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a brownout. Many may remember that the lights in their homes were not as bright as normal and that some appliances may have even vibrated. This condition is caused by low voltage from the power utility.

In the case of the super storm, the high winds caused trees to fall on power lines and likely destroyed a phase fuse on a major feed line. Grounding feed lines by fallen trees may also contribute to a brownout condition. This is not a fault of the utility but a condition caused by extreme weather conditions.

It is important when you are in a brownout that you take precautions to protect your appliances. Devices like toasters, incandescent lights, and your electric stove are restive loads and will not be harmed by low voltage. Devices that have a motor like a dishwasher, furnace, refrigerator, or freezer may be harmed by the low voltage of a brown out.

The best way to protect your appliances is to turn them off until you notice that your lights are at full brilliance for more than fifteen minutes. A fluorescent light is a good indicator as it will react very poorly to low voltage. When the fluorescent light is on steady at good illumination, your power is

okay. Many modern electronic devices protect themselves from low voltage to a point. My best advice is to turn them off and wait for the utility to correct the problem.

We were called out to several emergencies during the super storm and the incredible thunderstorm the next day. We were unable to use the door openers at the fire station, and the fluorescent lights acted downright weird when we arrived. We shut off our main breaker, which triggers the standby generator. The brownout provided enough power to keep the generator from working but did not allow our doors to work.

Compared to our friends in New York and New Jersey we were only brushed by the storm. Our brownout was a bit inconvenient. What could have happened may keep you up nights. However, worrying is a waste of good energy. Better to prepare and be self-sufficient during a storm. There are many good places to consult for what you need during a storm. I recommend ReadyGov as a good place to start. You may call us any time to help answer questions. We are at our fire station every Monday evening.

From all of us, your life safety team, have a safe and happy Christmas season. 

Can We Have Broadband Throughout Andover?

By Tina Cotton
Andover Cable TV Committee

New Hampshire is the recipient of a three-year, \$44.5 million grant funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to expand broadband Internet access throughout the state. Broadband is defined here as 768 kilobytes per second (kbps) downstream to a computer or similar device and 200 kbps upstream from a computer.

Dial-up Internet access is considered insufficient because of capacity and speed. Broadband — DSL, satellite, or cable access — are necessary, with DSL considered minimum and cable the best, according to Carol Miller of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), who is overseeing access nodes for neighborhood distribution.

DSL is the slowest broadband technology and is currently unregulated. Satellite has had problems with delay, weather-related problems, caps on usage, and generally 12 megabyte download and 1 megabyte upload speeds. Cable uses bundled fiber-optic strands, which are considered the best for download, upload, and reliability.

Access to broadband is considered essential for moving the economy forward—"be wired or be gone." Broadband coverage is essential for government information, business, safety, entertainment, publications, community development, and many other aspects of our lives, both now and in the future.

To explore broadband coverage as of June, 2012, visit IWantBroadbandNH.com. There you can read about the broadband program, click on interactive maps, including Andover, and test your download and upload speeds.

The North Country was considered the least covered and economically challenged area of New Hampshire and, therefore, has received priority. Tamworth and Center Sandwich have citizens who have taken it upon themselves to install wireless coverage (TamWireless.net and CyberPine.net); Tam-

worth has town-wide coverage, using their Town Hall as a hub.

Wireless uses radio frequencies with equipment similar to what Jonathan Cotton installed for the Blackwater Ski Area and the Proctor hockey rink and for real-time data gathering in the White Mountains for the Mount Washington Observatory. Fairpoint has been expanding its DSL coverage, with 95% active by November 1, and the rest in the coming year. Similarly, TDS has received grants to "turn up" its service.

Both wireless and satellite rely upon line-of-sight between the subscriber and the provider. Mobile wireless relies upon cellular providers with 3G or 4G capability. Twenty microwave towers will further expand statewide and interstate coverage.

The Lakes Region Planning Commission is gathering information for the 30 towns in its area. I am part of the stakeholders group, which is assessing needs, barriers, and solutions enabling broadband accessibility for all in the Lakes Region. John and I recently gathered GPS data for coverage in areas of Andover that were in question. Initial information was provided by TDS and Comcast.

The federal grant, with some matching state funding, is assessing needs and implementation. "Dark" (inactive) fiber is being laid, and the cost to "light up" (activate) the fiber must be borne by individuals, neighbors, towns, and grants. The best-wired governments worldwide are publicly supported (Iceland, Scandinavia, Hong Kong). Towns need to be proactive and should have a communications section in their master plans to accommodate proactive ordinances and public utilities, such as those currently being considered by Ashland.

Franchise agreements should be relatively short, because the competitive and technological landscape is changing so quickly. Political, social, geographic barriers, regulatory issues, profitability for providers, and affordability for users are issues that all need to be considered. See *Broadband on page 7*

Election from page 3

Irene Jewett, Wanda Smith, Deb Guinard, Doug Phelps, Rose Tilton, Vicky Mischon, Pat Moyer, Kit Norris, Margo Coolidge, and Trish Demers were still counting ballots at 1 AM the following morning. New residents Ron and Pam Cooper also stopped by to help with the counting. Many thanks to everyone.

Tax Bills

As you know, the state was late in getting our tax rate to us, so our bills have been mailed later than usual. However, you still have thirty days to pay the bill before any interest begins to accrue.

You can pay your taxes online by going to either Andover.NH.us or NHTaxKiosk.com. You can then provide your checking account number to pay by a direct debit to your checking account, or you can charge your tax bill

to your credit card. There is a fee of 40¢ to pay directly from your checking account; the fee for using a credit card is 2.95%, which goes to the credit card company. For a typical Andover property appraised at \$200,000, the fee for the credit card company would be about \$110.

The tax rate in Andover is \$18.67 and \$18.38 in East Andover. The difference is because of the two separate fire districts.

Holiday Office Hours

Our office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25 for the Christmas holiday. However, we will be open on Friday, December 28, from 8 AM to 5 PM. I will also be open on Saturday morning, December 29, from 9 to 11 AM.

The following week, the office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 31 and January 1.

Happy holidays to everyone! 



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