Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative

THE GRID

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COLES-MOULTRIE Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Pictured from left to right, Gavin Bennett, Mitch Stanciu, Brandon Slifer and Marcus McDowell

Storm Assistance – Winter Storm Fern

By Summar Smith, Communications Coordinator

In late January, Winter Storm Fern tore across North America, delivering a rare and destructive mix of snow, ice, wind, and extreme cold. The storm triggered more than one million power outages at its peak as heavy ice and snow crippled critical infrastructure. The southern U.S. was hit especially hard. Tennessee and Mississippi bore the brunt of the damage, while Kentucky and Texas also experienced significant impacts.

According to the National Weather Service, nearly 300 million people were under winter weather or cold advisories as Fern stretched an astonishing 2,000 miles, from the U.S.-Mexico border deep into eastern Canada. Meteorologists called the system "potentially historic," producing 1-2 feet of snow across wide areas and over an inch of ice in multiple states. The largest snowfall — 31 inches — was recorded at Bonito Lake, New Mexico. Bitter cold followed, with

Pictured left, Gavin Bennett and right, Brock Cook

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temperatures plunging to -43°F in Seagull, Minnesota. In some areas, power restoration took weeks, underscoring the storm's lasting impact.

While Winter Storm Fern caused widespread destruction across the South, CMEC's service territory was fortunate, experiencing only a handful of minor outages. Elsewhere, electric cooperatives faced extensive damage to their systems, prompting urgent calls for mutual aid to restore power to hard-hit communities.

Guided by one of the seven cooperative principles — Cooperation Among Cooperatives — CMEC is committed to working together and providing mutual support when it's needed most. Living out that principle, CMEC proudly stepped up to assist neighboring cooperatives impacted by the storm. On January 26, linemen Gavin Bennett and Brock Cook were deployed to Farmers Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation in Glasgow, Kentucky, where they worked through January 29 restoring power and repairing storm-damaged infrastructure. They were then reassigned to Tri-County Electric Membership in Tompkinsville, Kentucky, continuing restoration efforts through February 1.

As recovery efforts continued, another request for assistance came on February 6, this time from Mississippi. CMEC responded by sending four linemen — Marcus McDowell, Mitch Stanciu, Brandon Slifer, and Gavin Bennett — to Delta Electric Power Association in Greenwood, Mississippi, where they supported ongoing restoration following the storm's devastating impacts through February 11. Thank you to our linemen for helping our southern neighbors rebuild their system.

Vegetation Management

Tree-trimming activities began in March 2026 in the Bruce Substation area and will continue through late summer. This work is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the safety and reliability of your electric service.

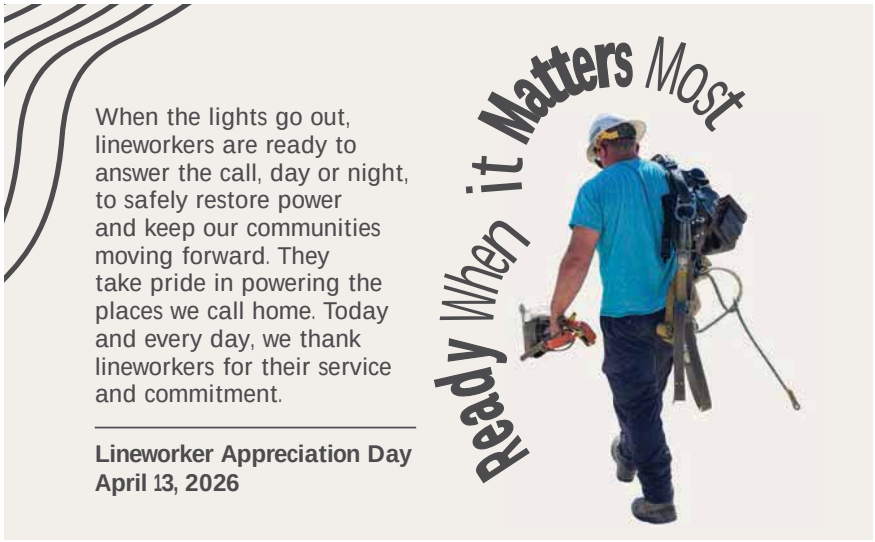
Tree trimming is crucial for maintaining a clear space around power lines, which helps to prevent outages and safety hazards. Our trained crews will be performing this work with a focus on minimizing any inconvenience to you.

What to Expect

- All trimming will follow strict safety and environmental guidelines.
- You may experience some noise and minor disruptions during work hours.
- If you have specific concerns or require special assistance, please contact us at 217-235-0341 or info@cmec.coop.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to keep your electrical service safe and dependable. If you have any questions or need further information, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for your support.



Behind the Switch: How SCADA Keeps Power Flowing for Our Members

Written by David Welsh, Director of IT, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative

David Welsh
Director of IT

When you flip a light switch, power up your coffee maker, or start equipment on the farm, electricity flows instantaneously and with great reliability. However, most of us never pause to consider the technology working quietly in the background that makes our everyday tasks possible. At the heart of that system is something called SCADA — Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition. **Alan Logsdon**

SCADA serves as our cooperative's digital control center and is vital for keeping power flowing. Across substations and along distribution lines, we utilize intelligent electronic devices to continuously monitor and improve electrical conditions in real time. These devices measure voltage levels, current flow, power factor, and the open or closed position of breakers. They also detect abnormal conditions, such as faults caused by storms, wildlife contact, or equipment failures.

The information collected by SCADA is not simply stored; it is transmitted back to our office through secure networks and made available to employees almost instantly. Our operations employees and field personnel can view live system diagrams showing real-time conditions across the electric system, whether they are in the office or responding from a service truck. This level of visibility is especially important for Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative given the size and diversity of the territory we serve. With more than 2,000 miles of energized line — much of it in rural areas — quick access to accurate information is critical. When a substation breaker trips and a feeder loses power, the system immediately generates an alarm, and within seconds, our employees can see exactly which feeder is affected. That immediate awareness allows us to quickly assess the situation, coordinate a response, and dispatch crews to the correct location, reducing outage times and restoring service as safely and efficiently as possible.

During adverse weather events, our SCADA system becomes even more valuable. When lightning strikes or high winds cause a fault, automated devices such as substation reclosures may operate to isolate the problem. SCADA immediately reports this activity to our employees, allowing us to determine whether service was restored automatically or if further action is required. Severe weather can also cause damage across wide areas, and SCADA helps us quickly evaluate the scope of an event. By providing real-time system data, it gives our employees a clearer picture of which sections of the system are affected, helping prioritize response efforts and allocate resources efficiently. In major events, such as a tornado, this visibility supports informed decision-making and organized restoration efforts across our service territory.

Safety is another huge benefit of the SCADA system. Before our crews begin work on a line or a substation, they can place breakers on "hot line tag" to prevent breakers from reclosing and add a visual tag to let other employees know what feeder they are working on. This visibility feature adds an important layer of safety for employees working in the field. When an incident requires additional response from first responders — such as when a car strikes a utility pole — SCADA helps provide a system-wide picture of the incident. While SCADA doesn't replace proper training, establish procedures, or perform physical safety practices, it strengthens overall situational awareness and enables control that helps protect employees, first responders, and the public while improving overall system reliability.

Because technology plays such a vital role in our daily operations, we have multiple safeguards in place to protect our systems and ensure reliable service for our members. We have recently upgraded from a legacy platform to a modern SCADA system designed to meet today's operational and cybersecurity standards. Although most members will never see the real-time data and monitoring tools used behind the scenes, the benefits are clear. Each time power is quickly restored after a storm, voltage remains steady during periods of heavy demand, or potential equipment issues are addressed before they result in outages, SCADA is helping make that possible. It operates quietly in the background, but it remains one of the most important tools Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative relies on to provide safe, dependable service to our member-owners.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In winter months (or whenever your home heating system is running), fan blades should rotate clockwise, which produces an updraft that pushes warm air down. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings.

Source: energy.gov

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed on our website: cmec.coop