

CURRENTS



WEATHER TAKES NO HOLIDAY

A wind-whipped Thanksgiving was closely followed by the season's first snow storm, keeping employees busy right on through the holiday.

Crews Fight the Elements to Safely Restore Service



With all there is to be thankful for, many of our customers added O&R to their lists this Thanksgiving as employees scurried to make sure the weather didn't put a damper on holiday celebrations.

"As usual, an awesome job by you and your crews. Be safe," said Walkkill Commission of Public Works **Lou Ingrassia** in a Thanksgiving Day note sent to Regional and Community Affairs Director **Neil Winter**.

November 28 wind gusts were recorded between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at peaks of 49 mph in Rockland, 48 mph in Bergen, 41 mph in Orange and 35 mph in Sullivan.

Approximately 8,300 customers lost power due to these damaging winds, but most were not out of service for long – thanks to the quick work of our employees with support from over 175 contractor and mutual aid personnel.



No sooner were all customers restored (and with barely enough time to have a left-over turkey sandwich), O&R employees rolled up their sleeves again to repair the damage caused by the season's first snowstorm. The storm began with a dousing of rain and sleet on Sunday, December 1, turning into snow throughout the day Monday and overnight into Tuesday.

Ice-encrusted tree limbs struggled to hang on against the added weight of heavy, wet snow that ranged from a low of 2 inches in Nyack to over a foot in Middletown.

More than 35,000 customers lost power as a result of primarily tree-related outages, which were tackled by employees and a team of nearly 450 contractors and mutual aid workers.



Midway through the 22 planning calls held between both storm events, Vice President of Operations **Frank Peverly** encouraged employees to treat the ongoing restoration effort like a marathon, not a sprint. Maintaining a healthy pace helped crews manage the steady stream of incoming repair work while staying mindful of icy and dangerous ground and overhead hazards.

"Our employees worked through extremely difficult conditions without being involved in a single recordable accident or injury. That's nothing short of impressive and speaks volumes to how well we can perform under pressure when we stay focused," said EHS&Q Director **Jeremy McVey**.

5 Tips to Help You Fend Off the Flu

You had your flu shot, now what? Here are five simple tips to help you steer clear of the flu and stay healthy this winter.



Eat Well. Unleash the power of fresh fruits and vegetables in releasing the nutrients and antioxidants your body needs for optimal performance and protection. Make sure you're also getting enough lean protein, including low-fat dairy, lean meats and plant-based protein (think beans).



Wash Hands. Keep your hands clean and away from your face. If you're out and about touching door handles, shaking hands, etc., make sure you pause frequently to wash your hands – especially before eating and after blowing your nose.



Get Moving. Exercise is key to reducing stress and boosting your immune system. Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week. Meditation, yoga and breathing exercises can also help keep stress and sickness at bay.



Sleep 7+. Shoot to be in bed for at least seven hours to help offset time spent on middle-of-the-night bathroom breaks and general restlessness. Sleep keeps you sharp and on your game, which is especially important when you're working outdoors and exposed to seasonal hazards like ice and snow.



Be Courteous. If you share a workspace with others, clean it frequently with antibacterial wipes – especially if you feel like you're coming down with something. Hold meetings in well-ventilated areas or leave the door open when gathering in smaller conference rooms.

Run Down This List Before Ringing in 2020

Before you know it, you'll be ringing in a new decade. Here are some things to do before you pop open the bubbly, pull out your noisemakers, or set your festive Out of Office message.

- 1. Check your vacation time.** Log into EPIC to view how much vacation time you have left and know your carry-over limits.
- 2. Qualify for next year's wellness credits and reimbursements.** You have until December 31, 2019, to qualify for wellness reimbursements and paycheck credits in 2020. You will need to complete a medical screening and the online health assessment by the end of the year. The amount of the credit and reimbursement depends on whether you are a management or union employee.
- 3. Sign-up to get your W-2 electronically.** You don't have to wait for your W-2 form to come in the mail. Register by December 31, 2019 to get your 2019 tax forms online in mid-January.
- 4. Cash Out Your WellRight Points** – If you participated in the HealthMatters with WellRight challenges be sure to redeem the points you earned by December 31, 2019 for gift cards to places such as Amazon, Whole Foods, BestBuy, and Starbucks.
- 5. Contact Vanguard to learn the 2020 Thrift Savings Plan limits.** The amount you can contribute to the Thrift Savings Account increases in 2020. Now may be the time to change in how much you're saving. Log in to Vanguard or call them at 1-800-523-1188.
- 6. Donate to your favorite local organization and double your dollars.** When you give to nonprofit organizations in our service area — New York City, Westchester, and O&R-served areas — Matching Gifts will match you dollar-for-dollar.
- 7. Update Your Emergency Contact Information.** Log into HR Payroll and check that your personal and emergency contact information is current. Go to Self-Service, then Personal Information.



Gifts We Can't Accept



It's that time of year for a friendly reminder that none of us, including family and household members, can accept gifts, tips, benefits, or items of value from our

customers, vendors, government employees and other business partners. If it's anything more than a giveaway of nominal value, we cannot keep it. Items of value could include cash, gift cards, discounts and tickets.

If you receive an invitation to a dinner or social event, check with your manager and the Ethics Office before you accept. If you receive a gift, send or give the gift back to the giver with an explanation of our no-gifts policy. (The Ethics Office has a letter template that you can use.) Notify your supervisor and O&R Director of Ethics and Business Standards **Mike Santos** at ext. 2943 or santosmic@oru.com.

Visit **Conor** to see if you can pass the holiday gift test! Contact Mike if you need guidance on our policy or a specific circumstance.

Think Outside the Box!

Reenergize your team offsite. O&R's Conference Center in Forestburgh, NY, is open Tuesday through Friday, year-round, to all employees for department and team meetings. Book a ½ day, full-day or two-day conference with menu options to cover every budget and diet. Don't forget to leave a little room on the agenda for some fun!

Check out all the Conference Center has to offer. Just search *Conference Center on Conor* for details, or reach out to **Laura Pierce** at 845-856-2386 / piercel@oru.com.

Donate Toys for Tots



I.B.E.W. Local 503 is collecting new, unwrapped toys on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's annual Toys for Tots campaign. All toys, with the exception of guns, bows and arrows and stuffed animals, are appreciated.

Look for collection boxes in lobbies and common areas throughout the company. Donations will be gratefully accepted through **Friday, December 13.**



Enjoy Free Tickets to Wonderland

O&R employees can enjoy free tickets to Bergen County's Winter Wonderland at Van Saun Park – open Friday through Sunday now through **January 5, 2020**. Free tickets are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Bergen's Winter Wonderland is made possible, in part, through a \$10,000 O&R sponsorship. Regarded as northern New Jersey's premier winter event, this attraction features: **Open Air Ice Skating, Kids'**

Beginner Synthetic Rink, Additional Kids' Activities and Games, Bergen Express Train Ride, Santa's North Pole Workshop, Unlimited Carousel Rides, Zoo Entry and Programming, Indoor/Outdoor Beer Garden and Food Trucks.

You can access your free tickets by following the link on **Conor** and clicking on **Tickets and Rockland Electric.**

SUBMIT BY JANUARY 2



Lebanon Lottery

Fishing on Lebanon Lake is a privilege exclusively for O&R employees and customers lucky enough to win the company's annual lottery.

2020 RESERVATIONS BETWEEN: January 15 and February 15 or May 1 and October 31

Complete the application below and submit to **Marielle Healy**, Facilities, SVOC, by **Wednesday, January 2.**

Winners will be posted to Facilities' website on **Monday, January 7.** Customers will be contacted by the Forestry department.

Call **Jon Flynn** to check ice conditions at 845-856-7774.

Lebanon Lottery. Enter for Your Chance to Win a Permit

NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMP#: _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

Ice Fishing Sport Fishing Both