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(Photo: Sun Prairie Utilities journey lineworkers, Cody Kuphal and Bob Kaufman in South Beloit, IL, before the convoy left for Florida.)

Sun Prairie Utilities Receives National Commendation for Restoration Efforts After Hurricane Milton

SUN PRAIRIE, (Wis.) — Sun Prairie Utilities (SPU) has received a national commendation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for its support in electric power restoration efforts in Lakeland, Florida.

On Oct. 9, 2024, SPU sent two journey lineworkers, Bob Kaufman & Cody Kuphal, with the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) convey of 22 Wisconsin public power communities to assist with widespread outages caused by Hurricane Milton.

Crews drove more than 20 vehicles, from bucket trucks to digger derricks, to aid Lakeland Electric. They arrived the night of Oct. 10 and began working the following day to restore electricity to businesses and homes.

Lakeland Electric estimated that 38,000 of its customers were without power on Oct. 10. By the morning of Oct. 14, their staff reported that the number had dropped to 4,300. MEUW staff said crews had to repair broken poles,

transformers, and downed wires in areas with extensive wind and flood damage after Hurricane Milton.

Wisconsin crews completed restoration efforts on Oct. 16 and left Florida the next day to drive back to their home state and families. When they returned, Kuphal and Kaufman shared stories of their time helping restore electricity to Lakeland residents.

“The coolest part is the people coming out and appreciating what you do in turning the lights back on,” commented Cody Kuphal [in an interview](#) with Roberta Baumann, Editor at The Star.

“One of the greatest actions that our public power community can take is lending a hand when bad things happen,” shared Andy Hirvela, SPU Interim Utility Manager and Supervisory Engineer. “SPU takes pride in sharing our talents and resources with public power friends like Lakeland Electric so they can get back on their feet safely and efficiently. We know Lakeland, or any of our MEUW partners, would be there for us as well.”

Sun Prairie Utilities participates in the American Public Power Association’s Mutual Aid Network, which coordinates with utilities and authorities during widespread power outages.

“Mutual aid is at the heart of what public power does, and the public power community thanks [SPU] for stepping up to help a neighbor in need — whether they are next door or thousands of miles away,” stated Scott Corwin, APPA’s President and CEO, in the commendation letter.

For more information on SPU and its commitment to mutual aid, visit sunprairieutilities.com/newsroom or PublicPower.org/MutualAid.

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