



## OG&E Wins National Award for May 3 Tornado Recovery

January 13, 2000

Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company announced today that it has won the top national award for emergency response by an electric utility.

The Edison Electric Institute, in presenting its Emergency Response Award, said OG&E's performance in the aftermath of the tornadoes of May 3-4, 1999 is "a model for electric utilities everywhere."

EI, the association of investor-owned electric companies whose domestic members serve about 75 percent of the nation's electric consumers, cited OG&E's work to restore power quickly and safely after the most violent single-day outbreak of tornadoes ever recorded in Oklahoma.

The Emergency Response Award was presented to Steven E. Moore, chairman, president, and CEO of OGE Energy Corp., parent company of OG&E.

"We are pleased and proud to accept this award, recognizing a truly amazing effort by our people -- some of whom had their own homes damaged or destroyed," Moore said. "But we will always look back on May 3 with sadness for the loss of life caused by the tornadoes."

During the evening and nighttime hours of May 3, 1999, 51 tornadoes raked Oklahoma, including an F5 twister that produced the highest wind-speed ever recorded, 318 mph. In 85 minutes on the ground, the big tornado traveled 38 miles, killing 44 people and injuring hundreds more as it left a trail of devastation across the south side of the metropolitan Oklahoma City area.

Damaged buildings numbered in the thousands, including 2,200 homes totally destroyed. The city of Moore was especially hard-hit, as were the metro communities of Del City and Midwest City. Damage was more than \$1 billion, including \$16 million to OG&E facilities.

The dozens of tornadoes that struck all over the state that night knocked out power to more than 167,000 OG&E customers. Cities and towns such as Enid, Mulhall, Crescent, Dover, Davenport, and Stroud witnessed the fury of F3 and F4 tornadoes spinning at 160 to 280 mph.

One tornado hit a major transmission line carrying power to Oklahoma City from OG&E's Sooner Power Plant near Ponca City. Moving along a line of giant steel-lattice towers built to withstand winds of up to 130 mph, the tornado sent 57 of them crashing to the ground.

All available OG&E personnel -- some 900 people in all -- were assigned to the recovery, alongside 250 reinforcements from Texas. Crew members received tetanus shots because of the risk of cuts and other injuries. Parking lots became temporary material staging yards, and OG&E set up mobile information centers in neighborhoods without telephone service.

By Monday, May 10, power was restored to every building that could accept it. What was initially expected to take several weeks had been completed in six days. The Sooner transmission line -- critical to OG&E's ability to deliver power during periods of summertime peak demand -- was re-energized on June 10. OG&E construction crews installed 87 tubular towers in four weeks, defying early estimates that the line would be down for months.

"Our customers count on us and in this case, our people really delivered," Moore said. "Best of all, through the thousands of work-hours logged during the restoration, the only injury was one sprained ankle. To have such a huge undertaking go so swiftly and so safely is remarkable. We're proud EEI saw fit to recognize it."

OG&E is Oklahoma's largest electric utility with 700,000 customers in a service territory spanning 30,000 square miles in Oklahoma and western Arkansas.

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