12 sleep.

13 But what Twitter actually really did for  
14 us is it proved that PSNH just didn't have a clue. Sorry.

15 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

16 MR. WOOD: You're welcome.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Ken Young.

18 MR. YOUNG: Yes. I live in Sharon.

19 And, if you don't have anybody else here from Sharon, my  
20 words to you is that they did an awfully good job. I got  
21 electricity after Christmas. But I live in a house that's  
22 impossible from the road, it's 400 feet away from the  
23 road. There's a pole outside on the road, has a gen --  
24 well, it has a transformer, and the line goes over my

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 garage, through a garden. They couldn't get close to the  
2 house with downed limbs, treetops and so forth, and the  
3 line had been pulled off an interior telephone pole that  
4 had about 250 feet away from the road. That had been  
5 pulled down. That pole was in the middle of my driveway.  
6 But they, from all intents and purposes, you couldn't get  
7 to it.

8                   So, I was out of a phone, I was out of  
9 electricity. The wood stove didn't like the idea of  
10 frosted, ice-covered wood. And, I finally pulled out and  
11 went to Nashua. The only amusing thing for your records  
12 is that I guess I got to Nashua about a day and a half,  
13 maybe two days after the ice storm. And, of course,  
14 Milford didn't have any electricity. And, cars were  
15 driving all over looking for a gas station, and they  
16 weren't having any luck. And, just this side of Milford,  
17 a Dunkin' Donuts had apparently a generator and they had  
18 electricity. Have you ever seen 100 cars lined up outside  
19 a Dunkin' Donuts, waiting for coffee, or whatever they  
20 could get inside. It was fun.

21                   I evacuated with two cats. And, I came  
22 back every couple days to see if the power was up. And, I  
23 guess a day -- the day, either the day before Christmas or  
24 the day after, I discovered that the line had been pulled

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 out of the snow, out of underneath the trees, they cut  
2 down all sorts of birches to try to get the line back up  
3 to the house. And, my gosh, they had gotten it up. They  
4 had even put it up on an interior pole, and it was  
5 connected to the house.

6 Well, almost. The meter box, and I have  
7 a fancy one, had been pulled off the house in the ice  
8 storm. So, some out-of-state utility workers went through  
9 all that, it looked like, you know, the Battle of the  
10 Bulge you see in those old World War II documentaries. I  
11 thought, "Gee, I was living through that again." The  
12 electricity, the line had been pulled back up, most of it  
13 replaced, put back on the house, but, of course, an  
14 out-of-state group is not going to tackle that utility  
15 meter box on the house. That was still yanked off, and I  
16 still didn't have any electricity.

17 Well, I'm not in desperate shape. I can  
18 drive back and forth between Nashua and Sharon. The road  
19 was opened finally. The State had to open it with a  
20 grader after the storm. And, he kept -- I could hear him  
21 come up the hill, and then he would have to back up. He'd  
22 have to come up the hill a little more, and then he would  
23 have to back up. He kept snagging a phone line or he kept  
24 snagging a power line. And, so, they finally did open it.

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 And, I thought "Gee, if that was Patton in a tank, he  
2 would have just driven right over the stuff."

3 But, for some group, out-of-state, that  
4 made it through my -- the house is completely obscured by  
5 trees, now it's completely obscured by, you know, fallen  
6 branches. Those guys did a super job, just trying to get  
7 the lines out of the snow, out from underneath all of  
8 these branches and treetops and finally get it connected.

9 Okay. They finally hooked up the meter  
10 box the day after Christmas. And, really, from my  
11 standpoint, I couldn't ask for better service. The only  
12 problem I had was I tried my daughter's computer in  
13 Nashua, and I would say "Is the electricity back up on  
14 Jarmony Hill Road?" And, I guess Christmas day they said  
15 "Yes, it is." And, I said "well, how about 243? My meter  
16 box is still off." "Okay. We'll look into it." And,  
17 sure enough, the day after Christmas somebody came over  
18 and looked at it. For battlefield conditions, where I am  
19 not the biggest casualty on the road, and I can survive by  
20 myself, and I can evacuate. By the way, getting over  
21 Temple Mountain wasn't too bad, if you had a four-wheel  
22 drive truck. And, back and forth I went every couple  
23 days.

24 And, really, in hindsight, if you look

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 at what Public Service did, it was a super job. Almost  
2 unbelievable, given the scope of the problem. And, hey, I  
3 don't think Patton could have solved it any faster, if he  
4 had to deal with the Battle of the Bulge all over again.  
5 And, I thank you gentlemen very much.

6 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Young.  
7 And, I just want to say, as Chris said at the beginning,  
8 and it applies to PUC as well, if there's anyone who  
9 wanted to talk about some issues, but didn't want to talk  
10 publicly, after the meeting we'll be over near the door,  
11 if anyone wants to raise any particular issues.

12 And, Anne Richards.

13 MS. RICHARDS: I'm from Mason, same as  
14 my friend, John, who was sitting next to me. And, the  
15 gentleman ahead of me spoke about George Patton driving  
16 over the wires is what he'd do. In Mason, you had three  
17 choices: Going over the wire, run around it, or drive  
18 under it. And, I do know some people were pretty unwise  
19 and went and cut some of the wires, just to make it easier  
20 for themselves.

21 But what I really wanted to comment on  
22 was we keep talking about communication. Nobody's  
23 mentioned using short-wave radio. We did the other night,  
24 Chris had somebody mention that. But, with the ham radio

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 operators, if you have a network, you can do a fair amount  
2 with them.

3 But I would like to comment on WMUR,  
4 Channel 9. They did an excellent job with their storm  
5 clips. And, then, they ran a lovely thing on the bottom,  
6 which was very informational, with where you could go for  
7 water, where you could go for showers, all those things.  
8 And, then, they would stop and say "Now you can go to your  
9 computer." Well, I had a diesel generator running out of  
10 my motor coach for our electricity. Mason is dial-up  
11 mostly. So, with no electricity, no telephone, and I  
12 didn't have telephone for 17 days. So, that was very  
13 disappointing, to be referred to your computer, and  
14 somebody else mentioned that this evening, that "go to the  
15 computer", but you can't do that unless you have all your  
16 facilities operating with that.

17 So, that's about all I wanted, to bring  
18 that up, so the next time perhaps WMUR won't continue that  
19 and not make us wonder "Well, now what?"

20 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. That's all  
21 the sheets I've gotten of people that indicated they  
22 wanted to speak. I don't know if Chris had anything in  
23 closing?

24 DIR. POPE: Only to say that we

{December Ice Storm Hearing @ Peterborough 03-18-09}

1 sincerely mean that we appreciate you taking time out of  
2 your busy lives to come and talk about this. And, you  
3 know, I think we got some very important feedback tonight.  
4 I've taken a number of pages of notes. I'm focusing  
5 mostly on the non-utility comments. And, there were a lot  
6 of non-utility comments. So, I've got a number of issues  
7 I want to follow up on.

8 In particular, the issue with the  
9 hospital and the nursing home, I would like some  
10 follow-up. And, somebody mentioned that they had called  
11 Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and I'll have  
12 to go back through my notes, but I'm hoping you'll  
13 remember who you were, and that you didn't get any help.  
14 And, so, if you could just see me afterwards, I'd like to  
15 hear a little bit more about that, too.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Then, we'll close  
17 the public statement hearing for this evening. And, thank  
18 you all for coming out. We appreciate it. Thank you.

19 (Whereupon the public statement hearing  
20 ended at 8:15 p.m.)

21  
22  
23  
24

