

# AHEAD OF THE STORM



## Duke Energy expects 1-3 million power outages from Hurricane Florence

BY NORM CANNADA  
THE JOURNAL

As Hurricane Florence moves closer to making landfall on the coast of the Carolinas later this week, officials are bracing for millions of customers losing power in North and South Carolina — with some likely to lose power for multiple days or weeks.

Duke Energy meteorologists are estimating 1-3 million customers losing power at some point from the storm, according to a statement released Wednesday afternoon.

“The magnitude of the storm is beyond what we have seen in years,” said Howard Fowler, Duke Energy’s incident commander. “With the storm expect-

ed to linger, power restoration work could take weeks instead of days.”

While the storm is not expected to impact Oconee and Pickens counties until later in the weekend, Duke Energy South Carolina spokesman Ryan Mosier told The Journal in a telephone interview Wednesday Upstate residents should start preparing for the storm.

“If they haven’t been paying attention to this in the Upstate they had better start now,” Mosier said. “This is going to be a storm event that impacts everybody in South Carolina. And when I say impact, we’re talking multiple days and in some cases weeks without power. That’s not taking into effect whatever

**‘If they haven’t**  
been paying  
attention to this in  
the Upstate they had  
better start now.’

**Ryan Mosier**  
Duke Energy  
South Carolina spokesman

type of damage you’re going to see from flooding. There’s going to be tons of rain that’s going to come down ...

SEE FLORENCE, PAGE A5

“From everything that we can see, from all the models and all historic experience looking at this we expect this to be a very life-impacting storm event for a lot of people in the Carolinas,” he added. “This is going to be a long-term recovery effort once the storm passes through. So people absolutely need to be paying attention to their local weather forecasts. They need to be making preparations if they haven’t already. There’s still time.”

Duke officials said they would have approximately 20,000 workers ready to start restoring power once it is safe to have them in the field.

“We’re going to have thousands of folks on the ground ready to do what we need to do to get power restarted as soon as we can,” Mosier said. “We’ve got a bunch of resources, a bunch of people coming from our territory in the Midwest... We’ve got a whole bunch of people coming up from Florida as well. These are Duke Energy folks. We’re going to have a whole army ready to tackle this thing as soon as we can.”

Updates on Duke Energy’s Hurricane Florence efforts can be found at [dukeenergyupdates.com](http://dukeenergyupdates.com).

To report outages to Duke Energy call 800-769-3766, visit

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

**Duke Energy employees load up outdoor furniture on Wednesday ahead of the arrival of Hurricane Florence. Utility companies are already preparing response teams for the storm’s aftermath in the Carolinas.**

ergy.com on a desktop computer or mobile device, or text OUT to 57801.

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative officials released a statement Wednesday saying the latest information they had showed “heavy rains and winds with speeds topping 40 mph will hit our area late Saturday and continue until Monday” and that the utility is prepared for the storm.

“Our inventory of poles, wire and other equipment has been expanded, our trucks are loaded, and all our crews are ready to roll at the first call,” the statement said. “At least

40 additional crewmen, some from as far away as Arkansas, are scheduled to arrive on Saturday. We also have additional resources and support available if we need them.

“Regardless of when Florence comes, we are prepared,” the statement added. “As we learned from Hurricane Irma last year, even if Florence does not make a direct hit on our state, heavy rainfall and high wind can cause property damage and outages.”

As part of the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Blue Ridge may send crews to help others in the cooperative if needed, “once our area has all power restored,” according to the statement.

To report an outage to Blue Ridge, call 1-888-BLURIDGE, download the Blue Ridge Cooperative mobile app., or visit [blueridge.coop/](http://blueridge.coop/) outage, Facebook and Twitter.

[ncannada@upstatetoday.com](mailto:ncannada@upstatetoday.com) | (864) 973-6680

Follow on Twitter @NormCannada

**‘We’re going to have a whole army ready to tackle this thing as soon as we can.’**

**Ryan Mosier**  
Duke Energy spokesman