



NEWS RELEASE

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After snow and ice thaw, Maui Electric restores power atop Haleakalā

KAHULUI, March 12, 2019 – Maui Electric restored power to a remaining small pocket of commercial customers atop Haleakalā after strong winds, snow and ice caused extensive damage to electrical infrastructure on Feb. 10. Crews completed extensive repairs at the summit after initially being delayed by the harsh conditions and limited access to the damaged equipment.

After the snow and ice atop Haleakalā melted, crews were able to travel to the summit and start damage assessments. Maui Electric worked closely with the affected customers to ensure cultural and environmental protocols were followed before restoration work began.

Once damage assessments were finished, crews from Maui Electric and Hawaiian Electric worked seven days a week to bring the remaining commercial customers back online. Work included the restringing of a mile of transmission and distribution lines, replacing and repairing equipment on 60 poles and replacing 22 poles in the mountainous terrain. As the area and terrain did not allow for vehicle access, poles and equipment had to be flown in or carried by workers who hiked in.

“Thank you to our customers for their patience as we worked to make extensive repairs to the system atop Haleakalā,” said Sharon Suzuki, president of Maui County and Hawai‘i Island Utilities. “This was a unique restoration process that included our crews working long hours at high altitudes with steep terrain and limited vehicle access.”

In addition to bringing snow and ice to unusually low elevations, the Feb. 10 storm generated heavy rain and wind gusts that brought down poles and damaged equipment across Maui, causing multiple outages.

“Mahalo also to our external partners who supported our response efforts through services such as helicopter deliveries and readying holes ahead of our installation of new poles,” Suzuki said. “We also appreciate the support from Haleakalā National Park, Haleakalā Ranch and the state Department of Land and Natural Resources which helped us to secure staging areas and access to the work sites.”

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