

The Ice Storm of '98
as reported to Bill Brenner by Andy Rochester

Sumner Maine welcomed Doug Grattan and 64 others from Grattan Line Construction for 11 days of gruelling work. Here in Sumner, population 761, we could not have done it without the help of dedicated people such as the crews that came up from Massachusetts. After a week in Vermont, 24 Grattan crews worked 18 hr. days to repair or replace our hard hit utility poles and power lines. Ice, over one inch thick in places, covered everything breaking utility poles, lines, and trees. Icy roads and falling limbs made the job treacherous as well as difficult. The Sumner Fire Department helping to coordinate the clean-up effort was put to the test. We tried to be sure that the roads were plowed and sanded so the Grattan trucks could maneuver around our narrow roads and steep hills. Sometimes we kept just ahead of the crews, who seemed to work tirelessly after only 6 hrs sleep each night. Driving around checking on the health and welfare of the residents we saw these crews often. Some had written nick names in the dust that accumulated on the back of their trucks such as "The Ice Warriors" or proudly stated "We came, We saw, We kicked Ice". In small groups working together or sometimes in a parade, headed for a late lunch or dinner, it was reassuring to know they were there for us. Their dedication and efficiency was obvious by the well coordinated effort they brought us. A lucky few had their power restored in less than 10 days, others in the worst areas had to wait two weeks. After well over 12,000 hours of work by Mr. Grattan's crews 98% of our homes had their power restored. An amazing effort by a few dozen people. In all 30 Utilities and Line companies from 9 states, N.S., and N.B. Canada came to Maines assistance.

Thank you Grattan Line Construction

Hope you like the pictures.
Thanks for the hat.

Andy Rochester