



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Winter storm paralyzes region with heavy snow

CO-OPS WORK TOGETHER TO GET ELECTRICITY FLOWING



A powerful winter storm swept through northwest Montana starting Friday, Nov. 22, bringing heavy, wet snow that caused widespread power outages and hazardous conditions. The storm, which persisted into the weekend, downed trees and powerlines across the region, leaving thousands without electricity.

Friday Night:

ISOLATED OUTAGES GROW IN SEVERITY

The storm began Friday evening, and while initial power outages were isolated, they steadily increased in frequency as snow accumulated overnight. By Saturday morning, heavy snowfall created hazardous conditions, causing trees to fall onto powerlines. Outages were reported from Whitefish to the Canadian border, and everywhere in between.

Crews from Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LEC), with support from Flathead Electric Cooperative, Missoula Electric Co-op, Interbel Co-op and independent contractors, worked tirelessly to clear fallen trees and restore power. However, the storm's severity continued to challenge restoration efforts.

Saturday:

WIDESPREAD OUTAGES AMID HEAVY SNOW

By Saturday afternoon, Nov. 23, outages had expanded, leaving residents across

See STORM, page 7

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2024	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2023
kWh SALES	105,969,870	103,726,548
REVENUE	\$11,772,010	\$10,805,151
COST OF POWER	\$4,926,185	\$4,324,879
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$4,369,292	\$4,122,528
MARGINS	\$901,965	\$1,071,659
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,278	5,199
NUMBER OF METERS	6,681	6,521
MILES OF LINE	1,019	1,013
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$40,164,528	\$39,173,290
MEMBER EQUITY	\$15,288,431	\$14,254,925
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (kWh)	1,194	1,255
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$145.42	\$140.83

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

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

- Approved proposed 2025 budget.
- Approved a donation request of \$1,000 to the Tobacco Valley Food Bank.
- Approved a donation of \$1,000 and (12) \$50 LEC Energy Certificates to the Big Hearts Open Arms.
- Approved trustees to attend leadership webinar.
- Approved to change future board meeting time from 6 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Approved year-end bonuses for employees and the general manager.

STORM

Continued from page 5

Lincoln and Flathead County in the dark. Dense, wet snow continued to burden power lines, causing trees to snap and fall into the lines repeatedly, and further hindering restoration efforts. Crews worked through the night alongside teams from all over the region.

Members reliant on medical devices requiring electricity were urged to seek alternative power sources as restoration timelines remained uncertain. Residents were reminded to report outages and downed lines by calling 406-889-3301.

Sunday:

CREWS WORK NONSTOP

On Sunday, November 24, more than 8 teams, and 36 individuals including local contractors and specialized crews, joined LEC's restoration efforts. Despite their tireless work, new outages emerged as additional trees succumbed to the weight of the snow.

LEC emphasized safety, urging residents to treat all downed power lines as live and hazardous. Snowmobile crews and sawyers were deployed to access hard-to-reach areas, demonstrating the collaborative spirit of the community and contractors.

Monday:

PROGRESS AMID ONGOING CHALLENGES

By Monday, November 25, crews had made significant progress, restoring power to many areas, however, the situation remained precarious, with continuous snowfall

See *STORM*, page 8

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

Tina Taurman
 President

Joel Graves
 Vice President

Sandi Mason
 Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Rodney Kane
Rick Peterson
David Purdy
Marianne Roose

Matthew Quinn
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. 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, JANUARY 22, 2025



Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
 memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

When the power goes out

HOW TO PREPARE AND STAY SAFE

AT Lincoln Electric Co-op, we take pride in our commitment to providing reliable energy daily. However, outages are an inevitable part of power distribution, often caused by factors such as severe weather, equipment failure, planned maintenance, animal interference or human error.

The duration of an outage can vary widely depending on its cause and the location of the trouble spots within our service territory. While we work hard to restore power

as quickly as possible, it's crucial to be prepared for the unexpected.

Preparation matters. Power outages can be inconvenient, frustrating, and sometimes even dangerous, particularly in extreme weather conditions. Being prepared can make all the difference in how you and your household manage during an outage. Here are some practical tips to help you stay safe and comfortable until power is restored:

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR ANY POWER OUTAGE

Water:

- Keep bottled water on hand for drinking.
- Stock up on larger containers of potable water, such as 5-gallon Culligan bottles or buckets, for cleaning, dishes and flushing toilets.

Food and Cooking:

- Store non-perishable food items that don't require refrigeration or cooking.
- If you have a cooler and it's cold outside, use your porch to store perishables. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain cool temperatures.

Lighting and

Communication:

- Have flashlights with extra batteries ready.
- Stock candles and matches, but use them safely.
- Keep battery packs charged to maintain communication devices such as phones or portable radios.

First-Aid and Meds:

- Ensure your first aid kit is well-stocked.
- Have necessary medications readily available, particularly if they require refrigeration or special storage.

Backup Power Source

- Gas or Propane Generator: Invest in a generator with sufficient wattage to power essential appliances, pumps,

and heating systems during an outage. Ensure it is properly installed and maintained for safe use.

- **Battery Power Pack:** Opt for a rechargeable battery power pack to keep critical devices, lighting, and even some appliances running. Charge it ahead of time to ensure readiness during emergencies.

Winter Outages:

Winter outages pose unique challenges, particularly when heating systems go offline. Here's how to stay warm and protect your home:

Fireplaces or Wood Stoves:

- If you have one, ensure you have plenty of firewood stocked in an easily accessible location.
- Use these heat sources safely to avoid fire hazards.

Blankets and Clothing:

- Stockpile warm blankets and winter clothing. Dress in layers to retain body heat.

Heat Retention:

- Avoid opening doors or windows unnecessarily to preserve the warmth inside your home.
- Seal off unused rooms to concentrate heat in occupied spaces.

Special Medical Needs

For individuals relying on medical equipment such as oxygen machines:


- Ensure your portable devices are fully charged or have sufficient battery backups.
- Keep spare tanks or power supplies on hand to last through an extended outage.

Lessons learned

At the time of writing, Lincoln Electric Co-op had just experienced one of the longest outages in recent history, with some of our members without power for up to 56 hours. Events such as these under-

score the importance of being prepared, especially as we head into what promises to be a long and challenging winter.

Hindsight may be 20/20, but preparation is key. Take steps now to ensure you and your household are ready for the unexpected.

A little planning today can make all the difference when the lights go out. And always remember, in the event of an outage call our office at 406-889-3301. 



STORM

Continued from page 6

causing more trees to fall onto lines.

The warm-up forecast for the coming days posed additional risks, as melting snow could dislodge branches and create new outages. LEC urged members to prepare for prolonged outages and remain vigilant.

Thanksgiving Week:

POWER RESTORED, GRATITUDE EXPRESSED

As conditions began to stabilize by the evening of Nov. 26, restoration efforts brought light back to the majority of affected homes. Crews, many of whom had been working around the clock, received a well-deserved respite as outages subsided for Thanksgiving.


“Thank you to all the linemen, contractors, and community members who supported us during this challenging week,” said LEC General Manager Matt Quinn. “Your cooperation and patience have been invaluable. We are deeply grateful for the hard work and dedication shown by everyone involved.”

Restaurants and hotels that provided meals and accommodations for the crews also received heartfelt thanks. LEC emphasized the importance of community spirit, which played a crucial role in overcoming the storm’s challenges.

Looking Ahead:

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STORM

With power restored to most areas, LEC crews are preparing for future winter weather events. Residents are reminded to keep emergency supplies on hand, report hazards promptly, and exercise caution around powerlines and crews working to maintain service.

“We’re ready for whatever winter brings next,” said an LEC Lineman. “This storm showed the strength of our community and the commitment of everyone involved in keeping the lights on.” 

WINTER STORM: KEY NUMBERS AND UPDATES

Crews Deployed:

Lincoln Electric Co-op, Flathead Electric Co-op, Missoula Electric Co-op, Interbel Co-op, Northwest Electric Contractors, Rocky Mountain Contractors, Wireless Construction Services, Potelco Inc, and several local sawyers and snowmobile teams.

Affected Areas:

From Whitefish to the Canadian border, and all areas in between consisting of thousands of members.

Safety Tips:

Avoid downed lines, report hazards to 406-889-3301, and ensure access for restoration crews. Be prepared, make a plan.

As the storm fades into memory, Lincoln Electric Cooperative extends its gratitude to all involved and wishes its members a safe and happy New Year.

EVAS



Eureka Volunteer Ambulance Service

• Who are we?

Our ambulances are staffed by volunteers who are licensed drivers, EMTs, A-EMTs and Paramedics. We organized as a non-profit, volunteer organization in 1995. We are governed by a Board of Directors and an active volunteer membership.

• What do we do?

Members volunteer at least 48 hours of on-call time per month time to provide emergency medical response services to the community during urgent times of illness or injury. Members respond to over 600 calls per year.

• Where do we provide services?

Our service area encompasses all the communities in Northern Lincoln County. The service area includes, but is not limited to, the communities of the West Kootenai, Rexford, Eureka, Fortine, Trego, Stryker, and the Ten Lakes Scenic Area. Our base facility is in Eureka, Montana.

• How do we respond?

When responding to a 911 call, most volunteers are leaving from their home or job. They meet at the ambulance building in Eureka to pick up one of the multiple ambulances and needed emergency medical equipment.

Have an Emergency? Call 911

See our Facebook page or visit EurekaEMS.com