



ORCAS POWER & LIGHT COOPERATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OPALCO CREWS WORK 'ROUND THE CLOCK TO RESTORE POWER

The winds blew in gusts up to 40 mph, temperatures were in the teens and OPALCO linemen worked all through the night to track down multiple power outages and restore power across the county.

The first outages of the night began at 4:00 pm when wind blew tree branches into the power lines in Olga on Orcas and Beverly Lane on Lopez. Line crews had power restored by 5:00 pm. At 5:00 pm, a tree limb fell into the transmission line on Shaw Island and knocked out power for all of Shaw and the west side of Orcas Island. Crews from Orcas and Lopez made their way to Shaw and had power restored to most members by 7:00 pm. Another tree went into the transmission line on Shaw at 11:00 pm and crews restored power again by 1:30 am. Crews were still responding to isolated outages on Tuesday morning.

On San Juan Island, a branch in the line knocked power out on Mitchell Bay Road at about 6:00 pm; crews restored power and went on to the UW Labs where a limb in the line caused an outage. Cold temperatures and wind blowing against the Cannery Village Condos near the ferry landing caused a transformer to overload (with the extraordinary heating load). Crews changed out the transformer and then headed to Beaverton Valley Road where a limb in the line caused another outage. Numerous additional small outages kept the line crew busy until about 5:30 am.

What should you do when your power goes out? Before calling OPALCO, look to see if your neighbors have power and, if so, check your breakers. To report a power outage, call 376-3599. Phone messages are updated regularly and calls are routed to the Sheriff's dispatch center after hours. OPALCO's website (www.opalco.com) has the most up-to-date information on outages (if you can't get online, call a friend with power to check it for you) and you can follow OPALCO on Twitter @orcaspower for updates on your mobile devices. In case of a prolonged power outage, unplug appliances, electronics and computer equipment, leaving one light on to let you know when power has been restored. This helps to protect your equipment and lessens the load on the system when the power restarts, helping to restore power more quickly and safely.

When OPALCO linemen are working in your area, please let them know you appreciate their dedication and hard work. A cup of hot coffee or a warm snack – and a few kind words – go a long way to keep these men going on a long, cold night outdoors.

To prepare for winter outages, make sure you have surge protectors installed on all sensitive equipment and appliances, keep flashlights in handy places with fresh batteries and assemble a box of supplies to meet your household's needs. For a complete list of outage preparation and safety recommendations, go to www.opalco.com.

OPALCO is a member-owned cooperative electrical utility serving more than 11,000 members on 20 islands in San Juan County. OPALCO provides electricity that is 95% greenhouse-gas free and is predominately generated by hydro-electric plants. OPALCO was founded in 1937 to bring electricity to rural islanders.

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Photo caption: OPALCO line crew