

Wesley's World

Village of Wesley Hills

March 2012



Reflectors

Please remember to wear reflectors when walking in the dark. They are available free of charge to Village residents at the Village Hall.

Sidewalk Update

The NYS Department of Transportation has confirmed that the sidewalk project for Route 306 is on schedule to begin later this year, with the bulk of construction continuing on into 2013. The reconstruction project for Forshay Road, which will add sidewalks, a turning lane at Viola Road, and a roundabout at Willow Tree Road, has been delayed, but is now on the Federal funding schedule. Construction is expected to begin in the 2013/2014 time frame. Given the mild winter we have had so far, we may not have to do as much road repair as in the past. If that continues to be the case, we plan to use some of the remaining funds from our bond and yearly highway grant to continue working on filling in the gaps in the sidewalks on East Willow Tree Road.

Village elections

Tuesday, March 20th at Village Hall.
Polls open 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM

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Budget

The Village Board is currently working on the budget for next year. This was the first full year of income from T-mobile for the flag pole cell tower at the Village Hall. That revenue is \$28,800, and will increase by 3% each year. Building is on the increase in the Village, so permit fee income was higher than expected, along with Planning Board and inspection fees. Home sales and refinancing in the County has contributed to a larger than expected mortgage recording tax income. Together, all these items more than offset the few increased expenses that occurred this year. As a result, the plan is to have no tax increase for the coming year. One issue that could affect this is the overall assessed value of properties in the Village. Last year, Village residents filed tax grievances with the Town and lowered the total assessed property value of the Village by over \$625,000. When that happens, everyone needs to make up the difference. As we get closer to finalizing the budget, we will know whether or not this is going to be a factor. In the meantime, please keep an eye out for notices about the Village budget hearing, and emails pointing to the proposed budget on the Village website.

SHARPS disposal

"SHARPS" are needles, syringes, and lancets used by residents for self medication. There is a safe way for residents of Rockland County to dispose of "SHARPS." Any resident who uses "SHARPS" in the home can participate in the program. This includes residents with allergies, diabetes, cancer, or other medical conditions, that require medication by injection. Please refer to the link below for details.

<http://www.co.rockland.ny.us/health/EI/sp.htm>

Tree debris pickup

The Town has completed its pickup of storm debris in the Village. Any debris that remains must be disposed of by your landscaper, or tied into 4 foot length bundles for our trash carter to pick up. The Town has ground the debris into mulch that is available for pickup, free of charge, at the Spook Rock Pool parking lot.

O&R President Bill Longhi answers your questions about the October snowstorm

The snowstorm on October 29th and 30th was the worst natural disaster in O&R's history. Devastation to our electric system eclipsed that of Hurricane Irene, with thousands of damaged or destroyed wires, poles and transformers causing more than 134,000 customers to lose power.

We want you to know we heard your frustration, your concern and, in many instances, your support. We've received important questions from our customers and local communities. We're sharing these questions and our answers to them. Based on your feedback and our own self-assessment, we took, and continue to take, a hard look at the things we need to do to better serve you in the future. We'd like to start by communicating more about what happened during the snowstorm and what we're doing to prepare for the next storm.

Why did so many people lose their power during this snowstorm?

The damage caused by this unseasonably early snowstorm was unprecedented. Neither time nor place were on our side. We were far enough north and west to get record levels of heavy snow (up to 19 inches) while being far enough south to have full foliage on our trees. Because of the unique nature and timing of this storm, seemingly all trees were at risk and affected, including healthy, well-groomed ones. If this storm occurred after leaves had fallen, we would have experienced dramatically less damage.

Why did it take a week to fully restore service?

Snow and wind don't damage equipment or take power lines or poles down; trees do. The tree damage was several times greater than during Hurricane Irene, directly causing interruptions to almost half of our 300,000 electric customers.

In total, there were over 6,000 separate damage locations in need of repair, and many of them required significant reconstruction work. Using our entire 1,100 employee workforce plus an additional 1,500 personnel from other utilities, we were able to restore full service within one week, which was consistent with other regional utilities.

As in any major storm, our initial recovery focus was on assessment and safety, including devoting resources to support municipal and county needs. We also gave a high priority to restoring power to over 50 schools throughout our area. As these areas were addressed, we focused more resources on overall service restoration, prioritized by size of outage and extent of the damage. In some cases, up to a dozen separate repairs were required across multiple municipalities to bring power to a particular area before local and individual service repairs could begin.

Were you prepared?

We had activated our storm response plan and were prepared with extra personnel, including both our own workforce and supplementary contractors, at a level well beyond what would normally equate to the forecasted moderate snowfall. As the weather conditions intensified and the damage from this storm grew later on Saturday, O&R expanded its mobilization to include the Company's entire workforce, along with crews from other utilities outside the affected region.

By Monday, that expansion exceeded the record level used in Irene and reached a peak plateau from Wednesday through Friday when we had almost 2,700 people working on the response – that's as much as eight times our normal field force, more than double our entire Company's normal size, and significantly more than during Hurricane Irene.

Why didn't we see a lot of field personnel early on?

Earlier in the week, you may not have seen the full impact of our expanded workforce in your neighborhood. That's because, in many situations, we had to rebuild our distribution circuits starting at the substations and working down along the main line into your neighborhood. In some cases up to a dozen separate repairs were required across multiple municipalities to bring power to a particular area before local and individual service repair could begin. As we progressed to this stage, that's when you began to see more and more crews working on the local damage that littered your communities and neighborhoods.

In addition, there may have been times when you observed O&R employees and contractors leaving your area before the repairs were complete and/or before full power was restored. In many cases, these initial personnel were trained damage assessors whose function is to relay the information so that the appropriate crews and equipment can be deployed. In other cases, it could be crews that are either not certified to perform the required repair work or that have been directed to a much larger outage which could be restored more quickly. While the above processes are typical within the utility industry, they unfortunately can give the visual appearance of personnel leaving an area when they shouldn't be.

Why did people have so much trouble getting through to O&R?

In 2010, we worked with our telecommunication provider and doubled the number of available customer service phone lines. However, during Hurricane Irene we learned that this larger capacity was still short of what is needed to support record call levels associated with a catastrophic event. As an interim step to relieve congestion we augmented the normal phone lines by routing additional calls through our own corporate fiber optic telecommunication network.

This network also enabled us to send some calls to our sister company, Con Edison.

Meanwhile we continue to move forward on a high priority basis to develop a far more robust solution that will likely include teaming with multiple companies in the call processing field to provide both electronic and voice support during these kinds of major events. We plan to have this major upgrade in place in time for the return of foliage in the spring.

At the same time, we are focusing on improving the value and accuracy of our web and mobile web applications. These tools can help reduce delays on our phone system by providing an efficient, alternate and unlimited path into our information systems.

Why did O&R keep changing my estimated restoration times?

We realize that providing accurate and timely information can be just as important as restoring the power itself. We want to provide outage-specific restoration projections as early as possible in a storm. During this snowstorm, we began early by providing these projections prior to completing a full damage assessment of our system. We based these projections on the number and size of the known outages as well as the resources involved in the restoration effort.

Two factors unique to this storm dramatically affected these projections and led to numerous updates as damage assessment and repairs progressed. The first was the extent of wires down and support of critical municipal needs that required more resources over a longer period of time than expected. The second factor was simply the massive nature of the damage to our system, exemplified by the "nested" damage and outages embedded within larger outages. This is what made the impact of this storm so unique. In some cases up to a dozen separate repairs were required across multiple municipalities to bring power to a particular area before local and individual service repair could begin. This resulted in significantly more work to restore a given area which necessitated adjustments to the projected restoration times.

What is O&R going to do differently in the future as a result of this storm?

After every major storm O&R performs a broad-based critique of the event, including a review of external feedback as well as our own self-assessment. Hurricane Irene and the October snowstorm are no exceptions. Clearly, Hurricane Irene highlighted a significant problem with the ability of customers to get through to us during the

extreme call volume periods associated with such a catastrophic event. The snowstorm further added the element of inaccurate and changing estimated restoration times.

While our processes and systems have performed well for us in the past, as with many things, when stressed to levels well beyond what they have ever experienced, problems surfaced. In addition to addressing these problems, we are also reassessing our overall storm response structure and process to assure they are as efficient as they can be and provide sufficient focus on the areas needing improvement.

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In parallel, we continue to move forward on a high priority basis to develop a far more robust solution that will likely include teaming with multiple companies in the call processing field to provide both electronic and voice support during these kinds of major events. We plan to have this major upgrade in place in time for the return of full foliage in the spring. At the same time, we are focusing on improving the value and accuracy of our web and mobile web applications. These tools can help reduce delays on our phone system by providing an efficient, alternate and unlimited path into our information systems.

In summary, our three key priority action areas are as follows:

1. Enhanced ability to process customer calls and inquiries.
2. More accurate and consistent projected restoration times.
3. Review of our storm response structure and processes.

Our objective is to have all three areas completed and implemented by the time the full foliage returns in the spring.

VILLAGE OF WESLEY HILLS

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WESLEY HILLS, NY 10952

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #70
MONSEY, NY 10952

March 2012 NEWSLETTER

Mayor
Dep. Mayor
Trustee
Trustee
Trustee

David Goldsmith
Edward McPherson
Howard Richman
Marion Ben-Jacob
Brett Bekritsky

***** ELECTION REMINDER *****

**Village elections will be held on Tuesday,
March 20th at Village Hall.**
Polls will be open from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

We still want your Emails

We would like to thank all those residents who have sent us their email addresses. The Village email list is now over 900 names. If you have not already done so, please send your email address to mayor@wesleyhills.org, so we can add you to the Village email list. Please let us know if your email address has changed.

Rabies Shots

Rabies shots for cats, dogs, & ferrets will be available at the Rockland County Fire Training Center on Sunday, April 22, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The shots are free; however a \$5 donation is appreciated. To be vaccinated, your pet must be healthy and at least three months old. Dogs must be on a leash. Cats and ferrets must be on a leash or in a top opening container. For more information call 364-2656.