

COLEMAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



FIRST ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, ARKANSAS

Powering Up After a Storm

BY B. DENISE HAWKINS

Coleman County Electric starts big when tracing outages during electricity restoration

Lights out? Thirty-one percent of power outages are triggered by the weather. Lineworkers must battle the elements to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

Your co-op staff knows you want to know why the lights are out and when they are coming back on. First, workers must find the problem, and then they follow a series of steps to bring the lights back on.

Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly as possible. Then crews fix problems affecting smaller groups of members.

Restoring Power

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems. They start with high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cables that supply power to thousands of consumers rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Next, crews check distribution substations. Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines (also called tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground

Outage Safety Tips

Follow these safety steps at home during a power outage:

- ▶ Before calling Coleman County Electric Cooperative to report an outage, first check to see whether your home's circuit panel or fuse box has tripped or blown a fuse. This can also cause a power failure. If tripped, reset the breaker or replace the blown fuse.
- ▶ If the power is out in your entire neighborhood, call Coleman County Electric at 1-800-560-2128 to report the outage.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug all unnecessary appliances and electrical equipment. When power is restored, turn on items one at a time.
- ▶ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours. A full freezer keeps food cold for about 48 hours.
- ▶ Individual households may receive special attention if loss of electricity affects life support systems or poses immediate danger. If you or a family member depends on life support, call Coleman County EC at 1-800-560-2128 before a power outage happens.

service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

Always call Coleman County Electric at 1-800-560-2128 to report an outage. This helps crews isolate local issues.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*.

Shade for Savings

BY THOMAS KIRK

Want to save money on your energy bill without investing in expensive retrofits and renovations? Get a shovel. Strategically planting trees and shrubs around your home is a tried and true way to save.

Energy savings gained from shade trees depends on the location and orientation of both the trees and the house. Your climate also comes into play, but smart landscaping can generally shave about 25 percent of energy used for cooling and heating.

In summer months, a tree's shade cools the surrounding air temperature by as much as 9 degrees. Air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25 degrees cooler. This means that a homeowner can reduce an unshaded home's summer air-conditioning costs by 15 to 50 percent.

In the winter, trees and shrubs block heavy winds. Homeowners are encouraged to plant deciduous trees if possible. Unlike evergreens, these trees lose leaves in the winter and allow more sunlight into the home for natural warmth.

For details on using trees to save energy, the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy website has thorough discussions of the benefits of shading on its Landscape Shading Energy Savers page.

Be sure to call 811, the state's call-before-you-dig number, before turning over even a spadeful of dirt. The free service will locate buried utility lines so you don't have a tragic accident.

Also, be sure to take the location of power lines into account when selecting trees. As a general rule:

- ▶ Plant large canopy trees (40 feet and taller) at least 50 feet from power lines.
- ▶ Plant medium-sized trees (less than 40 feet tall) at least 20 feet from power lines.
- ▶ Plant small trees (20 feet or smaller) at least 15 feet from power lines.

Planting the right tree in the right place can help lower energy bills.

Thomas Kirk is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency and renewable energy for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Coleman County Electric Cooperative

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Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Coke, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties

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colemanelectric.org



Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 9.

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when you go to bed Saturday.