



Alan W. Wattles

## Across The President's Desk

## Mutual aid in the electric utility industry and why it matters to you

From trimming trees to maintaining equipment to updating the grid — utilities work hard to reduce the likelihood of a power outage. But, when severe weather strikes, power outages can disrupt daily life in an instant. That's when a powerful network of cooperation known as mutual aid springs into action — helping communities recover faster.

It's not unusual to see utility trucks from a dozen different states lined up in a parking lot in the aftermath of a major storm. These lineworkers leave their families and travel long distances to help strangers, working in tough conditions to restore power, safety and a sense of normalcy.

For residents, knowing that help is coming — from near and far — can be a source of comfort during difficult moments.

### What is mutual aid?

Mutual aid is a longstanding system of collaboration in which electric utilities help one another during major, multi-day outages to restore power quickly and safely.

Think of it like neighbors helping neighbors, but on a national scale. If a

storm knocks out power in your area and your local crews can't reach everyone fast enough, utility companies from nearby states — or even across the country — may send lineworkers and other utility personnel, trucks and supplies to lend a hand. This support continues until everyone's power is restored.

### How it works

Even with year-round preparation, major weather events can still cause widespread outages. That's when mutual aid is activated.

Mutual aid agreements are not spontaneous offers of help. They're part of a well-organized system that allows utilities to quickly request and receive help when disaster strikes, and are most often used after:

- Hurricanes or tropical storms
- Ice storms or blizzards
- Tornado outbreaks
- Wildfires
- Earthquakes or other large-scale emergencies

When a utility anticipates a major weather event, it can prearrange support. Crews can be staged nearby and ready to respond as soon as conditions

are safe. Once deployed, they help assess damage and replace poles and lines to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible.

### Why mutual aid matters

Mutual aid dramatically shortens the time it takes to restore power after a disaster. But mutual aid isn't just about speed — it's a powerful example of compassion, resilience and unity. It ensures that no matter a utility's size or location, customers can count on timely service during critical times, and entire communities can recover more quickly.

### Thank you, lineworkers

Mutual aid works because of the dedication, courage and selflessness of lineworkers nationwide.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the crews who answer the call — not just in their own communities, but wherever they are needed.

So, the next time the lights go out, remember: you're not alone. There's a powerful team ready to help. In the utility world, mutual aid means everyone is part of the same family.





### MCEC line outages August 2025

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
08/02/25	1:51	649	Waterloo N & W	Unknown	N. Waterloo
08/03/25	1:09	8	Fountain Rd	Unknown	Fountain
08/04/25	0:18	384	Fults N	Unknown	Fults
08/06/25	1:10	3	Douglas Rd	Small Animals or Birds	Smithton
08/08/25	1:10	3	Main St	Other, Faulty Equipment	Fults
08/10/25	1:48	208	Gilmore Lake/Centerville	Other, Faulty Equipment	Millstadt
08/10/25	2:04	9	Violet Dr	Unknown	Poe
08/15/25	0:53	46	Kaskaskia Rd	Electrical Overload	Poe
08/18/25	0:36	3	R Rd	Unknown	Poe
08/19/25	0:17	343	Fults N	Other, Birds or Animals	Fults
08/21/25	1:29	2	Wagner Rd	Vehicles or Machinery	E. Carondelet
08/28/25	1:40	3	Hammond Ln	Other, Faulty Equipment	Smithton



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

[www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org)

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# Congratulations to our fair drawing winners!

It was a hot and lively week at the Monroe County Fair, and we want to thank everyone who stopped by our booth! We truly enjoyed connecting with you, watching the kids “climb the pole” like real linemen, and seeing the community come together despite the summer heat.

We hope our fan giveaway brought a bit of relief from the rising temperatures. A big thank-you goes out to all who entered our fair drawing!

We're excited to announce our winners:

- Toni Michels – \$75 Annbriar gift card
- Debbie Eckart – \$50 Tequila's gift card
- Austin Gotto – \$50 Silo gift card
- Thresa Weakly – \$25 Acorns gift card
- Tom Springborn – \$25 Acorns gift card

Congratulations again to our lucky winners! We had a blast and look forward to seeing you all again next year!



## Harvest Night

Nov. 15, 2025

Hecker Community Center

Doors open at 5 p.m./Dinner at 6 p.m.

**\$30 per person**

- Reservations & information: [harvestnight.net](http://harvestnight.net)

**Harvest Night** is the fundraising event (dinner and auction) for the Monroe County Extension & 4-H Education Foundation.

The foundation supports the following:

- Baebler Educational Farm: conducting agriculture and conservation research and youth activities. The farm is located at 4022 JJ Road, Waterloo, Ill., and is open to the public.
- Scholarships for Monroe County 4-H members educational enrichment: livestock conf., 4-H Camp, 4-H Leadership conf., post-high school award scholarships and more.
- Program fee and manual cost for Monroe County 4-H members.
- Youth cooking school, nutrition classes for the public and food safety training.
- Educational support to Monroe County Association for Home and Community Education.
- Agriculture and horticulture education for producers and families.
- Financial contribution to Agriculture In The Classroom program.

Join with friends for an evening of great food and fellowship!





## Protect yourself and your medical devices during a power outage

*Use this guide to plan ahead and stay safe*

If you or a loved one relies on an electric medical device, a power outage isn't just an inconvenience — it could be life-threatening. Severe weather or equipment failures can knock out electricity without warning, so it's essential to have a plan in place to stay safe.

Start by contacting your electric utility. Many offer priority restoration for those with medical needs. While utilities work hard to restore power as quickly as possible, even priority customers may face delays during widespread outages. That's why it's so important to be prepared.

### **Follow these tips to prepare medical equipment for a power outage:**

- **Document your devices.** Keep a file that includes the device's manufacturer, model, serial number, instruction manuals and a photo. This information can be useful for repairs, replacement or communicating with your utility or insurance provider.
- **Know your backup options.** Find out if your device is compatible with backup power like batteries or a generator. Check how long it can operate during an outage. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations and keep device-specific supplies on hand.
- **Keep devices maintained.** Make sure equipment is clean, calibrated and working properly ahead of time. Routine maintenance helps prevent surprises during emergencies.
- **Charge up.** Keep your cell phone, backup power sources and battery-powered medical devices fully charged. Keep extra batteries on hand, especially during storm season.
- **Create an evacuation plan.** Have a plan in case you need to leave your home. Identify locations of emergency shelters and power stations in your area. Talk with family or friends about places you can go that have power and are accessible.
- **Stock up for two weeks.** Keep a two-week supply of medications, medical accessories and essentials like coolers and refrigeration packs for temperature-sensitive medicine.
- **Consider manual alternatives.** Look for portable, dependable alternatives to electronic medical devices — for example, a manual wheelchair, walker or cane as a backup for an electric scooter.
- **Review your insurance coverage.** Before disaster strikes, talk with your insurance provider so you know what's covered if your medical device is damaged during a weather event or power outage.