



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Staying Safe in a Storm

Practice these tips for summer storms

No one knows electrical safety better than the experts who practice it every single day. Lincoln Electric encourages you to practice safety with these reminders for before, during and after a summer storm:

Avoid wires and water

When lightning strikes a home during a storm, the electrical charge can surge through pipes and utility wires. That means you can get zapped if you're touching water or any device that's plugged in, whether it's a landline phone or toaster.

Skip the makeshift shelter

During a storm, it's tempting to take cover under a picnic gazebo or golf cart, but in open-sided structures with no conductors to channel strikes, a bolt's path of least resistance to the ground could be you. On top of that, these structures raise your risk of a lightning strike because of their height. Keep moving toward suitable shelter.

Portable generators

Take special care with portable generators, which can provide a good source of power, but if improperly installed or operated, can become deadly. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can back-feed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including co-op line workers making repairs. It's best to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to install your generator and ensure that it meets local electrical codes.

Flooded areas

Stay away from downed power lines and avoid walking through flooded areas. Power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity. Report any downed lines you see to Lincoln Electric by calling 406-889-3301 immediately.

Electrical equipment

Never use electrical equipment that is wet - especially outdoor electrical equipment, which could be a potential danger after a summer storm. Water can damage electrical equipment and parts, posing a shock or fire hazard.

Have An Emergency Kit

Before storms hit, plan ahead with a well-stocked emergency kit. In addition to water, tools, and first aid, ensure you have plenty of non-perishable foods on hand. Ready.gov and redcross.org have many resources to help you create an emergency plan and kit.

Food safety

In the event of prolonged outages, practice food safety for the foods in your refrigerator and freezer. Try the quarter test. Before an outage, put a cup of water in the freezer. Once frozen, put a quarter on the ice. After an outage, check the quarter. If it has sunk, you should probably throw the food out. Visit fda.gov for best practice recommendations.

Lincoln Electric has served our local community since 1950, and safety for our members, the public, and employees is our number one concern.



BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.

■ WATER

Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.



■ TOOLS

Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.



■ FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS

First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at www.ready.gov

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Cost of Electricity

We're here to help you save



**Manager's Notes
by Telly Stanger**

In my first six months at Lincoln Electric Cooperative, I have experienced something twice that I've never before seen in my career. As you saw for the second time this year on May 31st, we had a system-wide outage that left all LEC members without power for several hours. This happened earlier in the year, though it was a bit shorter than this latest outage.

When Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has an outage, our entire system is without electricity until they can locate and remove the cause, then repair and re-energize. Typically, BPA outages are a result of wind and trees. Restoration time is directly related to the severity of the damage. Most of the time, it's a tree or two in the lines that needs clearing. Logically, it should be as simple as removing the tree(s) and restoring power. However, when BPA has trees in their line, it usu-

ally means we have some in ours, as well. After trees are cleared and facilities repaired, it then takes time to make sure that clearances are given and lines are safe to energize again.

Safety is our number one priority. Our impressive 31-years without a lost-time accident record helps to highlight that fact. So when these situations arise, our line crews and employees step up to ensure we are safe and communicating at a high level. It is imperative for

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	Year to Date 04/30/2020	Year to Date 04/30/2019
kWh Sales	46,372,524	51,635,325
Revenue	\$ 4,366,423	\$ 4,577,087
Cost of Power	\$ 2,071,766	\$ 2,319,232
Operating Expense	\$ 1,417,340	\$ 1,389,965
Margins	\$ 370,104	\$ 384,916
Number of Members	4,723	4,638
Number of Meters	6,107	6,014
Miles of Line	972	967
Total Utility Plant	\$ 33,787,662	\$ 32,616,819
Member Equity	\$ 9,704,317	\$ 9,641,147
April Average Residential Use (kWh)	1,251	1,813
April Average Residential Billing	\$131.54	\$133.18

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on May 18, 2020. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved drawing the Luck of the Draw winners in the LEC office on June 1, instead of waiting for the Annual Meeting.
- Approved the review of Policy 207 - Board Travel.
- Approved changes to Policies 208 - Board Compensation; 407 - Use of Cooperative Equipment & Facilities; 502 - Wage & Salary; and 514 - Absence from Workplace.
- Appointed Becky Evins as the LEC Representative to serve on the METS Pool Board.
- Authorized Marianne Roose to represent MECA on the Montana Council of Cooperatives Board.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

1-406-889-3301
info@lincolnelectric.coop
www.lincolnelectric.coop
Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:

1-406-889-3301

OFFICE

312 Osloski Road
PO BOX 628
Eureka, Montana 59917

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wesly Loughman
President

Tina Taurman
Vice President

Myra Appel
Secretary-Treasurer

Becky Evins
Michael Garner
Joel Graves
Marianne Roose
Troy Truman
Ethel White

Telly Stanger
General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. Members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020



**Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:

memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

Save

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our line workers to know the general location of all their fellow linemen, contractors, and any other employees. Before a line can be re-energized, the crew turning on the power must verify the exact location of all personnel before flipping the switch.

If you see our crews working to restore the electricity we've come to rely on, please give them the space they need to do their jobs safely. While we appreciate the thoughtful nature that lies behind members or the public attempting to help by sawing or moving trees off the line, it is EXTREMELY DANGEROUS to do so. LEC crews are responsible for ensuring no employees are adjacent to lines which will be re-energized, but they have no way of knowing if a non-LEC person is near or touching a downed power line. If our crews re-energize the line and

someone is near (they don't even have to be touching it), the helper may suffer severe injury or death by electrocution. Please let our trained employees and contractors do what they do best.

Unfortunately, both our average number of outages and duration times have been going up over the past several years. Our average time without power for the past 5 years is about 15 hours per meter per year. This number is heavily weighted by averages and ranges in time from 7.5 hours per meter in 2016 to 18 hours per meter in 2018. Two major factors play a part in these trends. We cannot change either without considerable costs. These factors are living in a heavily forested region and that we only have one main power source feeding our system.

During this most recent outage, I had a member ask if we were doing all

we can to mitigate these situations. The answer is yes - within reason. Understandably, there is a cost to everything and LEC wants to keep rates as stable and as low as possible. System maintenance and improvements are a big part of what can drive our retail rates to our members. We are mindful of what it takes to maintain a distribution power system. We stay aggressive in keeping rights-of-way cleared as reasonably as possible. Our main goal is to keep power on while maintaining affordable electric rates for our members.

Lincoln Electric values the positive comments during and after power is restored. Your patience during these moments is greatly appreciated.

Telly

Luck of the Draw Scholarships

Luck of the Draw scholarships are usually drawn at Lincoln Electric's Annual Meeting. Since the 2020 meeting continues to be postponed, the Lincoln Electric board of trustees elected to draw the scholarships on June 1 this year. They wanted to help students better plan for their financial needs. The following students were randomly drawn from all eligible applicants in the Lincoln Electric office by Member Services Committee Chairperson Tina Taurman. You can watch a recording of the drawing on our Facebook page.

\$5,000 Winner
Corwin Chaney

\$2,000 Winner
Andrew Mephram

\$1,000 Winners
Bailey Bishop
Rebecca Clements
Garrett Graves

McKenna Johnson
Jake Kindel

Michelle Leonard
Jarrit Persson

Madeline Richards-Schlarman
Briah Thayer

**PLANNED POWER OUTAGE
FOR
ALL LINCOLN ELECTRIC MEMBERS**

**POWER OFF AT
11:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12
BACK ON BY
5:00 AM ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 13**

**ALL LINCOLN ELECTRIC MEMBERS
WILL BE WITHOUT POWER DURING
THIS TIME WHILE OUR POWER
SUPPLIER, BONNEVILLE POWER
ADMINISTRATION, PERFORMS
CRITICAL MAINTENANCE**



**Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

312 OSLOSKI ROAD
EUREKA, MT 59917
406-889-3301
800-442-2994

Powering Up After an Outage

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. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



1. BPA's High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables 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.

2. Distribution Substation:

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.