



The Great Ice Storm of 2008 hit everyone in New England hard.

## SPACER CABLE HELPS AVOID THE WORST OF THE GREAT ICE STORM OF 2008

By Brian Trager, Hendrix Director of Technology and Eric Snitgen, Vice President and General Manager of Hendrix Aerial Cable & Systems

Ask almost anyone in New England about the Great Ice Storm of 2008, and you're likely to get a very chilly reception.

That's because the unforgettable

event, which hit the northeast United States on December 12 last year, wreaked significant havoc during its stay. The worst part was the widespread loss of electricity; the storm came in with

tremendous power, and it took away almost as much. In fact, over 1 million homes and businesses lost electricity

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It's all in the kit: Hendrix Wire & Cable have developed a Kitting Solution to complement the Spacer Cable System. It ensures cables are cut to length for a specific job, thereby reducing scrap and installation time. There are no short lengths left on the reels, less set ups on the reel trailers and less splicing.

## Spacer Cable

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through a seven-state area, with up to 800,000 in New England alone.

What's more, due to the extent of the damage to power lines, some customers did not have power restored for almost a month. No wonder that the mere mention of the storm still leaves people cold to this day.

While few customers were completely spared, some fared better than others. This was due, in large part, to the preparation and foresight of the utility companies that serve them. Templeton Light & Water is one of those companies. As the sole provider to Templeton – a quaint town situated in north central MA, the utility, which provides power to 3,400 households, suffered damage that paled in comparison to some of its statewide neighbors.

"What could have happened in the ice storm of 2008, I don't even want to imagine," said Sean Hamilton, general manager of Templeton Light & Power. "Relatively speaking, we

did pretty well. We had 70% of our town out of service because the transmission lines were out. We had to wait about three days for the transmission lines to be cleared and reenergized to get power to the town. But we were very pleased that we were able to get everyone back up so quickly.”

Hamilton doesn’t hesitate when asked the reason: Spacer Cable from Hendrix Wire & Cable, one of the premier providers of high-quality overhead and underground power distribution products, played the primary role in shortening the power outage time. Over the years, Hendrix Spacer Cable has been effective in reducing power outages caused by various elements in the environment – not the least of which are severe ice storms. Plus, because temporary tree contact does not cause outages, it translates to less tree trimming, which increases overall aesthetics and lowers labor costs.

“The Spacer Cable was incredible,” said Hamilton. “It was directly responsible for helping us suffer far less damage than we could have. Had the transmission lines not been out, Hendrix Spacer Cable would have allowed us to bring up about 70% of our customers almost immediately.”

“The four main circuits, which are all Hendrix, were completely intact,” he added. “We were able to reenergize that cable and restore power to 70% of our customers. We were cutting trees out of the Spacer Cables that were two or three feet in diameter. If the pole top didn’t fall the cable wouldn’t have come down; the pole broke before the cable. But that’s a pretty easy fix: usually we just re-install the tangent bracket a little lower temporarily and put the whole thing back up.”

According to Hamilton, power was 100% restored to the town in about a week. Without the Spacer Cable it could have – and would have – been much worse and much longer. Just ask residents of any of the towns who lived three or more weeks as if it were 1800.

Hamilton – and the town of Templeton – has a long history using

Hendrix products.

“We have been installing Hendrix Spacer Cable since the late 1960s,” he said. “We have just begun to replace some of the older cables with newer versions, not because of failure but because of lightning strikes and various severe weather events. Further, any new pro-

“If a pole gets hit you can float the cable and come back and set the pole another day, so you have flexibility in terms of repair schedules. It’s compact, so it helps with trimming and maintains the aesthetics of the road.”

jects that we undertake, whether underground or above ground, are designed with Hendrix cable.”


While the Spacer Cable performed

admirably during the ice storm, Hamilton emphasizes that the product’s advantages are evident on a year-round basis.


“The Spacer Cable is extremely versatile,” said Hamilton, whose company uses a wide range of Hendrix products including brackets and insulators. “If a pole gets hit, you can float the cable and come back and set the pole another day, so you have flexibility in terms of repair schedules. It’s compact, so it helps with trimming and maintains the aesthetics of the road.”

“Installation is quick and simple; our installers love working with it, rather than the open wire that is so much more difficult; all three cables are right there in front of the installer in a nice, compact design. Basically, we can just ‘set it and forget it’.”



“I know for a fact that the Spacer



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Cables have contributed to our low incidence of outages in town. I can attest to that personally. It pretty much takes an act of nature to get one of the cables down.”

On the few occasions when there is a problem, Hamilton’s customers enjoy a rapid 58-minute average response time. So between the durability of the Hendrix spacer cables and the efficiency of the repair crews, Templeton customers are rarely left in the dark.

Hamilton noted that in addition to how well Hendrix’s products perform, they are augmented by the company’s expertise.

“We have often called Hendrix with questions related to tension and stress on the cables, and they have always been provided helpful recommendations,” he

said. “They don’t just deliver their product and say goodbye.”

Brad White, manager of the West Boylston (MA) Municipal Light Department, echoes Hamilton’s acco-

Department where he worked for 19 years, he has worked with Hendrix products for over 30 years.

“Spacer Cable has a unique design and a reliable way of keeping distribution systems together,” he said. “Our first installation with Hendrix was in the 1970s. They are more reliable than the open copper wire. With all the new construction being underground we use their URD products as well.”

Like Templeton, West Boylston felt the full brunt of the 2008 ice storm; on the first night, the entire town was out of power. But

due to the ruggedness of the spacer cable, the damage was greatly minimized.

“It took only a week to get everyone back,” recalled White who noted that 70% of the wiring in town is supported

“It took only a week to get everyone back,” recalled White who noted that 70% of the wiring in town is supported by Spacer Cable.”

lades. White now serves as head of operations for this municipal utility that serves approximately 3,200 customers – and between his previous position as manager of the Boylston (MA) Light

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by Spacer Cable. "We quickly picked up the main circuits that were fed with the Hendrix spacer, so we had a number of people back up almost immediately."

Like the old Timex watch commercial, the Spacer Cable is able to "take a licking and keep on ticking," said White.

White said that the aesthetics allowed by the Spacer Cable are important in a town as picturesque as West Boylston. "Due to its durability, you don't have to be as aggressive with tree trimming," he said. "That makes it more conducive to an attractive profile when you look down the street. The less you can trim from the natural landscape the better."

White mentioned that his goal is to increase the percentage of Spacer Cable to 100%. Towards that end, he is already supervising a major project in which the Spacer Cable is being installed from I-90 to the center of town.

The reliability of the Spacer Cable has only one drawback, as summed up by Hamilton.

"The folks in our town are so accus-

tomed to not having outages, that when we have one, it's a huge deal," he said. "Because of the Spacer Cable, we have really been spoiling our customers. But, frankly, it's a nice problem to have."

For Jonathan Gonynor, Manager of Distribution Standards for National Grid in Westborough, MA, maintains that while the ice storm was a "tough situation for everyone," it did not turn into a full-blown catastrophe.

"We had over 500,000 customers without power," said Gonynor. "It took roughly seven days to restore power. Without the Hendrix Spacer Cable it could have been far worse than it was."

"In terms of what I actually witnessed, if the pole didn't break it was typically the hardware at the top of the pole that broke, which brought the Spacer Cable down. A majority of the problems we were dealing with were broken brackets. Fortunately, those are very easy to restore. When you get into pole replacement, that becomes a little more difficult than just picking the wire up and putting it back up on a bracket."

Gonynor, who notes that National Grid installs the cable on single-phase and three-phase arms as well as the "diamond" configuration, says that the company purchases a "considerable amount" of the Hendrix Spacer Cable each year. This is due to the cable's performance not only during severe conditions like the December ice storm but all year round.

"We feel that the storm performance and the reliability relative to momentary contact with tree limbs or animals make the Hendrix products superior," he said. "The outer jacket is very rigid and the 'weatherability' is better than a traditional covered cable or conductor."

Templeton's Hamilton summed up the performance of the Hendrix Spacer Cable best when he said, "We obviously have no control over when storms occur. But it's nice to know that if we ever have another ice storm like last year's, we can greatly reduce the impact."

Now that will warm the heart of any utility manager.

## OVERHEAD DISTRIBUTION USING SPACER CABLE SYSTEMS



### Ideal for Areas with Trees

- Resists storm damage
- Reduces outages (eliminates tree/wildlife induced interruptions)
- Improves power quality
- Lowers tree trimming costs
- Improves aesthetics
- Greater public acceptance

### Solutions for those "Impossible Circuits"

- Upgrading circuits in alleyways
- Road widening projects
- Upgrading backlot services
- Adding multiple circuits to an existing right of way

