



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



Room 433 - State Capitol Bldg. - Jefferson City, MO 65101 - Phone: (573) 751-2306

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 18, 2007**

## **A Massive Storm Calls for a Massive Response**

JEFFERSON CITY—This winter has already proved to be a fierce one for the people of Missouri. The recent ice storm, which has been called the worst winter storm in 50 years by the National Weather Service, particularly hit hard in the southwest portion of the state, making it nearly impossible for many residents to get around and knocking out power across the region. Because the temperatures have been below freezing, those without heat have been forced to seek shelter elsewhere until electrical power can be restored.

Local and state efforts are being made to help those affected by the massive storm. Reportedly, 60,000 customers of rural electric co-ops and 35,000 customers of Empire Electric in southwest Missouri were still without power on Wednesday. Empire Electric, based in Joplin, has a fully activated staff, and more than 1,000 additional workers on the ground trying to bring customers power. They are focusing on main electrical lines first and then moving to smaller lines. They estimate that the outage will continue for an extended period. More snow is expected this weekend, so they urge customers to remain patient as they are working around the clock to fix the problem and take advantage of the emergency shelters that many communities have established. The service territory of New-Mac Electric Cooperative was also severely impacted by the ice storm. As of Thursday, New-Mac reports having made headway on main feeder lines, but that there is still much work to be done.

Both providers stress the importance of residents not approaching downed power lines or repair crews, which is extremely dangerous with slippery ice, and fallen trees and lines. In the meantime, Governor Matt Blunt has created special state agency teams to help with the storm-response efforts on local levels. Some of the state agencies participating in these special teams are the: State Emergency Management Agency; Office of Administration; Missouri Departments of Transportation; Natural Resources; Conservation; Health and Senior Services; Social Services; and the Missouri National Guard. Also joining the teams will be the American Red Cross.

The state agency teams will help determine the type of equipment and state resources that local governments need to continue their disaster-response efforts. More than 370 citizen-soldiers continue to support local civil authorities with power generation, clearing the road for emergency services response calls, and door-to-door checks in southwest Missouri.

The State Emergency Management Agency reported that earlier this week, 85 shelters were open throughout the state, with a total estimated population of more than 3,600 people. On Wednesday, state officials set up a donations hotline to coordinate and distribute donated goods, time, and financial assistance. The number is 888-377-2100, and will be staffed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Those affected by the storm may also call the number to receive referrals for assistance that might be available in their area.

With more winter precipitation in the forecast, I encourage citizens of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District to check on neighbors, and if your home is blessed with power, open your doors to those less fortunate. I will be doing my best to help recovery efforts so that residents of this great state are warm and safe for the rest of the winter.

-END-