



TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP NEWS

TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
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FROM THE CEO

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 CEO of Twin Valley 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 small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out.

2 OUR EMPLOYEES MIGHT BE AFFECTED TOO. Because TVEC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees



Angie Erickson

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NOTICE TO TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

Apex ROW has been contracted by Twin Valley to treat unwanted vegetation and brush in our electric rights-of-way with herbicide this summer.

The herbicide is safe to humans, pets and livestock, and regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Agriculture. We will not spray in any yards or gardens, and will take precautions around crop fields.

If you have any of the following: bee hives, organic gardens/crops or vineyards, please let us know if you prefer us to **NOT** spray on your property.

To avoid unwanted herbicide treatment, register at www.driftwatch.org or www.fieldwatch.com to place yourself on a universal list consulted by utilities.



The Power of Smart Home Technologies

Smart home technologies are transforming how we live, making our homes more comfortable, convenient and energy efficient than ever before.

Smart home technologies are devices that communicate with each other to automate everyday tasks and functions around the home, like heating and cooling, lighting and security. In addition to convenience, smart technologies enable consumers to manage and monitor their energy consumption through device scheduling and control.

With just a tap on your phone or a voice command to your virtual assistant (like Alexa or Siri), you can conveniently control many aspects of your home environment. If you're new to the smart tech world, there are several cost-effective devices you can try as you explore ways to make your home smarter.

One of the best and most inexpensive places to start is with a smart bulb or plug. Smart LED bulbs allow you to control home lighting remotely through a smartphone app or voice commands. You can set schedules to automatically turn lights off or on, which can help you save energy and boost home security.

Smart plugs are another inexpensive way to give electronics and small appliances the smart home treatment. Smart plugs allow you to set schedules and remotely control power to lamps, small appliances and electronics, minimizing standby energy consumption and maximizing convenience. For example, you can sync the timing of your bedside lamp, alarm, speakers and coffee maker to turn on at the same time each morning.

If Alexa or Siri is already part of

your household, you can build on your existing “tech ecosystem” by adding a smart hub, like Amazon Echo or Apple HomePod. Voice assistants that are synced to smart devices like bulbs and plugs provide additional options for device management and allow family members to interact with the various devices through voice control rather than individual apps.

Home heating and cooling account for a significant portion of energy use, so one of the best investments you can make in smart tech is a smart thermostat. While traditional programmable thermostats can be set to your schedule and preferences, a smart thermostat takes this one step further by learning and adjusting to your routine and building a schedule around it.

Smart security systems are popular options for homeowners looking for advanced security solutions that incorporate cameras, sensors and cloud-based video recordings. As with other smart technologies, smart security systems provide convenient, flexible ways to monitor homes (and businesses), giving you peace of mind even when you're away.

If you're considering smart tech for your home, start by defining your goals. Is saving energy your top priority, or are you aiming to improve home security? Smart home technologies provide great convenience — but remember, they are internet-connected devices. That means you'll need a stable Wi-Fi connection to ensure devices are working properly, and you'll need strong passwords for your router and individual devices.

Whether you're looking to automate every aspect of your home or simply want to try a device or two, smart technologies have the power to transform your living space into a home where comfort and convenience reign supreme.



**TIPS FOR INTEGRATING
Smart Home Tech**

If you're new to smart home technologies, keep the following tips in mind as you explore home automation options.

- 1 DEFINE GOALS.** Determine the areas in your home you want to make smart, like lighting, security and entertainment systems.
- 2 CHOOSE COMPATIBLE DEVICES.** A smart hub can make integration easier with a central device to control multiple smart technologies.
- 3 CHECK THE WI-FI STRENGTH.** Smart home technologies require a stable internet connection to function properly, so consider factors like router placement and signal strength.

10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration Continued from page 12A ▶

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. During widespread outages, many TVEC employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, field staff are surveying damage, 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.

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. 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 encounter other hazards including weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)

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.

COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for a power outage, but if it happens on a sunny day you may wonder why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.

WEATHER

High winds, snow and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.

CRITTERS

Squirrels, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.

ACCIDENTS

Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.

SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE

Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

10 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.



Cool Ideas: K-State Expert Urges Farmers to Follow Safety Tips on Hot Days

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

Light clothing, cooling vests should be part of safety equipment

Summer's hottest days are likely still ahead in Kansas, but Tawnie Larson knows that "farm and ranch work won't stop during hot weather."

So, Larson — a project consultant for agriculture health and safety in Kansas State University's Carl and Melinda Helwig Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering — is putting in some sound advice for farmers this summer.

"Wear lightweight, long-sleeved, light-colored clothing, or a cooling vest and take short, frequent breaks in a shaded or cool area to stay cool while working outdoors," Larson said.

She said that technical cooling vests "are essentially like wearing air conditioning."

"The vests use specialized fabric and fibers to circulate cooling products to keep body temperatures low during hot days," she said.

Larson also suggests using equipment with a canopy, such as a Rollover Protection Structure, known as ROPS, with a sunshade.

"Usually, the ROPS with canopies cannot be folded down, which in turn provides more safety for operators because the ROPS is always activated," Larson said. "Equipment that has an enclosed cab often times comes with air conditioning and has a built-in ROPS. Both of these options provide safety from rollovers and can help prevent heat-related illness."

Larson notes that everyone reacts differently to hot days, so it's

important to listen to your body. "Take frequent breaks and stay inside during the hottest part of the day," she said.

According to the Kansas Mesonet, the hottest part of the day in Kansas is between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends drinking 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes, and before becoming thirsty. The CDC also recommends keeping sugary and alcoholic drinks to a minimum. Replace salt and minerals with snacks or a sports drink.

Heat stroke symptoms include high body temperature; hot, dry, red or damp skin; fast, strong pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; and lack of consciousness. Larson said that if a person is suffering from heat stroke:

- ▶ Call 911 immediately.
- ▶ Move the person to a cooler place.
- ▶ Lower the person's temperature with cooler clothes.
- ▶ Do not give the person anything to drink.

"Heat exhaustion is different and usually not as serious," Larson said, noting that symptoms of exhaustion may include heavy sweating; cold, pale and clammy skin; fast, weak pulse; nausea; tiredness; headache; and fainting.

"If this occurs, take action by moving to a cool place, loosen clothing, get cool, sip water and seek medical attention if symptoms last longer than an hour or get worse," Larson said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends drinking 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes, and before becoming thirsty.