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Metro

Power outages dwindling in towns

By **Matt Byrne and Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS NOVEMBER 07, 2011

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A week after an early snowstorm battered Massachusetts, only a few hundred households remained without power last night.

At 11 p.m. yesterday, National Grid said on its website that it had restored power to all of its customers, and Western Massachusetts Electric Co. reported on its site that 233 of its customers were still in the dark.

Of the Western Massachusetts Electric Co. customers without power late last night, 143 of them were in Springfield, according to the company website.

NStar reported on Nov. 3 that all of its customers — more than 200,000 — affected by the storm were back online.

While the number of outages steadily declined over the

course of the day, state officials and residents have grown impatient with the companies.

The state Department of Public Utilities, which regulates the industry, is expected to open an investigation this week into storm response and preparedness, called for by Governor Deval Patrick, said Catherine Williams, a spokeswoman for the agency. Attorney General Martha Coakley is also conducting an investigation.

Yesterday afternoon, before the company reported that it had fixed all its outages, the remaining National Grid households without power were centered in Hampden and Hampshire counties. Palmer, Monson, Belchertown, and Wilbraham were among the communities with the highest number of people in the dark at the time.

Ed Maia, a selectman in Monson, a town ravaged by disasters this year, said yesterday afternoon, when 406 households still lacked power, that the pace of restorations was steady.

“Given the magnitude and scope of this storm, they’re doing a great job,” Maia said. “It takes time to mobilize the kinds of numbers we need out here.”

In Palmer, where 600 customers were still affected by the outages early yesterday, dozens of members of the Faith Baptist Christian Academy met for Sunday service as usual.

“Even if we had no power, we were planning on meeting and having the service anyway,” Matthew Blain, a deacon at the church, said yesterday. Power was restored Saturday night.

Correction: Because of reporting errors, a story in yesterday’s Metro section about the restoration of electrical power in Massachusetts misstated the number of NStar customers affected by the outages and incorrectly described an investigation by the state into the storm response. At its height, more than 200,000 NStar customers were without power. An investigation by the state Department of Public Utilities, which regulates the utility industry, will be undertaken at the direction of Governor Deval Patrick and is separate from an investigation by Attorney General Martha Coakley.

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