

POWERLINE Press

A Monthly Publication of:



Memories of February '08 storm still linger

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Even though many people wish for a white Christmas, December typically is not the worst winter weather month. It's February. Last year our members were dealt that harsh cold reality when the worse ice storm in 30 year's hit the area. Many members of the Cooperative were left without electricity for several days.

In light of that fact and the fact that we are heading into February, we thought it would be a good idea to revisit some ways to be prepared for a major winter storm to hit our area. So please read the following very carefully and try to be as prepared as possible for any winter weather that may head our way this year.

There is always the chance for the power to go out in any month, just not February. Whether it's a power line going down due to ice build up or maybe a lightning strike to a sub-station, the possibility is always there. So what do you do when the power goes out? Do you just assume that your Semo Electric Cooperative knows about the outage?

You're as much a part of our emergency response team as our lineman. You are our eyes and ears out in the community and we need your help in assessing the damage that has been done during a storm. When the storm rolls through and the electricity goes out, call us immediately.

Here are some important facts that you need to know in helping us with the outage.

1) Make sure Semo Electric Cooperative has your correct phone number. We look up your account using this number and it's important that we have the correct one on file. To update your phone number with our system, just call 1-800-566-1048 and pick option 2. You can also report an outage using this phone number.

2) Call the correct number to report an outage. Here are the numbers:

1-800-813-5230 Toll Free Line
(573) 471-5821 Sikeston Office
(573) 568-4611 Bloomfield Office.

3) When we answer, give us information that

will help us determine what is wrong. For instance; did you hear a loud noise before the electricity went out? Did or do you see any power lines down? Did you see a lightning strike just before the power outage? Letting us know about some of these things will help us determine what is wrong and ensures that our crews will be there in a timely manner with all the tools they need to get the job done.

4) Sometimes our call load is so heavy we may not be able to answer. If that occurs, in most cases our Outage Phone System will answer the call. You will be prompted to give information using the keys on your phone. Remember, when asked to give your phone number, **DO NOT** give us your area code. We don't require that because we all live in the same area code. Just give us your 7 digit telephone number and the rest of the information the system asks you to give.

By the way, here are a few other tips to remember. Keep one hard line phone in your home. This is a phone that requires a plug straight into a phone jack with no wireless headsets. When the electricity goes out wireless phones are useless. You may want to keep a cell phone

handy too, just in case. But remember, the same storm that knocked your power out can also knock out a cell phone tower. And finally, keep your Semo Electric Cooperative outage number handy. Put it on the refrigerator, by the phone or you can program the number into the address book on your cell phone.

Now while we need your help in reporting a power outage, we **DO NOT** need help in clearing or fixing lines. The lineman that work for your Semo Electric Cooperative are trained to deal with these situations and while we appreciate your help, only professionals should handle any type of electrical wire. So please, do not try to move or pick up any electrical wire. Not only that, but **DO NOT** pick up or cut any tree limbs or other debris that may be near power lines without Semo Electric Cooperative checking first, to make sure it's safe. Your life could be in severe danger if you don't follow these simple rules. The best way you can help, is by picking up the phone and calling us first.



RURAL

M I S S O U R I

POWERLINE Press

Always be prepared for anything

It is quite possibly one of the most frustrating events that can happen to anyone. A large storm moves through your area, knocks out power and you have no idea how long it will take to be re-established. It's not just your frustration, but it is also the frustration of your Semo Electric Cooperative.

"there is no way for us to determine right after a storm hits, how long it will take," says Jerry Dockins, customer service manager for Semo Electric Cooperative in Sikeston. "We start with our main lines and work down from there."

Semo Electric Cooperative serves 17,000 members, with over 2600 miles of line that stretches 75 miles north and south to 75 miles east and west. That's over 5,600 square miles to cover. So as you can imagine, just assessing the amount of damage done after a severe storm could take some time.

So what are the steps taken in turning your electricity back on after a major storm? Here are the 5 steps.

1. All repairs start with the main line. A large number of our members will be knocked off line if the main line coming from a sub-station is knocked down. So it only makes sense that we start with the main line first, because all other repairs would be pointless until this line is restored.

2. With the main line restored, the line crew can isolate other damage and prioritize repairs. Again, they are looking for lines that would restore power to a greater number of homes first.

3. Once the main lines and secondary lines are restored, then we focus on tap lines. Tap lines come from the secondary lines. These lines feed individual homes. Again, it wouldn't make sense to repair these lines first, because without the main or secondary lines, no one has electricity.

4. Finally, we take care of the individual repairs. These lines come from the tap lines, directly into your home. These are the last lines to get repaired. It's not that they aren't important, but we want to restore power to as many people as soon as possible and that means main lines first, then the secondary, followed by the tap lines and finally the individual service lines.

Dockins said, "When severe weather comes through its all hands on deck. Everyone comes in and we work as long as we need too to restore all of the power to our members."

Dockins also says that typically the lineman can have power restored with a few hours, but after a large weather event,

like a tornado, ice or snow storm, it could take a whole lot longer. In fact, depending on the severity of the storm, it could take a day or two, instead of an hour or two.

With that in mind, here are a few things you should have handy in case the electricity goes out during severe storm.

Essentials:

Battery operated radio will help you stay informed about the storm and about how soon damaged lines will be repaired. Have a flashlight and candles handy too. Candles not only provide light, but they can also help provide some heat during those winter outages. Don't forget the batteries. Have extra batteries on hand, just in case.

Food and Water:

You should have at least a 3 day supply of food handy.

Things like dry cereal, peanut butter or canned fruits and vegetables are ideal things to keep around. You need to store at least 3 gallons of water per person in your household. You need other water stored too for sanitation purposes.

First Aid Kit:

It's not only a good idea to keep a first aid kit around, but knowing how to use what's inside is important too. Simple medical emergency procedures change all the time. It would be a good idea to get with your local American Red Cross to find

out what kind of first aid training is available. A first aid kit should contain the basics, like bandages, medical tape, scissors, a cleansing agent and latex gloves. You can find first aid kits at many department stores in our Southeast Missouri area.

Other items:

Non-prescription drugs like anti-diarrhea medication, aspirin and antacids are good to store somewhere. By the way, don't forget the sunscreen! Even in winter, that is an important item to have around to protect your skin from the sun. Certain tools would be handy to have as well. A hammer, screwdrivers, crow bars, signal flare's and other tools could prove invaluable. It would be wise to store some extra clothing somewhere, just in case. Things like sunglasses, hats, gloves, blankets and maybe even raingear.

You just never know what you are going to encounter after a severe storm moves through an area. You know your family best. Think about the needs of the family, come up with a plan and store your emergency kit in a place that would have easy access. Taking just a little time to plan for the unforeseen, can save your life or your loved ones lives.



POWERLINE Press

Proper Installation of a generator can be a matter of life or death



In any storm, safety is always top priority. Many members bought generators after last year's winter storm, while many others are contemplating the idea of adding a generator to their home or business, to be prepared the next time a large storm moves through the area. Improperly connecting a generator can cause back feed on the entire circuit which can cause a contact. It is vitally important that you have an electrician install a generator to your home. It wouldn't be a bad idea either, before you make such a large investment, to have an electrician help you find the right generator for you. Many times, electricians can even help you find the best deal possible, saving you money in the process.

NOAA Radio's Available at SEMO Offices

It's always nice to know when a bad storm is approaching. That's why SEMO Electric Cooperative offers NOAA Weather Radios to our members. These radios remain silent until a severe storm approaches. When the National Weather service issues any type of watch or warning, the radio alerts you.

"This is the one thing that will wake you up in the middle of the night to alert you of severe weather," says Theresa Eisenman, spokesperson for the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration.

These radios can be purchased at either SEMO Electric Cooperative Office. The cost of the radio is \$34.00 which includes tax. A small price to pay for the safety of your home and family.



Clock is ticking on Youth Tour and Scholarship Programs

Area youth should be busy this time of the year. Some are finishing their senior year and looking forward to college, some are looking forward to their senior year and yet others are just looking forward to the summer break. However, youth who's parents or guardians are members of SEMO Electric Cooperative should not get so busy, that they forget the Youth Tour and Scholarship Programs deadline is fast approaching. The Youth Tour deadline is March 1st, while the SEMO Electric Scholarship deadline is April 1st.

The Youth Tour offers a chance for High School Juniors to travel to Washington D.C. this summer. It's an all expense paid trip to our nation's capital, where the winners see all of the major monuments and attractions. They also go to Capital Hill, where they meet their U.S. Representative and Senators. While some go to Washington, others might go to Jefferson City and tour our State's capital.

The SEMO Electric Foundation Scholarship was established 2 years ago. Last year was our first time awarding the scholarship, which was given to 21 students from around the area. These students received a one-time \$2,000 scholarship.

If you need more information about the scholarship or the Youth Tour, stop by either office in Sikeston or Bloomfield or go to our website at www.semoelectric.coop. All Youth Tour essays and scholarships must be in our offices the day of the deadlines.

Employee Anniversaries



Jim Brown, a Journeyman lineman, is celebrating 33 years with the Coop.



Celebrating 9 years with the Coop is Journeyman lineman John Griffin.



Customer Service Representative Brad Jones is celebrating his 5th year anniversary with the Coop.



Also with Customer Service is Dannett Coatney who is celebrating her 2nd year with the Coop.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING DECEMBER 15, 2008

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of SEMO Electric Cooperative was held Monday, December 15, 2008, at the Cooperative office in Sikeston, Missouri. Rick Faulkner, President, called the meeting to order and Reuben Jeane, General Manager, led in the invocation. The following board members were present: Rick Faulkner, John Bledsoe, Tim Coppage, James Deneke, Clyde Hawes, Charles Marshall, Carl Eftink, Butch Dirnberger, Jerry Moore, Dicky Hanor, Keith Haynes, and Dennis Fowler. Also in attendance was Reuben L. Jeane, General Manager, acting as secretary, and staff members.

A motion was made to amend the agenda adding a change to the date of the regularly scheduled February board meeting due to the scheduling of the NRECA Annual Meeting. Motion was seconded and carried.

An error in the General Manager's report was corrected to show that the Cooperative will receive an 8.6% rate increase from M & A. Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2008, with the correction.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

Randal Tennison, Financial Manager, gave the financial report. Year-to-date operating revenue was \$23,284,000. Cost of purchased power was \$13,206,000. Year-to-date margins were \$1,396,000. With other margins, the total year-to-date was \$1,682,176. A review of the balance sheet showed that the Cooperative's assets were \$74,216,000. Key statistics showed that the Cooperative remains financially strong as compared to other cooperatives. Expense reports for the General Manager and the Directors as well as the distribution of checks report were all reviewed.

The General Manager was then asked to give the customer service report in the absence of Jerry Dockins. There was an increase of only 26 meters year-to-date with a decrease of one percent (1%) in kilowatt hours used. Overall sales analysis showed a 2.1% decrease in kilowatt hour sales per individual customer. The Cooperative made one last order of CFL light bulbs for the year. There is a strong possibility that the program will be changed drastically and no CFL bulbs will be available in 2009. There were 41 total rebates for November with the amount totaling \$14,000.

Larry Kelly, Engineering Manager, then gave his monthly report. There were eighteen (18) new services. Each Director received a handout concerning the current status of the AMI project.

Marty Vineyard then gave the operations report. There were fifty-six (56) outages and seventy-four (74) work orders completed.

Ron Montgomery gave the purchasing warehouse report. Prices were stable and inventory would be completed by the end of December.

Marla Wood then gave the human resource report informing the board that there were no lost time injuries for the month of November and if there are none through December it will be the first year ever that there were no lost time injuries. The safety incentive bonus to each active employee will be \$540.

The communications report was then presented by Glen Cantrell. Glen reported on the scholarship program, Youth Tour and Cycle. After a discussion of all staff reports, motion was made and seconded to accept these reports. Motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The staff members then exited the meeting and the General Manager was called upon to give his monthly report to the Directors. The Board was updated on the AMI project. Over the Christmas holidays, obtaining meters and equipment slowed down. Residential meters may not be received until the end of the first quarter possible into the second quarter. Priority installation at this time will be the load control on irrigation accounts in time for the summer season. The two trucks that were ordered in February should be delivered in December. The state Legislative Conference would be held in Jefferson City on February 2nd and 3rd. All directors were encouraged to attend to ensure that our voice is heard in the political arena. Motion was made and seconded to accept the General Manager's report. Motion carried.

POWER SUPPLY REPORT

Clyde Hawes gave the power supply report from the last meeting with M & A Power Cooperative. Motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the power supply report.

AMEC REPORT

John Bledsoe then gave the AMEC report also encouraging directors to attend the Legislative Conference as well as the local legislative conference that will be held in April, 2009. Motion was made, seconded and carried to accept his report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to be brought before the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion was made for membership action to be taken to receive new members and to cancel memberships with those members who have moved off the line. Motion was seconded and carried.

Due to the NRECA Annual Meeting being scheduled during the week of the regularly scheduled board meeting, the February board meeting was changed to Wednesday, February 25th, 2009, at the normally scheduled time and location. Motion was seconded and carried.

The Board President then called for membership concerns. The General Manager reported that the Cooperative received a request from the Richland Drainage District to completely remove a line at Salcedo near Scott County on Ditch #2. After a discussion, the Board advised the General Manager that he should follow the policy which would allow the Cooperative to charge Richland Drainage District for the labor costs to do this work.

The Board President then brought before the Board an opening on the Labor Committee and recommended that Butch Dirnberger be appointed to fill the open position. Motion was made, seconded and carried to affirm the appointment.

Following a short executive session, and there being no other business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Tim Coppage, Secretary

Richard Faulkner, President