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**ATTACHMENT 7**

**RTI International - News Release -  
01.16.2003**

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**The North Carolina Ice Storm: Lost Time at Work and Other Impacts**

Chapel Hill, NC -- Seventy-one percent of all full- and part-time working North Carolinians responding to a new survey about December's ice storm reported missing work -- typically, at least one full day. Most of those respondents could not work because their offices were closed, survey results showed. Nineteen percent said they could not physically get to work. And half of those responding said downed trees or electrical wires blocked roads in their neighborhoods.

Those results are among new analysis coming from a survey conducted by researchers at the Howard W. Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and RTI International. Investigators telephoned 457 households in the 36 counties included in North Carolina's application for federal disaster relief to assess the impact of the ice storm.

"There is only so much information that can be collected by utility companies and local governments," said Dr. Kenneth Bollen, director of the Odum Institute. "This survey was designed to collect neglected but important information on households in the affected counties."

Most of the surveyed households lost power (78 percent) as well as heat (58 percent), while 28 percent were without either telephone service (28 percent) or water (19 percent). Researchers said the loss of utility service represented only part of the total storm impact. [The North Carolina Ice Storm: Who Lost What and for How Long?](#) details survey findings about power, telephone, and other service outages during the storm.

"The results of the survey quantify what we have been hearing in anecdotal reports in the news media and elsewhere," said Paul Biemer, who holds joint posts at RTI and the UNC institute, where he directs survey research. "We hope the results help state and local officials, business leaders and others have an even fuller understanding of the storm's impact on North Carolina."

More than a quarter of the responding households -- 28 percent -- reported spending nights away from home; the median stay was three nights, researchers said. Fourteen percent of the respondents said their homes were damaged with a \$400 median estimate for repair costs. Only 2 percent of the respondents reported any storm-related injuries. About 50 percent of households without power reported spoiled food. The median estimate of the value of lost food was \$100.

Researchers also asked survey respondents what they would do to reduce damage from a future storm. Eighty percent said they were supportive of proposals to trim back trees further from power lines. Less than half -- 47 percent -- were willing to pay extra on their monthly bill to bury power lines in their

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communities. About 24 percent of those asked said they would pay an extra \$1 to \$5; 12 percent would pay an extra \$6 to \$10; and 11 percent would pay more than \$10 monthly.

Survey respondents were randomly selected from households in the 36 counties affected by the ice storm, reaching as far west as McDowell and Rutherford counties and as far east as Halifax and Edgecombe counties. Most were clustered along the Interstate 85 corridor. The Odum Institute-RTI survey was conducted between December 21 and December 29. The margin of error is 4.7 percentage points.

## The Odum Institute

UNC's Odum Institute, founded in 1924, maintains one of the nation's largest archives of polling and census data and supports social science research at Carolina through statistical and survey consulting, short courses and colloquia, and a state-of-the-art computing lab.

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## The North Carolina Ice Storm: Who Lost What and for How Long?

Chapel Hill, NC -- Most North Carolina households in the path of December's ice storm might have been shivering in the dark, but at least most of them could talk to cross-town friends and relatives about it.

That's among the findings of a new survey by the Howard W. Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and RTI International. Researchers telephoned 457 households in the 36 counties included in North Carolina's application for federal disaster relief to assess the impact of the ice storm.

"We hope our findings will provide decision-makers in business and government and citizens in general with a more complete knowledge of the storm consequences," said Dr. Kenneth Bollen, director of the UNC institute. "This, in turn, should enable communities to better prepare for the next ice storm or hurricane."

Nearly 80 percent of the households in the 36 ice storm counties lost power, survey results showed. About 58 percent lost heat, but only about one out of four of the households reported losing telephone service. Roughly one out of five households went without water. Although only about 55 percent of those with wells were without water, of those households that did lose water, most -- nearly 92 percent -- rely on wells for their water supply. Most households that lost one of these services did so for two or more days.

"People are very resourceful," Bollen said. "While four of five households lost power and 58 percent lost heating, two-thirds of all those surveyed had alternative ways to heat at least some part of their household. On the other hand, if we look only at those who lost the use of their primary heating system, about 38 percent had no alternative way of heating at least part of the house. That's especially critical for very young children and for frail or medically fragile adults."

Among the households that reported losing electric power, slightly less than one out of three of them also reported losing their telephone service. (Households with only cordless phones would not be able to use them without electric service, even if they did not lose telephone service or service had been restored.) While only 14 percent had access to a back-up generator, two-thirds of those surveyed had alternative ways of heating their household. Slightly more than 80 percent of those with other sources of heat relied on gas or wood fireplaces or kerosene heaters.

Overall, researchers said, these results show the great extent to which households in the ice storm area were affected by the storm. The overwhelming majority lost power, a clear majority lost heat, and significant percentages of households lost phone service or water access.

The survey touched on a variety of topics related to the ice storm such as perceptions of power companies' response to the ice storm, its impact on families and work, and how residents coped in its aftermath. Findings on these and other topics will be available in a report to be published later this year. Survey respondents were randomly selected from households in the 36 counties affected by the ice storm, reaching as far west as McDowell and Rutherford counties and as far east as Halifax and Edgecombe counties. Most were clustered along the Interstate 85 corridor. The survey was conducted between December 21 and December 29. The margin of error is 4.7 percentage points.

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