

# News Release

**Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 25, 2007**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: Michelann Ooten, Public Information Officer**

**405-521-2481 office; 405-205-1879 cell**

## **OEM OPENING ICE STORM DAMAGE ASSESSMENT LINE**

*Individuals, business owners with uninsured damages urged to call toll-free number*

In order to better collect damage reports related to the Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> ice storm, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) will open a call center tomorrow (Friday, Jan. 26). Residents and business owners who have uninsured damages are urged to call the toll-free Oklahoma Ice Storm Damage Assessment Line (877) 628-5297 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Operators will be on-hand to take the calls daily.

The call center is needed to gather preliminary damage information to strengthen the state's application for federal disaster assistance for individuals and business owners. For more than a week, damage assessment teams have surveyed damage in the hardest hit areas. However, due to the high number of rural residents impacted and because storm debris has made some areas difficult to access, OEM is operating the call center.

"We are asking anyone with uninsured damage caused by the ice storm to please call," explained OEM Director Albert Ashwood. "These damage numbers will help us make the case for additional federal assistance," he said.

Callers will be asked to provide their name, address of the damaged property and the type damage their property sustained. They will also be asked if they sustained financial loss because their business or place of employment was closed due to the ice storm.

The OEM announcement comes as approximately 2,700 electric customers remain without power across the state and as Oklahoma awaits word on Gov. Brad Henry's request to Pres. George W. Bush for a major disaster declaration to help communities and impacted by the ice storm.

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Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** January 26, 2007 **FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Michelann Ooten, Public Information Officer 405-521-2481 office; 405-205-1879 cell

## ICE STORM DAMAGE ASSESSMENT LINE VERY BUSY WITH CALLS

High call volume on the Oklahoma Ice Storm Damage Assessment Line has prompted emergency officials to urge patience. The call center opened at 7 a.m. today and by noon 130 calls had been received. The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) opened the call center to receive reports from individuals and business owners who sustained uninsured damage in the Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> ice storm. OEM will continue to operate the toll-free line, (877) 628-5297 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily.

"The call center is needed to strengthen the state's application for federal disaster assistance for individuals and business owners," explained OEM Director Albert Ashwood. "The phones have continued to ring since we activated the program this morning."

"Many of the calls concern food that spoiled when power outages occurred and we want to remind Oklahomans there is no government program that reimburses individuals for the loss of food," added Ashwood.

Those calling to report damages are asked to provide their name, address of the damaged property and the type damage their property sustained. They are also asked if they sustained financial loss because their business or place of employment was closed due to the ice storm.

The OEM announcement comes as approximately 1,800 electric customers remain without power across the state and as Oklahoma awaits word on Gov. Brad Henry's request to Pres. George W. Bush for a major disaster declaration to help communities and individuals impacted by the ice storm.

# *News Release*

## **Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 2, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Michelann Ooten, Public Information Officer

405-521-2481 office; 405-205-1879 cell

### **INDIVIDUALS WITH UNINSURED ICE STORM DAMAGE URGED TO CALL**

#### *State's Damage Assessment Line to Close Monday*

The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) needs to hear from all who sustained uninsured or under-insured damage in the Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> ice storm. Individuals and business owners are urged to call the Oklahoma Ice Storm Damage Assessment Line (877) 628-5297 before it closes Monday at 7 p.m.

Already more than 2,400 calls have been received on the toll free line which opened a week ago. Calls are taken from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. The damage reports are needed to strengthen the state's application for federal disaster assistance for individuals and business owners.

Many of the callers report roof, window and fence damage caused by downed trees. Still other callers report electric meters pulled from homes by downed power lines and damage to electric systems and appliances. Fire damage to some homes has also been reported.

Additionally, individuals are reporting medical conditions complicated by the ice storm. The reports show extended power outages contributed to depleted wheelchair batteries and insulin supplies and damaged oxygen concentrators needed for asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Those calling to report damages are asked to provide their name, address of the damaged property and the type damage their property sustained. They are also asked if they sustained financial loss because their business or place of employment was closed due to the ice storm.

On Thursday, Pres. George W. Bush granted a major disaster declaration to assist Delaware, McIntosh, Muskogee and Pittsburg counties with infrastructure damage and clean up related to the ice storm. The declaration failed to deliver assistance to individuals and business owners impacted by the storm.

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

Matt Skinner, Public Information

Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [m.skinner@occemail.com](mailto:m.skinner@occemail.com)

03-13-2007

## **STAY AWAY, STAY SAFE**

*Commissioners warn oilfield sites only for professionals*

(Oklahoma City) A recent incident in which a 15 year-old boy was badly burned at an oil-field tank battery has prompted another warning from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission about the need for the general public to stay clear of such sites.

Commission Chairman Jeff Cloud said part of the problem might be that such facilities are a common sight to many Oklahomans.

“Many times we either forget or don’t fully grasp the potential danger of something simply because we’re accustomed to it,” noted Cloud. “Some children wrongly see oil and gas sites as potential playgrounds. We even have reports of adults using them as hunting blinds. But the reality is such sites are only for trained professionals who know exactly what to do and, just as importantly, what not to do around such equipment.”

Commissioner Bob Anthony said oil field safety begins in the home.

“There are caring parents who wouldn’t dream of allowing their children to run around unsupervised in a factory. Oil and gas sites are no different. They are no place for children or the layman.”

Commissioner Denise Bode said the Commission works with other organizations to promote oilfield safety.

“Every year the Commission gives the Michael Jenkins Award to an individual who has gone to great lengths to educate our children about the dangers of playing around oilfield equipment. Michael Jenkins was 12 years old when he was killed while playing on a tank battery. His parents founded the Michael 4 Safety Foundation to help educate school children on oilfield safety. The Commission also works with the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) to promote such education in the classroom and the media. Urge your local school to allow us and the other organizations to come speak to your school, church or community group to outline the dangers in person.”

The Commissioners also noted that there is excellent material on oil field safety available for free to schools, parents and the general public through the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board and Michael 4 Safety. For more information, go to [www.oerb.com](http://www.oerb.com) and [www.michael4safety.org](http://www.michael4safety.org).

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

Matt Skinner, Public Information

Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 521-6945, [m.skinner@occemail.com](mailto:m.skinner@occemail.com)

March 28, 2007

## **Media Advisory**

**Who: Oklahoma Corporation Commissioners**

**What: Hearing on alleged violations by Public Gas Company. Public Gas customers and members of the general public are welcome to attend and participate.**

**When: March 29 @ 3 p.m.**

**Where: Pittsburg County Courthouse  
Oklahoma State university Extension Conference  
Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
115 East Carol Albert Parkway  
McAlester, OK**

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All OCC advisories and releases are available at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 521-6945 [m.skinner@occemail.com](mailto:m.skinner@occemail.com)**

**May 30th, 2007**

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**A public Oath of Office ceremony and reception honoring new Corporation Commissioner Jim Roth will be held on Monday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.**

**The event will take place in the Commission courtroom (Room 301) of the Jim Thorpe Building, 2101 North Lincoln Boulevard.**

**-OCC-**

**(All OCC advisories and news releases are available at the Commission web site [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us))**

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [m.skinner@occemail.com](mailto:m.skinner@occemail.com)**

**December 12, 2007**

## **OVER AND UNDER**

*Commissioners urge patience, look for progress in reducing power outages*

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission says the state's regulated electric utilities deserve praise for their all-out effort to restore power to the state. The Commissioners add, however, that given the fact that damage done by the ice storm has weather-related power outages at a record high for Oklahoma's most populated areas, even with the best efforts, it will take time to completely restore power.

The Commission is also looking beyond the immediate crisis, and once the crisis is passed and power is restored, will ask those electric utilities under Commission jurisdiction to work with the Commission to conduct an in-depth analysis on the feasibility of moving more power lines underground.

"The focus of the utilities at this time must be and most certainly is on restoring power," said Commission Chairman Jeff Cloud. "But there is also the fact that we've already had two so-called 'storms of the century' this year. The ice storm in January of this year which so severely impacted eastern Oklahoma and the present storm that has caused record power outages are proof positive that we need to aggressively pursue an answer to the kind of things Mother Nature can throw at us.

"While many new power lines are being run underground, there has been only limited movement in regards to moving existing overhead lines," added Cloud. "Public Service Company of Oklahoma has made a laudable effort in this regard, and working together with all the utilities in question, we can carefully examine whether more can be done."

Vice-Chair Bob Anthony says under Oklahoma law, these decisions are subject to utility company management discretion, with the Commission to determine appropriate and recoverable costs.

"The high costs of burying lines need to be weighed against the benefits of such a program. We must also remember that both underground and aboveground power lines have a finite life, and must be replaced, each with certain inherent difficulties," said Anthony.

There's more at stake here than simply keeping the lights on, noted Commissioner Jim Roth.

"Obviously, safe, reliable power is one of the cornerstones of our state's economy," said Roth. "But there is a very real human element to outages like the one we are currently experiencing. From the utility workers who are risking their lives to get power going, to the emergency workers trying to make sure we're safe, to the homeowner trying to stay warm, we all have a stake in doing what we can to try and solve this problem. We look forward to working with the utilities in this regard."

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