



CONNECTIONS

News and Information from OUC—The *Reliable One* | DECEMBER 2017

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OUC Crews Assist with Power Restoration in Hurricane Ravaged Puerto Rico



Left to right: Chris Traniello, Bryan Walsh, Mike Atout, Brent Lowery, Glenn Massari, Marcos Laborde Delgado, Dewey Harvey, Andrew Phillips, Chase Crawford and John Wallace.

Left to right: Hector Ramos, Carmelo Nieves, Luis Burgos and Eric Rivera.

Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in late September, leaving massive amounts of destruction, including near depletion of the area's electric grid. OUC joined Puerto Rico's power company, PREPA, as well as fellow mainland utilities, to help restore electricity to the residents and businesses that remain in the dark. Fourteen line technicians, engineers and fleet personnel volunteered to work on the island to bring back a sense of normalcy. This mutual aid assistance is common among public

power utilities like OUC. When Hurricane Irma cut power to nearly seven million Floridians, municipally owned electric companies from around the nation brought trucks, crews and supplies to the state to help with the massive restoration effort.

For a look at our crew's journey in Puerto Rico, visit OUC.com/puertorico.



COMING SOON – New Outage Alerts and Online Outage Map

Soon, you'll be able to sign up for our new phone, text message and email Outage Alerts to stay informed throughout an entire restoration process. You will even be able to report outages from your smartphone. We're also enhancing our

Online Outage Map to provide even more valuable information to you when an event occurs.

At OUC, we're constantly working on innovative ways to better your customer experience. Visit OUC.com to explore.





Energy-Efficient Holiday Gifts

Cordless Power Tools — Cordless screwdrivers, drills and saws, as well as yard tools like lawn mowers and leaf blowers that are equipped with ENERGY STAR battery chargers, use about 30 percent less energy than their corded counterparts.

Programmable Thermostat — A programmable thermostat can provide nearly \$200 per year in energy savings. Some can even “learn” your family’s schedule to provide more personalization. Perhaps best of all, many smart thermostats now allow you to adjust your climate controls remotely from a smart phone.

Motion-Sensor Power Strips — A power strip may seem like a boring gift, but you can purchase models that switch on and off as you enter or leave a room. This keeps electronics from wasting energy when not in use and eliminates the need to hit the red power button all the time.

Pressure Cookers — Pressure cookers provide, by far, the most energy-efficient way to cook. Not only do they heat up faster, but they can cut energy usage by as much as 70 percent.

Holiday Decorating Safety Tips

- Thoroughly inspect light strands before you hang them. Be sure to discard any with frayed or loose wires, as those are more prone to catching fire.
- Check all lighting instructions for “indoor,” “outdoor,” or “indoor/outdoor” use. Only hang them in those designated areas.
- Keep live trees watered daily. A dry tree decked with electrical lights can be a major fire hazard.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for one that’s fire resistant.
- Turn off all decorations before leaving the house or heading to bed.
- Keep candles away from trees and draperies, and never leave them unattended.
- Consider using LED lights. They’re much more efficient and reduce the risk of fire.

For more energy saving tips, visit www.ouc.com/conservation.



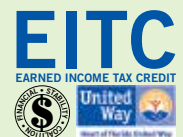
Free Tax Refund Guide

With holiday shopping taking a chunk out of people’s wallets, saving money any chance you get is important. United Way has partnered with H&R Block to offer www.MyFreeTaxes.com. If you made less than \$66,000 in 2017, you can file your taxes online for free! [MyFreeTaxes.com](http://www.MyFreeTaxes.com) is safe, secure and easy to use.

For those who prefer in-person help, **Heart of Florida United Way** will open Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) locations across the tri-county area. If you made less than \$66,000,

you qualify to have your taxes done for free at a VITA site! IRS-certified volunteers will help you get 100% of your refund, including tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). You could qualify for a tax credit of up to \$6,318 if you worked even one day last year.

To find the VITA site closest to you, dial **2-1-1** or text “MyMoney” to **898-211** or visit HFUW.org/taxes.



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