Understanding power restoration

GETTING YOUR POWER BACK ON AS QUICKLY AND SAFELY AS POSSIBLE

Here in southern Indiana, the weather can often be unpredictable and severe. Ice storms, thunderstorms and even tornadoes are common causes of power outages. As your electric cooperative, providing reliable electric service is one of our top priorities.

However, we can’t control Mother Nature, and the restoration process from a major storm can be slow and tedious. Obviously, the more extensive the damage to trees, branches, poles, transformers, wire and other equipment, the longer it takes to rebuild service and restore power. All our crews, including our after-hours crews, will work 16 plus hours each day. In extreme situations, we have access to our contract-ed construction and right-of-way (ROW) crews, as well.

There are typically several questions and topics that our members bring up on social media and over the phone throughout the course of a major storm restoration. Let’s go over some of the most common issues.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Trees are the number one cause of outages. In fact, trees cause about 50 percent of our members’ outages in a typical month, followed by small animals and birds at 30 percent. We have been talking about this topic a lot lately because we are really trying to be proactive with our vegetation management program. We are taking an aggressive approach to getting all of our rights-of-way under control by having our tree trimming and right-of-way clearing contractors working to clear and maintain these areas. This is a challenging task, given the rough terrain of parts of our service territory, but it is necessary to continue to provide safe, reliable electric service to our members.

It is also very important that members do not plant trees under power lines or in our rights-of-way. If you are thinking of planting trees, please make sure you do not plant them within 20 feet on any side of the power lines. If you already have trees in these locations, they must be trimmed to 10 feet below the neutral wire or removed completely.

SAFETY FIRST

The safety of our employees and crews, as well as the safety of our members and the general public, is our number one priority. We will not take unnecessary risks or shortcuts to restore power quicker. Our crews are required to come in for an 8-hour rest period after working 16 hours straight. When working with electricity, one must be extremely focused and thinking...
clearly in order to avoid deadly mistakes. For this reason, it is a safety requirement that our crews come in for an 8-hour rest period. We want to make sure that all our employees make it home safely to their families each night.

24/7 SERVICE

The first thing you need to know is that your REMC does have crews on-call after-hours and all weekend long. We do not have crews working in shifts. All our crews report for a full day’s work Monday through Friday. Then, the after-hours “on-call” crew responds to outages throughout the evening and on the weekends as needed. If there are multiple outages or a time-intensive restoration issue occurs, additional crews are called in to help. This coverage is sufficient to meet the needs of our service territory unless we are impacted by a major storm. When this happens, we have the option of utilizing our contracted crews and calling other nearby co-ops to send crews to help.

Hiring additional employees would affect the operating budget for the co-op and would ultimately result in a rate increase, due to the added expense of salaries and benefits for these additional employees. It is true that our employee base is lean compared to the number of members we serve. However, our employee base is sufficient to meet our needs at this time. In emergencies, like major storms, we know we can call on our contracted crews and neighboring co-op crews for immediate help when needed. This cost is less than the cost of adding full-time employees.

SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO RESTORING POWER

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

First, they check high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cable that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Second, they check distribution substations. A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if the problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

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

Fourth, they check tap lines. If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

And finally, they check individual homes. If your home remains without power, the service line between transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

So, depending on where you live, your service may be restored sooner than others’ or you may be one of the last ones to get your power back on.

We always appreciate the patience and understanding of our members when we are faced with a difficult outage recovery situation. We are ramping up efforts to use social media and our website to keep all members informed of outages and restoration progress. We have plans to add an interactive outage map to our website in the near future. For now, be sure to like our Facebook page to get the most timely updates in an outage situation.

BILL SCHMIDT
General Manager

Your chance to win!

Each month, Daviess-Martin County REMC asks our readers three questions. The answers can be found in the articles of Electric Consumer. Clip the coupon below along the dotted line. Fill it out and return it to our office with your monthly payment before the 20th of the month. (Delinquent members are not eligible.)

Each month, a winner will be drawn from the entries submitted. Make sure you bring or mail in your most recent coupon, as the coupons are dated monthly. Members with automatic payment accounts will be entered in the contest as well. Copies will not be accepted, and coupons are not available at the office! Winners will be notified and their names will be published in the following monthly issue of Electric Consumer.

December winner:
Charles Ball, Mitchell

For bills dated the 5th of the month and paid by the 20th.

1. Daviess-Martin County REMC will celebrate 80 years of service at its annual meeting at ____________
   _____________.

2. Touchstone Energy Camp and Indiana Youth Tour applications must be completed online by
   _____________.

3. Downed power lines can energize the ground up to ____________ feet away.

NAME: ____________________
ADDRESS: ____________________
ACCOUNT NO.: ____________________
PHONE NO.: ____________________

The answers can be found in the articles of Electric Consumer. Clip the coupon below along the dotted line. Fill it out and return it to our office with your monthly payment before the 20th of the month. (Delinquent members are not eligible.)
Save the date!
Daviess–Martin County REMC
2019 Annual Meeting: Thursday, April 11
Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. Meeting at 7 p.m.
**NEW LOCATION:** North Daviess High School gymnasium
*Celebrating 80 years of service to its members*

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**APPLY FOR**

**YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CAMP**

**JUNE 5–8**

A fun, powerful and unique camp experience designed for students entering seventh grade in 2019. Horseback riding, canoeing, zip lining, trying out archery, swimming, learning about electrical safety and bucket truck rides.

Go to touchstoneenergycamp.org to apply. This year applications must be completed online and are due **March 4**.

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**INDIANA YOUTH TOUR**

**JUNE 13–20**

Daviess–Martin County REMC wants to send you on a weeklong, all-inclusive trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C. Monuments, museums, legislators, friends, history.

*Must be a high school junior to apply.*

Go to indianayouthtour.org to apply. This year applications must be completed online and are due **March 4**.

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**Election to occur at DMREMC**

The directors for the following districts will be elected as a part of the 2019 annual meeting agenda:

- **District 1:** Daviess County — Elmore, Madison, Steele and Bogard townships
- **District 4:** Daviess County — Harrison and Reeve townships

Incumbent directors seeking re-election include Steve Streepy from District 1 and Terry Chapman from District 4. Directors will be elected for three-year terms.

Any member who resides in these districts and who is interested in becoming a director-candidate must complete and submit a petition for nomination. Please contact Theresa Showalter at the REMC office at your earliest convenience if you have any questions regarding the election process or need any information.
POWER OF OPERATION ROUND UP

HOW YOUR REMC USES SPARE CHANGE TO CHANGE LIVES

Willing to round up your electric bill to the next dollar and use that spare change to help the local community? Daviess-Martin County REMC is one of hundreds of co-ops that uses this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

The average co-op member donates $6 with a maximum possible contribution of $11.88 per year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with 5,957 participants in the program, it adds up to make a significant impact.

Over the years, Daviess-Martin County has collected and distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for a wide range of community and civic organizations. In the most recent grant cycle, seven grants were awarded to local organizations, totaling $8,029. Since 2004, when the program began, your cooperative has awarded $481,881 in grants.

December 2018 Operation Round Up grant recipients:

- One Voice-One Word The Promise Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- RSVP Volunteer Center
- North Daviess Music Boosters
- Senior and Family Services Inc.
- Loogootee Post Prom Committee
- Martin County Historical Society

The next quarterly meeting of the Operation Round Up trustees will be held in March. Applications for the next round of grants must be submitted to the Daviess-Martin County REMC office by Feb. 28.

Please visit www.dmremc.com to download an application under the “My Community” tab.

Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.

Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 ft. away – so keep your distance.

Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.

If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.

Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you’re using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org