

# Northwest storm leaves at least 200,000 without power

## OTEC sends crew to help in the Willamette Valley

By **GILLIAN FLACCUS** and **REBECCA BOONE**  
Associated Press

LAKE OSWEGO — At least 200,000 people remained without power in the Portland area Sunday, Feb. 14, after a winter storm blanketed the Pacific Northwest with ice and snow and made travel treacherous.

With a number of transmission lines and substations knocked out of service and additional tree limbs at risk of falling on power lines amid more expected freezing rain and wind, some people could experience multiple outages or prolonged outages, said Steve Corson, a spokesman for PGE, one of the area's major electricity providers.

"Our hope would be that most would be restored sooner than that, but some customers will be affected for several days," he said.

The utility, which had about 250,000 customers without power on Saturday, is bringing in crews from Nevada and Montana to help restore power, he said. Other utilities, which reported about another 25,000 outages Saturday, were also working to bring electricity to homes and businesses.

Just as in the massive wildfire season that left many in Western Oregon without power, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is providing some help.

Joe Hathaway, the co-op's communications manager, said Consumers Power Inc. in Philomath requested assistance, and OTEC sent a four-member crew there Saturday. The outage map for Consumers Power shows about 2,000 of its customers in areas surrounding Salem were without power Monday morning.

"Our guys are there already," Hathaway said.

"They are working on getting CPI's transmission back up."

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown praised utility crews as well as state and local workers and first responders for working to restore power, clear roads and help those in need because of the extreme conditions, which prompted her to declare a state of emergency for the greater Portland area on Saturday. She urged everyone else to remain at home as much as possible.

"Check on your neighbors and loved ones when you can do so safely," she said.

Forecasters warned of more hazardous weather through Monday.

An ice storm warning was in effect for the Portland area until Monday evening. In Seattle, which got more than a foot of snow by Sunday morning, more precipitation expected to fall as sleet or rain could cause snow-covered tree limbs to break, causing outages there, The Seattle Times reported.

Winter storms and extreme cold affected much of the U.S. West over the weekend, particularly endangering homeless communities. Volunteers and shelter staffers worked to ensure homeless residents in Casper, Wyoming, while authorities in western Washington and western Oregon opened warming shelters in an effort to protect homeless residents from the wet and cold.

Arctic air caused temperatures to plunge to the negative 30s in parts of Montana and high temperatures were not expected to rise above zero or get much higher in eastern Wyoming or Colorado.

In the Portland area, many trees snapped under the weight of ice, falling on power lines and causing transformers to blow out in showers of blue and orange sparks.

Brian Zevenbergen watched Saturday as a crew sawed up two large, ice-cov-

ered trees that had crashed across his driveway overnight, narrowly missing two cars parked there. His house in Lake Oswego had also lost power overnight. Just around the corner, another massive tree blocked the street in the suburb south of Portland and had taken out a city street light.

"Last night, everything was standing, and this morning the two trees

had me blocked in the driveway and were blocking at least half the street," he said. "Friends on the lower levels have power, so I have invites to go hang out there."

The ice and snowfall caused treacherous driving conditions, forcing Oregon transportation officials to close Interstate 84 in the Columbia River Gorge, and the regional transit

agency TriMet suspended all bus and train service in the region on Saturday. Eastbound lanes remained closed and limited buses and trains were running Sunday although TriMet urged people to delay travel until conditions improve.

The latest storm system was expected to bring snow to the mountains of the Northwest and the Intermountain West

through Monday night.

The highest parts of the Cascades were expected to get snow measured in feet while over a foot of snow is likely in the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho, the Teton Range in Wyoming and the central Rockies, the National Weather Service said.

— *Observer editor Phil Wright contributed to this report.*

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## Northwest flooding to worsen in next five years, OSU study finds

By **KALE WILLIAMS**  
The Oregonian/OregonLive

Flooding in the Columbia River Basin is expected to increase dramatically in scale over the next half decade as the climate warms, according to new research from Oregon State University.

The severity of floods large and small — on the Columbia, Willamette and Snake rivers, along with hundreds of smaller tributaries — will increase and, in some places, the flooding season will grow longer.

That's according to a new study from researchers at the university, published last month in the journal Hydrology and Earth System Science.

"The flood you're used to seeing out your window once every 10 years will likely be larger than it has been in the past," the study's lead author, Laura Queen, a research assistant at OSU's Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, said in a statement.

Queen ran simulations using streamflow data collected from nearly 400 sites throughout the Columbia River Basin and western Washington. The simulations included data from

1950-99 and expected streamflow from 2050-99.

"This was the best and most complete set of data," said co-author Philip Mote, a professor in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences and dean of the Graduate School at OSU. "It shows that the magnitude of one-, 10- and 100-year floods is likely to go up nearly everywhere in the region. These are profound shifts."

The Willamette River saw the biggest bumps in flood severity in simulations, with 50-60% increases in 100-year flood scenarios. Parts of the Snake River could see a 40% increase in 10-year floods and a 60% increase in 100-year floods.

The season for flooding on the Snake, now primarily confined to the spring, could start as early as December or January.

The Columbia River Basin and much of the Northwest have seen frequent flooding. The Vanport flood in 1948 wiped out one of Portland's largest African-American communities at the time. Floods on the Chehalis River in Washington have forced the closure of Interstate 5 twice in the past 15 years.



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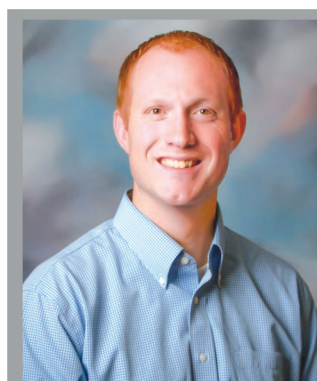
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