



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

10 things you might not know about power restoration

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then suddenly, they snap their fingers, and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen.

As the President/CEO of Monroe County Electric Cooperative, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

- 1. We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or a small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. Our new meters alert us immediately should it lose power, but we also rely on you to let us know if your power is out. It's easy to report an outage via our SmartHub app or give us a call at 1-800-757-7433.
- 2. Our employees might be affected, too.** Because MCEC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local, too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When

you're without power, our people might be, too.

- 3. It's a team effort.** Every one of MCEC's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, engineers and field staff are surveying damage, our tree crews are clearing hazards, dispatchers are organizing crews, and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

Depending on the number of outages and the extent of the damage, we may need to call in additional support. This could include having our office personnel stay to continue answering calls from our members. This approach is beneficial as they receive the most up to date information quickly, allowing them to relay accurate information to our members promptly. If the damage and outages are significant, we might also seek assistance from neighboring cooperatives. This practice embodies one of the cooperative principles: cooperation among cooperatives.

- 4. We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what



happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

- 5. Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.
- 6. Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)

(Continued on page 18B)

(“Power restoration” continued from page 18A)

- 7. Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these “blinks” are important, because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.
- 8. You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan — remember, we don’t always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you’re unsure what to do,

call us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.

- 9. Our employees have to plan — and eat.** If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews work long, hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else.
- 10. Sometimes it’s a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive

relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they’re going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it.

Honoring our hometown heroes

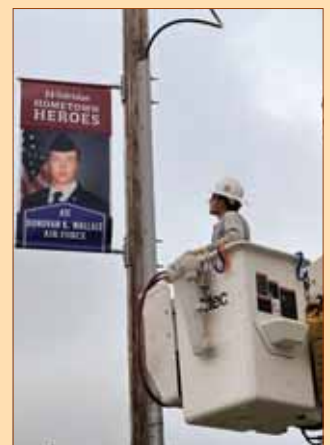
MCEC crews proudly assisted the City of Waterloo in installing banners for their Hometown Hero Project. This initiative features over 190 banners displayed throughout the town, honoring past and present members of the U.S. military. MCEC was deeply honored to contribute to this heartfelt tribute, which beautifully recognizes the bravery and dedication of those who have served and continue to serve our country.



MCEC member Bob Metzger watches proudly as the crew installs banners honoring his father, Armin Metzger, a U.S. Army veteran, and his uncle, Monroe Metzger, a U.S. Navy veteran.



Linemen Andrew Gotto, Gary Gilbert and Matt Kish installing banners in Waterloo.





ways to prepare your home for *Summer Vacation*

Once you have packed your bags, get your house ready for vacation too.

1. Set or program your thermostat to 85 degrees.
2. Unplug small appliances and electronics.
3. Turn your natural gas water heater to low.
4. Turn off your electric hot water heater.
5. Use light timers or smart lighting.
6. Ensure your sump pump is operational.
7. Clean out your refrigerator.
8. Pause your mail.
9. Make sure doors and windows are locked.
10. Let a neighbor know your plans.



MCEC line outages May 2024

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
05/04/24	1:35	6	K Rd	Lightning	Waterloo
05/08/24	2:04	10	Suttersville Rd/Hern Dr	Trees, Other	Fults
05/08/24	1:08	3	D Rd	Lightning	Columbia
05/08/24	1:12	2	Roenicke Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
05/08/24	1:20	10	Suttersville Rd/Hern Dr	Lightning	Fults
05/08/24	0:50	2	High Prairie School Rd	Lightning	Smithton
05/08/24	1:41	14	State Rt 159	Trees, Other	Poe
05/22/24	0:48	3	N Prairie Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	Poe
05/25/24	0:55	2	Robinson School Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	New Athens
05/25/24	1:29	259	Millstadt Area	Unknown	Millstadt
05/25/24	0:40	259	Millstadt Area	Vehicles Or Machinery	Millstadt
05/26/24	1:15	8	Keim Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	Millstadt
05/26/24	3:44	9	Hoffmann Ln	Trees, Other	Fults
05/26/24	1:59	23	Mm Rd	Trees, Other	Fults
05/26/24	1:54	17	G Rd/S Fork Rd	Trees, Other	Fults
05/26/24	1:28	7	Eckert Orchard Ln	Trees, Other	E. Carondelet
05/26/24	1:45	9	Bluff Rd	Trees, Other	Fountain
05/30/24	1:26	5	GG Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	N. Waterloo
05/30/24	0:38	10	Brodbeck Point	Vehicles Or Machinery	Millstadt



www.mcec.org

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Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Policy Change Announcement:

On-time payment criteria

Effective September 1st, we are updating our policy regarding the criteria for on-time payments. Previously, payments were considered on time if they were *postmarked* by the due date. Moving forward, payments will be deemed on time only if they are *received by* our office by the due date.

Reason for the change

The decision to revise our policy is driven by several factors:

- 1. Processing delays:** Reliance on postmarked dates often leads to processing delays due to variations in postal service speed and efficiency. Payments might take several days, weeks or months to reach our office, causing uncertainty and potential discrepancies in account statuses.
- 2. Efficiency and accuracy:** By requiring payments to be received by the due date, we can ensure that accounts are updated promptly and accurately. This change will streamline our operations and enhance the reliability of our billing process.

Impact on customers

We understand that this change may require adjustments to your payment routine. Here are some recommendations to help you adapt smoothly:

Plan ahead: Consider mailing your payments earlier than usual to account for postal delivery times. Alternatively, explore electronic payment options, which are typically faster and more reliable.

Electronic payments: We encourage the use of online payment methods, which provide instant confirmation and reduce the risk of delayed or lost payments. We have a multitude of ways to pay your bill in lieu of mailing it in.



Sign up for SmartHub — with this app you can view your bill immediately, pay your bill, report outages, get outage alerts and more. Visit mcec.org to sign up!



Sign up for AutoPay — there are no fees! Call our office to get signed up or sign up for SmartHub and enroll through the app.



Drop Box — if you drive by the office, we have a drop box in our parking lot you could utilize to drop off your payment.



Automated Phone Payments — call our office and press 2 for self-serve billing options.



Pay over the phone — whether or not during business hours.

Set reminders: Use calendar reminders to ensure payments are sent well in advance of the due date.

Support and assistance

We are committed to making this transition as seamless as possible. If you have any questions or need assistance with adjusting to this new policy, our customer service team is ready to help. You can reach us at 618-939-7171 or visit our website at www.mcec.org for more information.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement this change. Our goal is to provide you with the best service possible, and we believe this update will contribute significantly to that aim.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.

Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source: homesandgardens.com

