

# The Inter-Mountain

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## ERCC generates safety for residents

Many businesses and homes in Randolph County and throughout West Virginia endured many days without power following major storm systems that swept through the area in 2012. The derecho that struck June 30 left approximately 672,000 utility customers in West Virginia without power while the Mountain State snowstorm generated by the remnants of Hurricane Sandy in late October affected approximately 219,250 utility customers.

When the sudden and unexpected derecho struck in June, ERCC staff sprang into action. The emergency generator was in full operation mode powering many essential facility functions. Regularly scheduled staff reported for duty, even while experiencing power outages in their own homes, along with non-scheduled staff who were on hand to provide additional assistance in meeting the daily needs of all residents. ERCC operated on emergency power for approximately 40 hours while continuing to provide complete, compassionate care to all facility residents.

Resident safety always is of paramount concern to ERCC board members and the administration. While the derecho was described to be a once-in-a-lifetime storm, and ERCC residents were safe and secure at all times, directors and staff of ERCC focused on taking emergency preparedness to the next level, that being the purchase and installation of a full-facility generator. Knowing that a project of this magnitude doesn't happen

overnight and the fact that once-in-a-lifetime storms can strike unexpectedly, ERCC immediately contracted with a firm in Buckhannon, Electrotech, to provide an onsite full-facility generator on a moment's notice.

That notice actually needed to be given late in October as weather forecasters predicted that the Hurricane Sandy superstorm would dump massive amounts of ice and snow in the West Virginia region. As that storm moved through the area, ERCC operated on power provided by a mobile full-facility generator that was positioned prior to the storm.

Many residents and family members commented how ERCC was virtually unaffected by the power outage created by Hurricane Sandy. That was very true as 100 percent of ERCC's power needs were provided by the mobile full-facility generator.

After many weeks and months of planning, preparation and project coordination, ERCC recently received shipment of a 200 kilowatt CAT Olympian Generator with a 1000 Amp Transfer Switch, all of which tipped the scales at 9000 pounds. The new generator, which is fueled by natural gas, was fully installed and operational in August and is capable of powering the entire facility.

“Major storms have highlighted the need for ERCC to be totally self-sufficient in the event of power outages,” said Don Megert, ERCC board of directors member and building and grounds committee chairman.

ERCC Administrator Denise Campbell stated, “Power outages will continue to occur due to the unpredictable effects of weather systems, but family members can have the peace of mind knowing that ERCC residents will be safe and secure no matter what Mother Nature may throw at us.”

ERCC is one of the few facilities in the area to utilize a full-facility generator of this capacity and magnitude. Costs for equipment, site preparation, and installation can range from \$130,000 to \$170,000.

“We’re investing in the complete safety and comfort of our residents, who are family to us,” Campbell said. “That peace of mind is priceless.”

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