



# POWERWORKS

## Ice Storm, 2013

Early on December 20, 2013, a severe ice storm struck central and eastern Canada. The storm lasted three days but many felt the effects much longer. At one point, 600,000 electrical utility customers were without power. PWU members working for Hydro One and many local distribution companies rose to the challenge, many making significant personal sacrifices to get the lights and heat back on.



PWU Workers from PowerStream work to restore power.

The ice accumulation had major impacts on the Hydro One distribution system causing downed trees and broken poles. Over an eight-day period, more than 585,000 Hydro One customers were hit by power outages. By December 27th, power was restored to 97 percent of affected customers. More than 1,400 employees worked 16-hour shifts for nine days to respond over 60,000 incident reports, many involving thousands of customers. At least 300 employees cancelled their vacations to work to restore power and Electrical Forester Journeypersons were recalled from standoff to chip in.



Hydro One also received assistance from workers at 15 local distribution companies including London Hydro, Newmarket Hydro, Norfolk Power and Orangeville Hydro where the PWU has members.

PowerStream lost about 92,000 customers and Whitby Hydro, Halton Hills Hydro and Milton Hydro lost thousands more.

Here was the experience of PWU member Steve Payne from Hydro One Forestry based in Barrie:

The storm hit the afternoon of Saturday December 21st. I went to work on Monday December 23rd at 5 a.m. I drove to Guelph and the ice on the trees got heavier as I went. It was very heavy near Caledon and Orangeville. The Town of Fergus had no power at all when I went through.

When I got to the Guelph area office, there was about two inches of ice on everything. That's not quite as much as the ice storm of 1998 when there was about four inches of ice.

We got our orders to meet up with a Hydro One line crew from Blind River. They were working on three-phase line south of Guelph. Upon meeting this crew, we were shown the section of line that was isolated and de-energized. The line crew flagged traffic for us while we started removing hanging and broken limbs off the line. That job took us a few hours until the linemen were able to give the all clear and reactivate the line.



For the next few days we worked on single-phase lines in 16-hour shifts. Fallen trees caused most of the line problems. The conifers caused the largest problems since they keep their needles year round and leaned most heavily on the lines. The deciduous trees looked like chandeliers. Some side roads had the lines hidden under leaning trees. In other places, the weight of the ice caused the lines to snap.

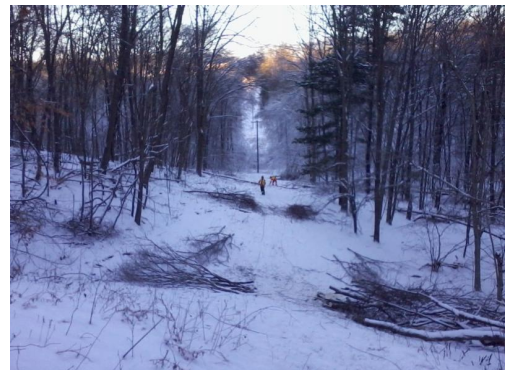
My forestry partner and I used a 55-foot lift and a hydraulic saw. The saw allowed us to cut off hanging limbs from about six feet away, which reduced the possibility of getting hit by trees and wires under tension.

My crew got to go home on Christmas Eve but was back at it at 8 a.m. on Boxing Day. We were finally released to go home on December 29th.

The homeowners in the Guelph area were great. They thanked us for our efforts and even dropped off coffee. The Blind River Line crew worked on Christmas Day and a thoughtful homeowner brought them some turkey dinner!

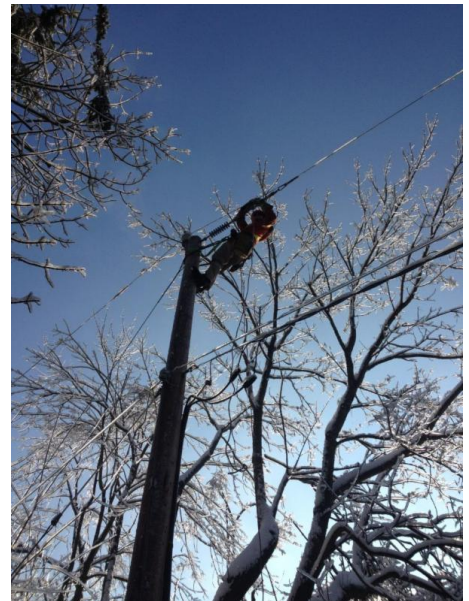
Rudy Kerec worked on a Hydro One line crew during the storm out of his Thorold home base. Here's how it went for him:

I was called late on Saturday December 21st and was told to report for work the next day at 7 a.m. Our entire shop was called out. Apart from Christmas Day, we worked 16-hour days for eight days straight. On Christmas Day itself, we still had to work six hours, one of 5 a.m. to 11 a.m., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. I chose the last shift so that I could be with my young family on Christmas morning.



I was working with an apprentice crew dealing with off-road incidents, which can be tough. It varied between wires down in the bush and climbing trees. We had some real challenges putting in new poles in steep terrain that the buckets couldn't reach. We'd use the digger to drill the holes and then climb the poles to string the wires.

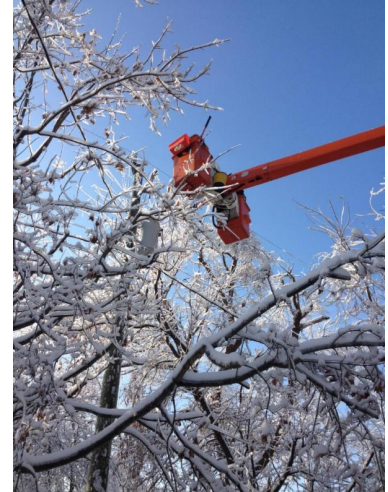
The work was hard because it was bitterly cold and wet. But there were so many people who didn't have power. We were able to restore electricity to about one hundred people for Christmas Eve and Christmas morning even though we had to cut it off again to do more work. Those people were especially grateful.



One special memory came when my young crew complained that they were starving on Christmas Day. They used their iPhones to track down a Starbucks in Waterdown. Although the outlet only had breakfast sandwiches, that became our Christmas dinner, which we shared with an OPP officer and an older couple who were without power and were looking for someplace warm.

Mark Evans is a Hydro One lineman working on a travelling line crew out of Toronto and he reported the following experience:

I was deployed on Saturday night before the worst of the storm had hit. I called around to our crews and three-quarters of them were available immediately. I was sent first to Orangeville, which wasn't too bad, but things just started snowballing. We were then dispatched to Bolton where a major circuit serving 12,000 customers had been knocked out.



We worked 16-hour shifts for eight days right through Christmas and Boxing Day. We worked all over including parts of Toronto and Newmarket. Because of the volume of calls, we were often waiting a while for pole locates. The conditions were frigid with icy roads and ice covering everything. The biggest challenges were the snapped lines.

In the end, this storm response speaks to the best of our Union. PWU members were willing to band together in trying circumstances, even if it meant sacrificing their holidays, to help people out.

The Canadian Tire group of companies donated some \$1,000,000 in gift cards to hydro workers province wide as a thank you for their efforts and, in turn, the donation was directed to the Canadian Red Cross (Ontario Branch). A sign outside a local church said it best: "Merry Christmas and God bless the hydro workers!"



PWU Member Paul Murray from the Electrical Safety Authority talks to a Toronto homeowner.

On December 27th, Hydro One sent crews to help Toronto restoration efforts after bringing back service to their own customers. Toronto Hydro was hit hard by the storm losing power to more than 300,000 customers by the afternoon of December 22nd. Workers, including PWU members, from nine other utility companies from around Ontario, Manitoba and Michigan came to help out.

In a non-descript building in central Ontario is the heart of Ontario's electrical grid. The Ontario Grid Control Centre (OGCC) houses the Dispatchers who assess,

organize and dispatch all electrical trouble calls for Hydro One and the Electrical Controllers who operate 97 percent of the high-tension electrical system for the province. The OGCC became Hydro One's focal point for organizing ice storm restoration activities and these PWU members were put to the ultimate test during the ice storm.

Here are two of their stories:

**Danielle Leslie** (Dispatcher; Dispatchers assess trouble tickets submitted from the Hydro One Call centres and organize the information that is forwarded to the appropriate work crews.)

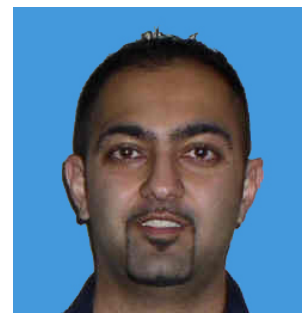


On Dec 22, 2013, many Hydro One customers awoke without power. The ice storm was one of the most damaging Ontarians have seen in years. The damaging winds, freezing rain and countless fallen trees resulted in 37,445 calls from customers and emergency services and 2,800 individual incidents that required a crew.

As a dispatcher, storms are part of the job and monitoring the weather becomes a force of habit. It's the number one predictor of whether you are going to have a normal or hectic day. The role of a dispatcher is to prioritize and track crew responses, monitor the outages, and provide customer support to ensure the quickest restoration time. For many dispatchers, this storm was the most demanding one they have seen in their careers. Our screens were filled with calls from customers, phones were ringing and circuits were tripping.

By Christmas Eve, the number of incidents was reduced to 900 but 27,300 customers were still without power and the workload at the OGCC was still at an all-time high. Many dispatchers had to sacrifice time with their family and friends during the holiday season to assist in the restoration efforts across the province. The restoration efforts lasted over a week with many people stepping up to the plate and putting in the extra effort to ensure that our customers would have power as soon as possible. We came together as a PWU collective with our brothers and sisters in different utilities and sectors pitching in to help our fellow residents in a time of dire need.

**Hafiz Lalani** (Controller; Controllers are responsible for running grid activities including monitoring for any abnormal conditions and responding to alarms.)



When the storm hit, I was called in to be on shift to assist with the work that flooded into the Control Room. This storm

was different than most winter storms. The northern part of the province was, for the most part, unaffected. The urban areas in and around the GTA were hit hardest.

On the two worst days (the 22nd and 23rd), we had 1,126 breaker outages resulting in over 300,000 people being without power outside of Toronto. There were also many unlogged cases of partial feeder outages where the station breakers remained closed but there were outages to portions of the feeds to various customers from devices opening up part way along the line.

Over the course of the four days that it took to get the power back for the majority of affected customers, it was amazing to see the number of dedicated people that were working throughout the different utilities and disciplines. I worked my 12-hour shift from 6:30 p.m. on the 24th through to 6:30 a.m. on the 25th but it wasn't till well after 1 p.m. that we finished up the day's paperwork. Even then, there was still more going on through Boxing Day with the 27th becoming a normal day. To see this event and be part of it was truly an eye opener and shows the real value and expertise of all the people of various disciplines from Operators to Lines and Forestry to Stations staff along with many more.

The PWU is very proud of the way our members and our industry responded to this widespread emergency and the needs of people in the affected communities - it's what we do!

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## Bargaining Calendar, 2014

### Sector 1

AMEC Nuclear Safety Solutions	3/31/2013
Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. (Chalk River)	3/31/2014
Bruce Power	12/31/2013
Compass Food Service Workers (Darlington)	12/31/2014
Compass Food Service Workers (Pickering)	11/21/2013
Nuclear Waste Management Organization	3/31/2014
Nuvia-Canada	12/31/2014

### Sector 2

Atlantic Power	12/19/2013
Brighton Beach Power	11/15/2014
Lake Superior Power	12/31/2013

**Sector 3**

County of Brant	4/30/2014
Electrical Safety Authority	3/31/2014
Entegrus Powerlines	12/31/2014
Grimsby Power	5/31/2014
Independent Electricity System Operator	3/31/2014
Norfolk Power Distribution	12/31/2013
Orangeville Hydro Ltd.	9/30/2014
PUC Services (Inside)	4/30/2014
PUC Services (Outside)	4/30/2014
Kincardine Cable TV (Rogers)	1/31/2014

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## **Settlement with Hydro One Protects PWU Jobs at Inergi and Vertex**

In December, Hydro One and the PWU reached a mediated settlement agreement covering work conducted by two Ontario Hydro successor companies - Inergi and Vertex. Hydro One had announced that it would be tendering the work presently being conducted by Inergi and Vertex. Although the two companies are expected to bid on the respective work packages, there will likely be other bidders and Hydro One will make the ultimate decision. If either Inergi or Vertex were not successful, jobs would have been put at risk and, accordingly, the PWU filed a grievance.

If Inergi and Vertex are the successful bidders, the PWU's bargaining rights will carry on at those companies as will the employment of its members. The settlement requires that Hydro One amend its Request for Proposal (RFP) to require all bidders, as a condition of being permitted to bid, to recognize the PWU as bargaining agent and to conclude a labour agreement with the PWU. The settlement will help set the stage for the protection of jobs, wages and benefits for PWU members at Inergi and Vertex for the multi-year term of the new services contracts resulting from the RFP process.

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## PWU Members Complete Health and Safety Instructors Course

The PWU graduated 13 Workers' Health and Safety Centre (WH&SC) Instructors in early November. These new instructors will be able to teach PWU Health and Safety (H&S) Accreditation training, H&S Certification training and reach out in collaboration with the WH&SC to provide much needed H&S training to workers in their communities. The graduates came from a diverse selection of employers and each person brings workplace experience that enhances their ability to deliver H&S training.



Instructor training encompassed two weeks of training under the leadership of Wayne Galandy from the WH&SC. The students learned how best to teach adults. Each student had to make presentations to the class three times over the two-week period. Each presentation became successively more complex and the final presentation comprised one of the WH&SC basic certification H&S modules.

In the coming months, the new instructors will either be teaching PWU H&S Accreditation training or co-piloting with experienced instructors to gain some confidence. Some of the new instructors will be in the classroom as early as February.



# Last Coal Burned At Nanticoke Generating Station

December 2013 saw the shutdown of the Nanticoke Generating Station when it finished burning the last of its coal supplies. Nanticoke was the largest coal-fired station in North America and had been in operation since 1972. Lambton Generating Station used the last of its coal supplies in September. The PWU has been working closely with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to ensure that member redeployments and voluntary separations are carried out in accordance with the Collective Agreement, which includes provisions specifically negotiated for the closure of OPG coal stations.



The Union will continue to advocate for the conversion of the Nanticoke and Lambton stations to biomass.

The Atikokan Generating Station stopped using coal in September 2012 and is being converted to use carbon-neutral biomass as fuel. It will be the largest 100 percent biomass-fuelled generating station in North America and is expected to be in service later this year.

In November, the Ontario Minister of Energy, Bob Chiarelli, announced that the Thunder Bay Generating Station would continue to use coal through 2014, when one unit will be converted to advanced biomass fuel. This notice of fuel change triggered the coal closure language in the collective agreement. The PWU plans to meet with OPG in early February to begin working through implementation issues. The Union will ensure that any affected members will get the full protection of the relevant Collective Agreement provisions.

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## **PWU and Hydro One Reach Multi-Year Forestry Staffing Agreement**

Late in 2013, the PWU came to agreement with Hydro One concerning the staffing of its forestry program. Instead of year-to-year staffing decisions, the parties have agreed to a multi-year staffing plan out to 2018 with a set number of Regular positions to be posted and filled in each year. The agreement is intended to enable a projected vegetation management work cycle of seven to eight years utilizing additional Regular hires along with Hiring Hall members including apprentices. The settlement is good news for both Regular and Hiring Hall members, providing needed clarity about the company's forestry staffing plan.



Further information is available from Hydro One Chief Stewards.

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## **PWU Members Ratify Collective Agreements at the Portlands Energy Centre and Lake Superior Power**

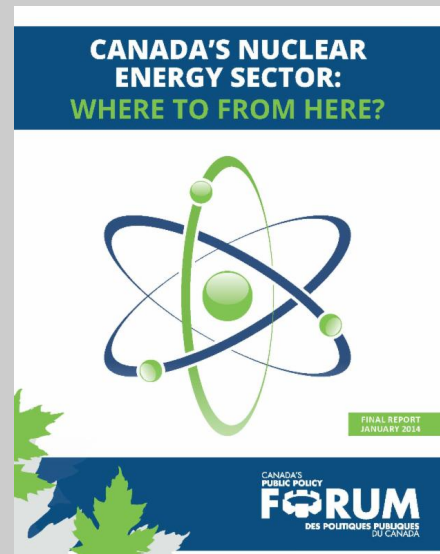


PWU members at the Portlands Energy Centre recently ratified a no concession three-year collective agreement that included improvements to wages and shift differentials and paid lunches for maintenance staff.

Members at Lake Superior Power ratified a one-year extension to the current collective agreement with a general wage increase of 2.75 percent. The company is currently pursuing a new Power Purchase Agreement with the Ontario Power Authority.

## Public Policy Forum Releases Report on the Future of the Canadian Nuclear Industry

In January, the Public Policy Forum, an independent, not-for-profit Canadian think tank, issued a report entitled *Canada's Nuclear Energy Sector: Where to From Here?* The report noted that "there is a potential strong future for the Canadian nuclear energy sector, and that it has an important role to play both domestically and abroad." At the same time, the industry faces a number of challenges that have impaired its ability to grow. The PWU was one of the report's sponsors. We also hosted one workshop of industry experts and participated in others as part of the study. The report can be found at <http://ppforum.com/publications/canadas-nuclear-energy-sector-where-here-final-report>.

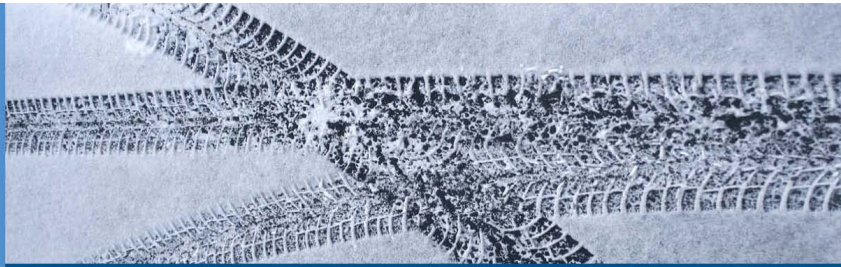


## PWU Participates in Movember

PWU members across Ontario participated in last year's Movember, an annual event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of prostate cancer. One group of PWU representatives, pictured here, raised \$2,400.



Left to Right: Bryan Roberts, Paul Reece, Glenn Dawson, Bob Walker, Steve Payne, Ted Taylor, Steve Allan, Paul Garden, Craig Middleton, Dave Watt



### Top Tips for Safe Winter Driving

Winter roads can send drivers into some unplanned territory. Winter doesn't only bring snow, it brings freezing rain and drizzle, cold harsh winds, and black ice. Make sure you are ready to handle whatever winter has in store!

**Visibility is Key!** - Snow brush and scraper to clear your roof, headlights, and windows of snow and ice. Ensure your windshield washer fluid is topped up.

**Stay warm essentials** - Have a jacket, gloves, toque, and boots in your car. Keep some lock de-icer handy and spare phone charger in your glovebox.

**Traction** - Spinning on ice? Kitty litter, old carpet, or your floor mats placed under your tires will give you the traction you need.

**Energize** - Jumper cables - a must have in winter. Make sure you check your owners manual for the correct procedure as boosting a battery can be dangerous if done incorrectly.

**As a PWU member you are eligible for exclusive group rates on your Home & Auto Insurance! Call HUB today for a free, no-obligation quote.**

**1 - 877 - 506 - 3092**



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