



OG&E Crews Return Home After Hurricane Ian Restoration Efforts



OG&E crews return home following a two-week deployment after restoring power to tens of thousands of Floridians.

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OKLAHOMA CITY (Oct. 11, 2022) – OG&E’s team of 95 linemen and support staff returned home safely after a two-week deployment in Florida to assist with power restoration efforts. Crews arrived back to their Oklahoma and Arkansas homes late Sunday after making significant strides in restoring electricity for tens of thousands of customers in Melbourne and Punta Gorda, Florida.

The crews deployed in late September at the request of Tampa Electric and Florida Power & Light before Hurricane Ian made landfall and left hundreds of thousands of customers without power. The team first worked in the east coast community of Melbourne, and once all power was restored to residents, they traveled to Punta Gorda in the southwest region of the state where Hurricane Ian caused significant damage and power outages to approximately 126,000 customers.

The linemen worked 16-hour shifts throughout their deployment restoring power, removing dangerous obstacles, and repairing electrical conductors and essential equipment. With the news from Florida Power & Light that all customers who could take power would be fully restored last Friday night, OG&E crews wrapped up repairs on their assigned circuits and returned home.

This restoration effort was an emotional experience for OG&E Storm Manager Kenny McKinzie since Florida will be his last mutual assistance deployment. McKinzie plans to retire at the end of this year after nearly four decades with the electric company and leading more than a dozen mutual assistance teams since the mid-90s.

“I’ve been with OG&E for almost 37 years, and I feel very blessed and fortunate to go on my last storm mutual assistance. It means so much to me to take these guys down there,” McKinzie said.

OG&E Manager of Distribution Construction and Storm Response Lead Chad Guthrie says even though the linemen are tired, they are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to help energize many Florida residents.

“Floridians have been really encouraging no matter where we are - including the customers’ gratitude, other vegetation crews and contractors saying thank you. We are fortunate to work with these individuals and that continuous encouragement keeps us going,” Guthrie said. “We really enjoyed what we’ve been a part of, and the outpouring of support reenergized us – we want to thank everyone in Florida, our families and customers in our home state for that.”

Residents in Florida have gone out of their way to show their sincere appreciation to OG&E crews. The owner of a Chick-fil-A in Port Charlotte provided 41 linemen with free meals to show his gratitude for power restoration in his hometown. In return, Guthrie thanked the owner with a hard hat and safety coin. Later, the man called OG&E’s customer service to express how touched he was by their hard work and selfless service. Florida Power and Light personnel even created a slogan to emphasize how vital the crews have been in repairing damage across the state: “When in doubt, send OG&E out.”

“I want to express my appreciation. The guys really did an outstanding job and set themselves apart in terms of their quality, dedication and commitment to safety,” Florida Power and Light Power Incident Commander, Brevard County, Florida, Sean Mauldin said. “These crews worked extremely hard day in and day out, but I hope a silver lining for them was getting to take in the view of the ocean from their bucket trucks while they worked along the beach on a barrier island.”

OG&E provided its assistance to Florida Power & Light through its membership in the Midwest Mutual Assistance and Southeast Electrical Exchange, which dispatches mutual assistance teams in cases of widespread outages.

“Electric utilities are incredibly supportive of each other when natural disasters and other destructive events occur,” Andrea Dennis, vice president of transmission & distribution operations for OG&E said. “Today we are helping our friends in Florida; tomorrow, they could be helping us. The mutual assistance we offer is an important partnership, and we are proud to be a part of such a meaningful collaboration.”

About OG&E

Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of OGE Energy Corp. (NYSE: OGE), is Oklahoma's largest electric utility. For more than a century, we have provided customers in Oklahoma and western Arkansas the safe, reliable electricity needed to power their businesses and homes with some of the nation's lowest electric rates, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence. Our employees are committed to generating and delivering electricity, protecting the environment, and providing excellent service to approximately 882,000 customers. OG&E has 7,207 MW of electric generation capacity fueled by natural gas, wind, low-sulfur coal, and solar. OG&E employees live, work, and volunteer in the communities we serve. For more information about OG&E, visit us at [OGE.com](https://www.oge.com) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).