



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

LEC system-wide outages

What occurs and how we restore power

ON the evening of December 3, a system-wide power outage affected every Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LEC) member, nearly **6,000 members** across more than seven communities in two counties. We know how disruptive an outage can be, especially when it happens suddenly and on a large scale, so we want to explain what caused the outage, how our system works, and what steps LEC takes to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

What Caused the Outage?

The outage originated on a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission line that delivers wholesale power to LEC's system. When BPA experiences a fault, whether from trees, equipment failure, wildlife or weather-related issues, our entire service area can lose power instantly because all electricity feeding LEC travels through BPA's transmission infrastructure originating in Columbia Falls.

How many were affected?

Because LEC receives power through a single transmission source, the outage was **system-wide**. That means:

- All LEC members were without power
- Every community we serve, including Eureka, Rexford, Fortine, Trego, Olney, Stryker, Whitefish and the surrounding rural areas, was impacted

Within the first **five minutes**, our office received **438 phone calls** from members reporting the outage, a clear



sign of how widespread it was. LEC had five people working the phones at this time.

Where our power comes from

LEC does not generate electricity locally. Instead, we purchase power from BPA, a federal power producer and transmission provider for much of the Pacific Northwest.

Here's how the flow works:

1. BPA generates or transmits power across the region
2. LEC receives that power at our substations
3. LEC distributes the electricity over hundreds of miles of local power lines to homes and businesses

4. Because this "supply chain" begins with BPA, any BPA transmission outage immediately affects everyone downstream — including LEC members.

LEC can't repair BPA Lines

A common question we receive is: "Why doesn't LEC just fix the BPA line and get our power back on?"

Here's why:

- BPA transmission lines are federal infrastructure
- Only BPA-certified lineworkers are legally allowed to repair or energize them
- LEC crews can assist in identi-

See OUTAGE, next page

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2025	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2024
kWh SALES	95,398,417	105,969,870
REVENUE	\$12,367,253	\$11,772,010
COST OF POWER	\$5,171,030	\$4,926,185
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$4,936,857	\$4,369,292
MARGINS	\$701,315	\$901,965
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,370	5,278
NUMBER OF METERS	6,808	6,681
MILES OF LINE	1,023	1,019
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$42,730,112	\$40,164,528
MEMBER EQUITY	\$16,167,255	\$15,288,431
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (kWh)	1,252	1,194
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$154.48	\$145.42

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on November 24. A quorum of trustees was present, and the board took the following actions:

- Approved donation request of \$1,000 cash, \$1,000 energy certificates for Big Hearts & Open Arms
- Approved donation request of \$5,000 for Eureka Public Schools
- Approved donation request of \$500 for Eureka Little Guy Wrestling
- Approved LEC's Wildfire Mitigation Plan

OUTAGE

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fying the problem, provide access support and stage for restoration

- We cannot perform repairs on transmission equipment we do not own

The Lingering Impact of the 2024 Storm

Many members remember the historic storm of 2024, which caused massive tree damage across northwest Montana. That event left behind:

- Countless weakened trees
- Damaged and stressed root systems
- Standing dead timber
- Leaning trees that continue to fall months, and even years, after the storm

These lingering hazards increase the risk of trees coming into contact with powerlines during wind events, heavy snow or freeze-thaw cycles. This will remain an ongoing challenge for utility providers across the region, including BPA and LEC, for many years to come.

Why Right-of-Way clearing matters

Keeping powerline corridors clear of vegetation is one of the most important tools we have to prevent outages. However, LEC faces several challenges:

Private property restrictions

Some members do not allow LEC to remove hazard trees or adequately clear rights-of-way on their property. When vegetation remains close to the line, outage risk increases, future maintenance becomes more difficult and restoration times can be significantly longer.

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LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

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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

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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 4 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, DECEMBER 15, 2025



Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

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Forest Service and BPA responsibilities

Powerlines that cross U.S. Forest Service, Montana DNRC (state) land or BPA-controlled corridors fall under the clearing responsibility of those agencies. LEC cannot clear those trees without authorization, even when we know a risk exists.

Collaborative long-term vegetation management remains critical to reducing wide-area outages.

Thank you for your patience

We know outages are frustrating, especially when they affect everyone at once. The system-wide outage event highlights how interconnected our regional power system is and how important it is for LEC, BPA, landowners, and federal and state agencies to work together to keep electricity reliable.

LEC crews responded immediately once the outage occurred, remained in communication with BPA, and restored power as soon as BPA cleared and re-energized the transmission line.

We sincerely appreciate your patience, calls and continued partnership as we work to maintain a safe and reliable power system for our community. RM

Verify outages with LEC's Outage Map

OCCASIONAL power outages or interruptions in service are an unfortunate reality for LEC, especially in heavily treed areas and rural areas such as ours. If your power is out, LEC's Outage Map is a helpful resource to verify outages in your area and see who is affected.

Is Your Power Out?

Before reporting your power outage to the co-op, please take the following steps to make sure nothing on your side of the meter is causing the interruption:

Check your circuit breakers at your breaker panel to ensure all breakers are in the "On" position.

Still out? Check the breaker below your meter.

If you see a number displayed on the meter screen, that means there is power to the meter.

If there is no display, it likely means there is a power outage in your area.

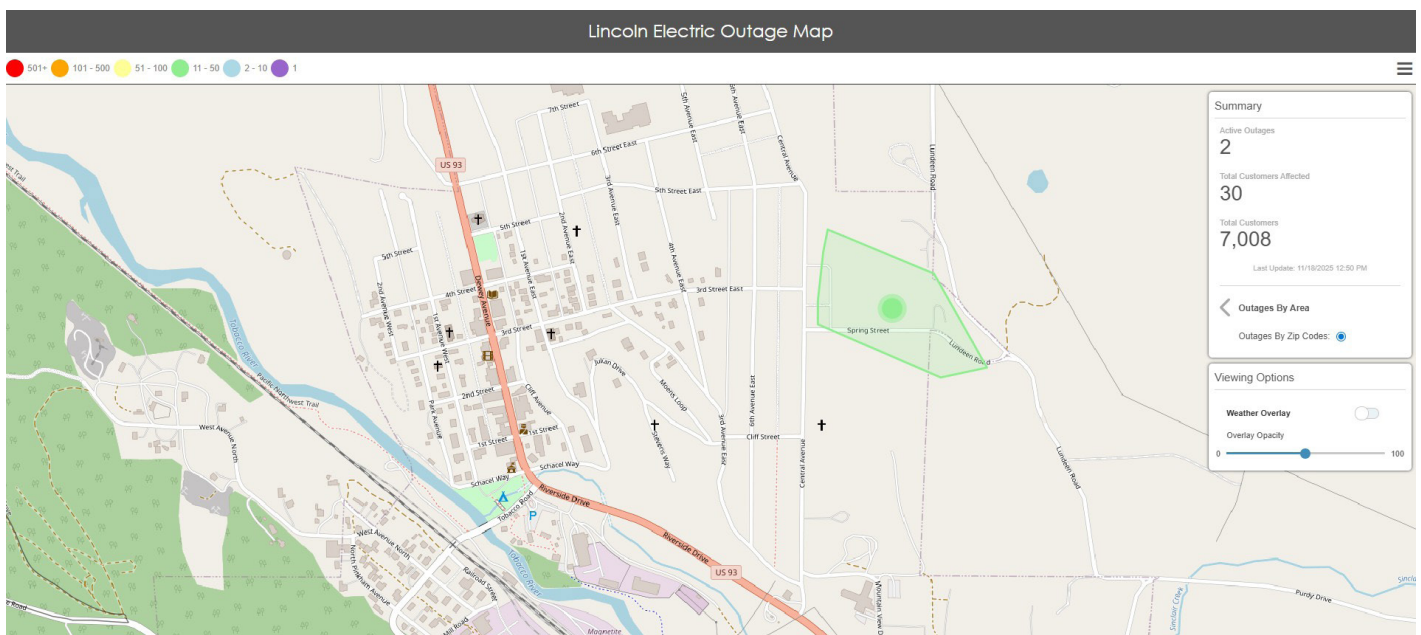
Check whether your neighbors

have electricity, as this can help LEC narrow down the issue.

Once you have confirmed that you are experiencing a power outage, check LEC's Outage Map, located through the SmartHub App, and the Lincoln Electric Co-op website at lincolnelectric.outagemap.coop to see whether your outage has already been reported.

If your outage is *not* shown on the map, please call us at 406-889-3301 and let dispatch know you are without power. If your outage is visible on the map, LEC is already aware of the issue and is working to restore power, so you do not need to report it.

If you would like to receive alerts about outages, visit our SmartHub app and set up notifications directly from your phone or home computer. For more information, visit our Outage Page on the website under the *Cooperative* tab or at: lincolnelectric.coop/outages-safety/outages. RM



Meet Shayna

MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES, SAFETY
AND COMPLIANCE

SHAYNA was born in Everett, Washington, and moved to Eureka at a young age. She attended school in Eureka from kindergarten through her high school graduation in 2004. Throughout her school years, Shayna stayed active and hardworking, playing softball and volleyball while also working at the local hardware store and spending her summers employed at Laughing Water Ranch.

After high school, Shayna worked in several places around Eureka, including Laughing Water Ranch. In 2005, she moved to Chicago, where she held a variety of positions before welcoming her son and daughter. Following their births, she dedicated her time to staying home and caring for her growing family.

Shayna moved back to Eureka in 2011. Once her kids returned to school, she re-entered the workforce, working at several local restaurants before transitioning into bookkeeping and accounting. She eventually took on those roles for Kootenai Sand and Gravel, and Indian Springs.

In 2016, Shayna was hired at LEC as a receptionist after seeing the position advertised in the newspaper. Reflecting on why she applied, she shared, “I knew the value that LEC brings to the community and how they take care of their members and their staff. I wanted a stable job where I grew up and could be close to my family.

“I moved into new memberships, and from there I began helping the Engineering Department by processing applications and cross-training on their processes. I was learning the systems well and really enjoyed the engineering side of things. I admired the people in the department and saw the value they brought to our members. I found electrical distribution – and how we get power – fascinating. The process of building out a new service is interesting.”

Shayna has worn many hats at LEC,

The faces of LEC

Introducing our Lincoln Electric family
of employees to all our members

taking every opportunity to cross-train in different departments.

“I get along really well with the team, and having a good attitude and strong teamwork makes work a lot more fun,” she said.

That positive attitude and versatility put her at the top of the list when the member services manager position opened after the previous manager retired. Shayna applied and was selected for the role. She has now been in her management position for more than six months, enjoying the challenges it brings and learning a great deal along the way.

“As member services manager, I really enjoy working at LEC, and the people I work with make it fun. I love being able to help our members, especially with rebates and energy efficiency. Helping them stay energy efficient and save money is incredibly rewarding. LEC does so much for its members through my department, and I’m proud to lead that work and be part of it every day.”

For many local Eurekans, Shayna is also known for the spectacular Halloween display she creates in her

yard each fall. It’s a dazzling collection of skeletons, often up to no good or playfully arranged in creative scenes. “Every year, my husband and I get the chance to be creative and come up with something new,” she said. “This year was my daughter’s senior year, and she’s an excellent volleyball player, so we did a dueling volleyball skeleton scene complete with wigs and jerseys. We got a lot of laughs from that one, and even had people stopping on the road to take pictures.”

Shayna is also a proud mom of athletes. Her son excelled in football and track, and is now playing college football in California. Her daughter recently wrapped up her volleyball season and is now competing in wrestling, with dance season right around the corner. Even her youngest keeps the family on the move, staying active with dance, soccer, wrestling and all the energy that comes with being 6 years old. As Shayna puts it, “My kids stay busy, and they keep me busy.”

In her free time, Shayna enjoys spending time with her husband and family at local sporting events, camping trips and outdoor adventures. She loves being outside – whether she’s hiking, exploring the woods or working in her garden. At home, she and her husband often team up on home-improvement projects and building projects, something she finds both fun and rewarding. RM

