

Storm

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Atlantic City Electric spokesperson Sandra May said road conditions hampered the restoration of electric service. Neighboring utility companies including Jersey Central Power and Light, Orange and Rockland, Public Service Electric and Gas and Con Edison assisted Atlantic City Electric in restoring electric power, May said.

As of 5 p.m. Sunday, Atlantic City Electric had 43,000 customers without power with a large majority of the outages in Cape May County, including Cape May and the barrier islands.

On Monday, May said there were still 39,000 customers without power in Cape May County and 205 in Atlantic City.

"We continue to work around the clock, working to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible," May

said. May said a majority of Atlantic City Electric customers would have their electric service restored by late Tuesday afternoon.

"Some customers in Cape May County will continue to be without power through the later part of the week," May said.

Atlantic City Electric is aware of another snowstorm that was due to strike the region on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, and are preparing for it.

A.C. Electric urges customers to call the outage line at 1-800-833-7476 for any updates regarding their specific outage.

Boninfante said sporadic power loss in Cape May County included the Wildwoods, Lower Township, Cape May and the barrier islands.

"The main problem that we've had in the county is the loss of electricity and the

downed trees and branches," Boninfante said. "On Stone Harbor Boulevard, the poles were on the houses. It was a very difficult storm, probably the worst I've seen in 27 years."

Boninfante said the county started preparing a week before the storm, monitoring weather forecasts and readying trucks, snowplows and salt.

Cape May County road crews plowed and salted the county roads and bridges since the start of the storm on Friday. Road crews were also accompanying Atlantic City Electric crews clearing trees and snow that are covering downed electrical wires.

The county had a supply of 900 tons of salt, with an additional 1,200 tons slated for delivery on Saturday. Boninfante said that delivery never arrived, and the state sent an additional 500 tons of salt on Sunday. She said the county is expected to receive

1,000 tons of salt from another vendor.

Boninfante said the county uses 400 to 500 tons of salt in a typical snowstorm. She said the county anticipated spreading 700 tons of salt with the recent blizzard, but the county used more than 1,000 tons.

"We've had more than 25 inches of snow. Temperatures have gone down at night so everything is freezing and have not risen enough to melt the snow. Even the snow that melts during the day is refreezing. The roads constantly need to be treated with salt because they're becoming slippery with ice," Boninfante said.

During the height of the storm on Saturday, 10 shelters or transitional care centers throughout Cape May County were opened. Boninfante said more than 850 people sought shelter. On Monday, Boninfante said some of the shelters closed

and there were still 150 people at the county shelters.

She said local offices of emergency management directed residents to shelters opened for their specific communities, Boninfante said.

Residents requiring shelter in the county should call their local offices of emergency management or the Cape May County Office of Emergency Management at (609) 463-6570.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation closed the Route 52 causeway bridge from Friday evening to Sunday morning in anticipation of the snowstorm. Motorists were detoured to either the Ocean City-Longport Bridge or the 34th Street Bridge.

The Cape May County Bridge Commission waived tolls on the Ocean Drive Bridges during the storm. Bridges such as the Ocean City-Longport Bridge were

temporarily toll free from Friday night to Sunday morning.

"Since motorists are being discouraged from driving during this severe storm, we expect that people will only be on the road in an emergency situation. It is generally the policy of the commission not to charge tolls under such circumstances," said Cape May County Executive Director Stephen O'Connor.

The Bridge Commission also notified the Coast Guard that the Middle Thoroughfare, Townsends Inlet and Beelsey's Point Bridges could not be opened for vessel traffic because of the storm's heavy winds.

"It is too dangerous to the bridge structure to raise the span anytime winds exceed 40 mph," O'Connor said.

Gov.

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ment center in Cape May Court House.

Christie commended county emergency management workers for their efforts and noted Cape May County's ten emergency shelters helped those who lost electricity during the storm.

"I want to say to everybody who's got family or relatives in those shelters, they're being taken care of well. If you would come and get them somewhere warm with their family members, that would probably be preferable,"

Christie said. Christie visited the Middle Township Middle School where the county established a shelter.

"They were definitely scared given the intensity of the storm, but they are being cared for by emergency management officials and the Red Cross," Christie said.

The governor said Cape May County accumulated more than two feet of snow in addition to weathering severe northeast storms last December.

"It's a pretty extraordinary hit for this region to take. I've

told all of the officials I've met with today that by Tuesday or Wednesday this region maybe in the position to make a judgment about declaring a state of emergency and making the applications necessary to the federal government for reimbursement of county and local governments for the expenses they've had to incur and for the damage that we'll be able to assess over the next couple days that they've incurred to the region as well," Christie said.

Christie said the state has to spend over \$10.6 million and

the snowfall totals must equal 90 percent or greater than the highest snowfall in the area in order to declare a state of emergency for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reimburse the state. Christie said he's confident the state would meet both criteria.

"It's just a matter of making sure we do it the right way, though. We do not want to do it in a haphazard way where we make an application that doesn't have all of the information or costs," Christie said.

The governor said the State

Police's Office of Emergency Management will work with local officials to gather cost data.

He said First Legislative District Senator Jeff Van Drew and Assemblymen Nelson Albano and Matt Milam have answered constituents' questions related to the snowstorm and possible relief.

"This is one of those situations where we're challenged as a state. We have to work hard and work together to make sure we keep people safe. First and foremost, that's our number one task as

a government is to protect the safety of our citizens. In this kind of storm with this kind of cold weather, we need to make sure we get people who do not have electricity to shelters so that they can stay warm," Christie said.

Christie told those with relatives living in Cape May County who they haven't heard from to go to their homes and check on them.

"The good news from this storm is that we have had no fatalities so far. Over 250 motor vehicle accidents, but no fatalities or serious injuries," Christie said.

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Shelter

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possible. But this is their 14th day of non-stop work. People are running on empty," she said.

Kaithern said public works employees had to work the weekend of Jan. 30 and 31 because of that weekend's snowstorm, and continued working through this weekend.

A lot of street clearing was delayed because of downed wires. Kaithern said public works crews had to wait until Atlantic City Electric could tell them if the wires were live.

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Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave
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Book of Eli R: 12:10, 5:05, 10:05
Dear John PG13: 12:50, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
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Winnie Piriano, a certified Senior Advisor and owner of South Jersey Home Care announces the addition of Susan Handron, RN to their home health care staff. Mrs. Handron has spent over 30 years in healthcare and is a former Administrator of the Shores at Wesley Manor. Ms. Piriano states that the experience & professionalism that Sue brings to our staff, patients and clients will without a doubt enhance the quality of care that South Jersey Home Care has represented in its 15 years of operation. South Jersey Home Care provides companions and Certified Home Health Aids for intermittent and live-in support for seniors. Our capable staff welcomes any and all questions or concerns about receiving home health care services, whether for yourself or a loved one. If preferred, an in-home consultation can be arranged at no cost to the person or family seeking this service. South Jersey Homecare, 1028 Asbury Ave. Ocean City, NJ 08226.

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