

The Twin Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

"Owned By Those We Serve"



January 2008

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From the Manager... December Ice Storm



Ron Holsteen

I was awakened early Sunday morning on December 9 by a phone call from our line superintendent informing me that we had numerous outages as the result of freezing rain. The rain was building up on the trees and breaking our power lines as limbs broke and fell to the ground.

All of our line crews had been called out by 5:30 a.m. and all other employees were at the office manning the phones, gathering materials and dispatching crews by 8 a.m. Around 11 a.m., we learned that the transmission line serving our Chetopa substation had gone out of service, so we had no electric power available in the southeast corner of our system.

We contacted our statewide association, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, and requested additional help through our mutual aid agreement with the other rural electric cooperatives in Kansas. Crews from Lyon-Coffey Electric, Burlington; Radiant Electric, Fredonia; Caney Valley, Cedar Vale; and Wright Tree Service responded.

Crews worked through the night, and after about a three-hour break were back at work at

6 a.m. on Monday morning. It seemed that the trees were breaking through the lines faster than we could put them back up. We were having a lot of problems just getting our trucks to the downed lines because of all the debris blocking the roads.

We requested additional help, but had to go as far as Mississippi to find available crews as another storm was causing damage to almost every rural electric cooperative in Kansas. Chain Electric dispatched an 11-man crew with six large bucket and digger trucks to assist us. The contractor (JET), who we use to build gas well services, also brought in

a crew to assist us.

Monday afternoon the weight of the ice became heavy enough to bring down several miles of line. A Labette County deputy reported seeing almost a mile of line fall to the ground at one time. We had 100 broken poles and about 250 services without power by Monday evening. Our crews worked 16-hour days from that time forward.

We arranged to have two dozers working with the crews to pull them through the ditches and to clear the trees so that the poles

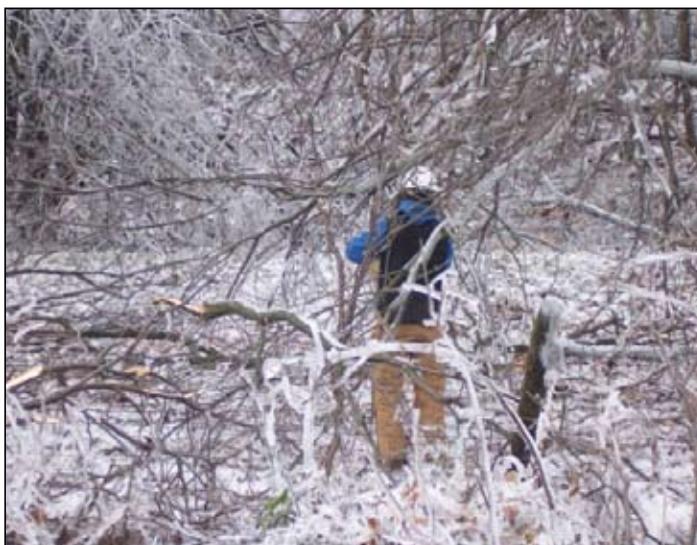


Ice-laden tree branches bend over the road as Twin Valley crews work to replace downed power lines following the December 9 ice storm.

could be replaced and the lines pulled back into place.

Empire Electric repaired their transmission line and restored power to our substation on December 12, and then we were able to begin restoring power to our members. We had restored power to all members by Friday afternoon.

I want to recognize all of the employees



A Twin Valley lineman is nearly camouflaged by icy tree branches as he attempts to clear brush from the right of way.

for their hard work and dedication to the members of the cooperative. They put in some long, difficult hours under some miserable and hazardous working conditions. There were no injuries or accidents reported. We appreciate the cooperation of our members, particularly those who reported the locations of the downed lines and poles.

Your Family's Electric Usage Is Unique!

As the cost of energy rises, more and more people are concerned about their rising utility bills and are looking for ways to control their energy use.

The best way to do this is to be aware of how much energy you use each month and how it is being used in your home, farm or business. This involves learning how to read your meter, keeping track of energy use, and using your meter as a tool to locate problems.

In this way, you can budget your energy use just like you budget for groceries and other household items.

You have complete control over how you use your electricity. You choose the ingredients that are necessary for you to maintain your standard of living.

The way you live and the way you use your electrical appliances have a greater impact on your consumption of electricity than the number of appliances you have.

Some of our lifestyle's can make an electric bill appear to be higher than "normal". Here are

some examples.

1. Family Size

Lets face it, there is a direct relationship between the number of people living at a home and the amount of energy that is used. That's especially true if you have teenagers at home.

Another example is when you have friends and family visiting, you can expect to use more energy for cooking, laundry, and hot water.

2. Space Heating & Cooling

From a comfort standpoint, most of us prefer to be relatively cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Humidity plays an important part in our year round comfort, too. If you run humidifiers and dehumidifiers, this contributes to household energy usage. Portable space heaters, air conditioners, and fans also contribute to energy consumption.

By taking a look at our "comfort" lifestyle in terms of maintaining relative humidity and temperature, we can use energy

wisely in many ways. These range from adding insulation, weather-stripping and caulking to simply turn down the heat and air.

3. Water Heating

About 12.6% of the energy used in the average American home is for water heating. Hot water plays a very important role in everyone's lifestyle-but many lifestyles require substantial amounts of hot water, and that results in higher usage.

So...Why is your electric bill higher than your neighbor's?

You just answered this question yourself. It's your electric bill, and it reflects the amount of electricity consumed by you and your family in your home and on your farm.

Your neighbor may have a completely different number of people living at home, different lifestyle, different size home, different farming equipment and methods, etc. These and many other factors make a comparison with your neighbor useless.