



More Power to You Thanks for Your Patience, Understanding After Storm

Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

From the outset of the July 24th storm, co-op employees were working...even if the phone lines to our offices weren't. Due to unprecedented call volumes, during the largest outage in the history of the co-op, the company that provides the phone lines to our offices experienced an overload that resulted in errant messages to some of our members.

We have been working with the phone company to make sure it is taking the necessary steps to ensure that such a situation doesn't happen again. We certainly apologize to those who were unable to get through due to the malfunction.

In the early morning of Tuesday, July 24, all heck broke loose with the weather. From the extremely high winds and lightning that pummeled northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, about 7,000 members lost power. Between 4:30 and 8:30 a.m. that day, more than 16,000 calls were made to the co-op. That's more than one call every second!

The phones, however, were just one of many problems that day. Our biggest task was restoring power to more than 7,000 members, which involved repairing dozens and dozens of downed power lines. The vast majority of outages were in our Illinois territory with the South Beloit and Rockton areas suffering the most damage.

The entire Rock Energy line crew started working to restore power about 5 a.m. They were joined in the afternoon by six line workers from other Wisconsin co-ops—Adams—Columbia in Friendship and Vernon in Westby. With their help, we were able to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. Cooperatives have a long history of assisting each other during major outages. We don't often need the help, but it's good to know it's there when we do. In the past, Rock Energy crews have helped cooperatives in areas around Wisconsin, Illinois,

Iowa, Ohio, and even Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

During major storm outages, most members understandably want to know when their power will be restored. Our standard response is "as quickly as possible." In most cases, we hesitate to predict restoration times for individual services because we simply don't have that detailed information—especially when the damage was as extensive as we experienced with this storm. Different circumstances can cause each outage, and some problems may take longer to identify and fix than others.

After storms, crews are dispatched first to areas where repairs can be made to restore power to the greatest number

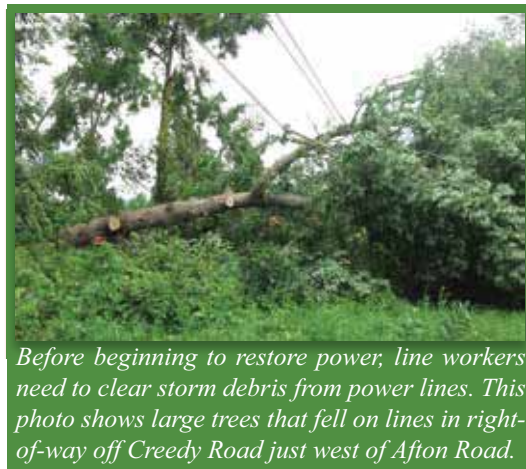
of members in the shortest amount of time. For example, problems at our substations are generally given priority because work done there could result in power being restored to hundreds of members.

Main feeder lines, which carry electricity from a substation to a large group of members, are the next priority, followed by tap lines that supply power to a small neighborhood and then service lines that carry power from a transformer on a nearby pole to a handful of houses.

To complicate matters, as was the case during this storm, an outage might have a number of problems. For example, lightning might have caused damage to a substation that supplies your power. A large tree might have fallen on the main feeder line that supplies your area, and high winds might have knocked down the tap line near your home. Each of these situations requires separate attention and takes time to fix. In many cases, line workers need to clear large tree limbs from power lines before even beginning the restoration work.

But rest assured, we continue to work around the clock until every last member has electricity. During the July 24 storm, most members had power restored later that night or sooner.

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Before beginning to restore power, line workers need to clear storm debris from power lines. This photo shows large trees that fell on lines in right-of-way off Creedy Road just west of Afton Road.



Stay Clear of Downed Power Lines

What should you do if you encounter toppled utility poles or dangling power lines after a storm?

The most important thing—which could mean the difference between life and death—is to stay away! Assume that all wires are electrical and treat all downed or hanging lines as if they are energized, said Dennis Schultz, director of utility operations at Rock Energy Cooperative. Lines do not have to be arcing, sparking, or smoking to be live.

Because it's impossible to look at a downed line and tell if it is energized or not, do not approach them or touch them. Immediately call Rock Energy Cooperative or the utility company that services the area. If you do not know what company handles electricity in the area or if there is an immediate danger, call 911.

Co-op crews working on power restoration after the July 24 storm witnessed several instances of people not taking the proper precautions around downed power lines. In one case, a person moved a power line that had fallen across a street.

Remember to stay away from damaged power lines like these along Blackhawk Boulevard in South Beloit after the July 24 storm.



“Fortunately, it wasn’t a live wire,” Schultz said. “But it could have been.”

In another area, the storm had blown a crossarm with the wires still attached off the utility pole. A person walked directly underneath the dangling wires to ask co-op crews working there when power would be restored.

“Those wires could have snapped at any time,” Schultz said. “If that had happened, the person wouldn’t have lived to see the lights come back on.”

Many people take safety precautions during a storm, but then let their guard down when it’s over, said Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity.

“The danger does not end when the storm does,” she said. “People can be hurt or killed by hazards left behind. Be cautious in any cleanup effort.”

Safe Electricity, a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council, warns that tree limbs or other storm debris may hide electrical hazards. It sponsors the Teach Learn Care TLC program that urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children are aware of these hazards as well.

In an effort to protect people from storm-related electrical hazards, the Electrical Safety Foundation has provided answers to common storm safety questions about power lines.

Q: What should I do if I encounter a downed power line?

A: Move at least 10 feet away from the line and anything touching it. The human body is a ready conductor of electricity.

The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.

Q: What can I do to help someone who has come in contact with a downed power line?

A: If you see someone who is in direct or indirect

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Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast

Saturday,
Sept. 15

8 - 10:30 a.m.

Rock Energy
headquarters,
2815 Kennedy Road,
Janesville

- Pancakes, sausage, juice, milk, water, coffee
- Health fair
- Bucket truck rides
- Jugglers
- CFL Charlie
- Spin-to-Win
- Bounce house
- Balloons
- Temporary tattoos

New this year!

Document shredding
Electronics recycling

- Popcorn
- Ice cream

Document Shredding



- 4 boxes or bags of material per member.
- You do not need to remove staples, paper clips, hanging files, or black binder clips from materials.
- CDs and credit cards also will be shredded.
- No three-ring binders.
- All material will be shredded on site.

Electronics Recycling



- Accepted items: TVs, personal computers, printers, scanners, fax machines, calculators, cell phones, keyboards/mice, radios, stereos, telephones, DVD/CD players, VCRs.
- No air conditioners, microwaves, dehumidifiers, vacuums, toasters, or large appliances.

More Power to You

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Power outages are major inconveniences, but unfortunately storms are unavoidable. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding when they do happen.

Fortunately, no injuries were reported during or after the July 24 storm. But line crews working to restore power witnessed some behavior that could have resulted in injury or even death. To underscore the importance of safety—both to our members and our workers—we are starting a new feature called Safety Zone in this magazine. This month's article, which stresses the importance of staying away from downed power lines, can be found on page 16b.

See You at Member Appreciation Day!

On a lighter note, please join us on Saturday, Sept. 15, for our Member Appreciation Day. This annual event is a chance for Rock Energy's directors and employees to show you how thankful we are to be your energy provider.

In addition to a pancake breakfast, health fair, prize wheel, bucket truck rides, and lots of activities for kids, document shredding and electronics recycling will be available this year to provide extra value to members. Shred-it, the Madison company that handles the co-op's

shredding, will allow members to bring up to four boxes or bags filled with documents that will be shredded right on site. Universal Recycling Technologies of Janesville will provide the electronics recycling. All the details are listed in the box on this page.

Shredding our personal documents is so important to safeguard against identity theft, which is quickly becoming one of the most organized and costly crimes of our time. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that as many as 9 million Americans become identity theft victims each year.

Shred-it will have one of its mobile shredding trucks at Member Appreciation Day. By shredding all unneeded documents that contain your personal information, you are taking one of the most important steps toward protecting yourself from identity theft.

Universal Recycling Technologies will provide electronics recycling to help keep TVs, computers, phones, and other devices out of community landfills. The company separates the components and safely processes the metals, glass, and other recoverable materials so they can be recycled.

We hope to see you on Sept. 15 so we can express our sincere gratitude for allowing us to serve your energy needs! ■

Get Connected

Check out these great deals offered with your Co-op Connections Card.



Dad's & Lad's Barber Shop, 609 Blackhawk Blvd., South Beloit – (815) 389-1224

Barber shop.

\$1 Off Haircut

CR Styles, 1691 E. Gale Drive, Beloit – (608) 361-0920 – www.crstyles.com

Locally owned and managed.

We pride ourselves in having a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Come visit us in our new location! Wide choice of only the best products, and as always, kids pay according to their age. Walk-ins welcome!



One Free Kid's Cut (per family) & \$3 Off Any Man/Woman's Cut

Introducing New Healthy Savings Discounts!

The same program that offers discounts at local merchants and has saved Rock Energy members \$46,000 on prescriptions now offers significant savings on dental, vision, hearing, lab and imaging services, and chiropractic work. To locate providers that participate in the Healthy Savings program, call (800) 800-7616 or visit HealthySavings.coop. Be sure to have your Co-op Connections Card handy.

Add Up Your Savings!



Tell us how much you have saved by using your Co-op Connections Card. If you have a story you'd like to share with other Rock Energy members, e-mail Barbara Uebelacker at BarbU@rock.coop or call her at (866) 752-4550.



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Downed Power Line

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contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.

Q: Can I use something that is not metal to try to move a downed power line myself?

A: Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even non-conductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.

Q: What should I do if I see a downed power line in the street while I am driving my car?

A: Do not drive over downed power lines.

Q: What if a power line comes down onto my car or I didn't see it until I've driven into it?

A: If you are in your car and it is in contact with the downed line, stay in your car. Tell others to stay away from your vehicle. If you must leave your car because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the live car and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the car to the earth. Shuffle away from the car.

Q: Is a downed power line still dangerous if it has come down in water, like a pool or pond?

Water is a good conductor of electricity. Any amount of water—even a puddle—could become energized. Be careful not to touch water—or anything in contact with the water—near where there is a downed power line. ■

Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 3, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 4. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage, please call (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550.