

MCLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER

NEWS

JANUARY 2023



Winter storms can be crippling - especially when it impacts electric utilities. Wet, heavy snow, ice, and high wind speeds create treacherous conditions that cause power outages and make power restoration difficult.

When a bad storm hits and outages are widespread it can sometimes take assistance from outside help to restore power to members. Minnesota’s electric cooperatives participate in the national power restoration program known as “Mutual Aid” where line workers, tree-clearing crews, damage assessors, and safety teams join forces during massive outages.

Recently, McLeod Co-op Power sent two trucks and four linemen to provide mutual aid in power restoration following a multi-day storm affecting Lake Country Power’s service territory. At the height of the storm, more than 12,700 of Lake Country Power’s 43,000 members were impacted in northern Minnesota. Crews had more than 500 outage points to assess, repair, and restore.

Trees, heavily laden with heavy, wet snow and ice, toppled and lost branches which tore down power lines and broke poles. The local linemen worked with crews from five other entities in support of restoring power. “In some places, the trees bowed over from the heavy snow to create archways over the roads. Many branches were hanging low over roads and the booms on the trucks would hit them causing the snow to fall into the buckets or the back of the truck,” said Craig Marti, McLeod Co-op Line Foreman.

“Without the mutual aid from five other cooperatives in the state, including McLeod, our members would have been out of power much longer than late Sunday night, and that’s when the bitter cold was starting to set into our region,” said Derek Howe, Lake Country Power chief operating officer. “We are so thankful for their help. I’ve

been here 12 years and this is definitely the worst winter storm I’ve seen.”

Electric cooperatives have a long history of providing mutual aid during emergency situations. McLeod Co-op has been on both the sending and receiving ends of mutual aid. When storms create havoc with electric infrastructure, the influx of needed personnel and equipment is extremely valuable. People need electricity and cooperatives always put forth their best efforts to restore power as safely as conditions allow.

“I’m very proud of our crews and their willingness to always help others that are in need. When we were first asked to assist with the storm damage in northern Minnesota, our guys said yes with no hesitation,” shared Emerson Brady, McLeod Co-op Operations Manager. This type of attitude and cooperation is so important because there will be a day when our Cooperative will need help from others. It’s satisfying and humbling to work with such a wonderful group of electric cooperatives.”

McLeod Co-op Power employees, Ryan Schuette and Brad Hundt, also shared highlights from their involvement.

“The amount of deep snow was really something we don’t see too often in our service territory. There were so many trees bent over from all the heavy snow. I have to say that it was rewarding to help their members get their power back when they had been off so long in the cold.” – Brad Hundt, Line Worker

“There was heavy snow cover that brought down a lot of trees on the lines. Maybe the most memorable thing for me was how grateful all the members were. Whenever we were at the gas station or getting something to eat people would offer to pay for our supplies. They were very grateful for all the guys that were helping up there.” – Ryan Schuette, Line Foreman

SAVE MONEY AND ENERGY THIS WINTER

03

SAFETY MOMENT: WINTER SAFETY TIPS

04

CONNECT WITH YOUR CO-OP ONLINE



FACEBOOK

Efficiency tips, photos from the field, outage information, and more updated regularly.



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All the Co-op’s information, news, and resources at your finger tips 24-7.



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2023 REBATES

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES

Energy Star Dehumidifier \$25

Energy Star Electric Clothes Dryer \$25

RECYCLING

Old Freezer or Refrigerator \$25
(Proof of recycling required, limit of two per year.)

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Level II EV Charging Station \$500
(Level 2 charger installed on the co-op’s Storage/Off Peak Program)

WATER HEATERS

Heat Pump Water Heater \$500
(50-gallon minimum capacity)

Replacement Electric Water Heater \$50
(40-gallon minimum capacity)

Electric Storage Water Heating Program \$400

ENERGY STAR SWIMMING POOL

Air Source Heat Pump Pool Heater \$400

Variable Speed Pump \$200

HVAC

Wifi Thermostat \$25

Central Air Conditioner or Air Source Heat Pump Tune-up \$25

Electric Thermal Storage Space Heating \$50 per kW

Air Source Heat Pump 8.2-8.99 HSPF \$500

Air Source Heat Pump ≥ 9.0 HSPF \$1,000

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump > 9.0 HSPF \$300

Ground Source Heat Pump \$400 per ton

ECM \$50
(retrofit only, no new construction)

ELECTRICAL LAWN EQUIPMENT
(APPLIES TO LAWNMOWERS, CHAINSAWS, TRIMMERS, LEAF BLOWERS AND SNOWBLOWERS)

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CEO MESSAGE

Hello Elliot. I knew we name hurricanes, but I didn't know we named huge winter storms. We ended 2022 with a winter storm named Elliot that is going down in the history books.

Temperatures plunged, snow fell, and the wind blew across large parts of our country. Planes, trains, and automobiles were impacted by airport and road closures. Tragically people lost their lives.

At our cooperative, under dire blizzard warnings, we proactively closed the office. We don't need our employees trying to either get to the office or get home during a blizzard. Our operations team was still ready for the outages. The lineman and their support don't get a day off. Outages came and they rolled out there to get the lights back on as safely as possible. Although when the plows were pulled off the roads and roads were being closed, we had to make a difficult call. We decided to pull our lineman in and wait till the conditions improved the next morning.

Yes, we knew we had some members out of power, and the decision to make a safety stop would keep them in the dark longer than we wanted and more importantly longer than they wanted. It is a hard call for our linemen to make. The week before we had four of them volunteering to work at a sister cooperative to help get power restored to their members after a large outage event.

It is in their blood to serve and not in their nature to stop work when there is work to be done; especially when it comes to restoring power. As soon as the sun started to peek



CEO RON MEIER

over the horizon and the winds had let up, they were back out there.

In the end, we strive to keep the lights on, but mother nature from time to time humbles us. Each of us needs to prepare for those days. We all need to ask ourselves what we would do if the lights went out for a couple of days in the cold of winter or the heat of summer. How will we keep warm, stay informed, and keep others abreast of our situations? Will your furnaces run without power? If not, do you have an alternative heat source or a place to go? If you are traveling, do you have in the vehicle stuff that you might need if you find yourself stranded in a ditch? Fuel in the tank, blankets, shovel, and some water and snacks in the vehicle? Be prepared.

While we all would like to not see another named storm this winter; let's be ready for it using the lessons Elliot taught us.

P.S. If you haven't downloaded and set up our SmartHub app that will allow you to be informed about what is going on during an outage, I suggest you do so as this is another great way to be prepared.

Cooperatively,
RM

DECEMBER 2022 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of McLeod Cooperative Power Association was held on December 20, 2022, at McLeod Co-op headquarters. Nine board members, the attorney, CEO Ron Meier, and department managers participated in the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The outage report for the month of November 2022 was reviewed with a total of 55 outages, affecting 464 consumers.
- Operations Manager Brady reported that a new Apprentice Lineman, Peyton Jasken from Hutchinson, will begin employment on December 27.
- A motion was carried to accept the proposal from Adult Training and Habilitation Center (ATHC) to pay-off their Economic Development Loan.
- Member Service Manager Ehrke reviewed the final draft of the Member Survey. The survey will be mailed the first part of February.
- Manager of Finance Jakel presented the Operating Statement and Balance Sheet for the month of November 2022.
- A motion was carried to approve Resolution 2022-12-02 Amended Deferred Revenue Plan.
- A motion was carried to accept the \$386,823.00 budget for the Co-op's yard expansion project for its headquarters.

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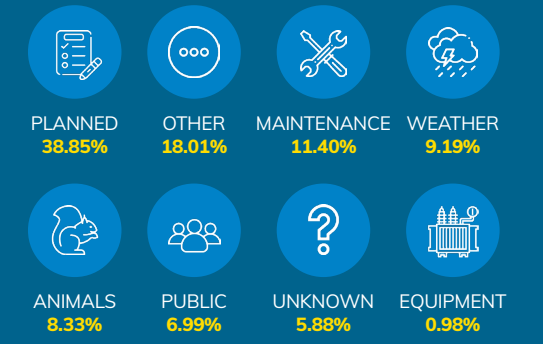
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2022 POWER OUTAGES

MONTH	OUTAGES	MEMBERS	AVG. MINUTES
January	43	1,025	50
February	24	237	17
March	37	55	37
April	49	145	59
May	174	1,944	780
June	71	224	97
July	72	2,344	120
August	136	951	724
September	67	134	72
October	59	123	79
November	55	464	96
December	28	188	57

WHAT'S CAUSING OUTAGES?



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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Did you know insulating your electric water heater could reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%? This could save you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs. Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy efficiency and save you money each month. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores.



5 WAYS TO FIGHT OFF THE WINTER CHILL AND SAVE

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: High winter bills are never fun. McLeod Co-op Power is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1

MIND THE THERMOSTAT

This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use – the lower the setting, the greater the savings. Many recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it at 60-62 degrees.

2

MINIMIZE USE OF ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS IF POSSIBLE

An electric space heater can cost more than most realize to operate. Minimize their use, except for limited or temporary spot heating. Turn space heaters off when leaving the room and follow safety precautions.

3

BUTTON UP YOUR HOME

The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

4

USE WINDOW COVERINGS WISELY

Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

5

CONSIDER YOUR APPROACH TO APPLIANCE USE

When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.



DO NOT REMOVE YOUR METER WITHOUT COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE

Electricians and/or members are not authorized to pull an electric meter to perform work on a service.

Electrical safety is a primary concern for McLeod Co-op Power. Removing or adjusting electrical equipment carries the potential to harm yourself and others. We stress the importance of never cutting the seal, tampering with, or removing a meter for any reason without assistance from the Co-op.

The cooperative's policy requires a trained co-op employee, using the proper protective equipment, to pull and reinstall any energized meter. McLeod Co-op Power provides this service during regular business hours for a fee of \$80. A notice of two business days is

requested, so coordinate your work needs with our team in advance by calling (800) 494-6272 during business hours.

WARNING: If an electrician or member does pull an electric meter to disconnect service, significantly higher fees will be incurred. Disconnection or tampering of a meter sends a power outage alarm to the co-op. If a line crew responds, the member will be billed at the applicable line crew service call rate of \$225 during business hours, \$425 on evenings or Saturdays, and \$525 on a Sunday or holiday.

Your cooperation is appreciated. Our only goal is to protect you, your neighbors, and our line workers from possible injury.

SAFETY MOMENT: SLIPPING AND SLIDING THIS WINTER POSES ELECTRICITY RISKS

Coming into contact with a power line can be deadly, but you don't have to touch one of them directly to be in danger. Thankfully, some simple precautions are all you need to keep you and your loved ones safe.



Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous.

VEHICLES AND POWER POLES

Accidents happen, especially in the winter when Minnesota roads are slippery and snow covered. Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS NO FIRE: Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted. Call 911 for help immediately.

IF A POWERLINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS A FIRE: Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire. To exit safely jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and the vehicle at the same time. Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 feet away from the vehicle to reduce the risk of electrical shock.



WATCH FOR HIDDEN DANGERS ON SNOW MOBILES

Zippering over glistening snow is always a thrill, but beware of hidden dangers while snowmobiling!

Guy wires that help anchor power poles may be difficult to see. Underground utility facilities may also be hidden by drifting snow.

To stay safe, we recommend staying on marked snowmobiling trails.

USPS 2220
PERIODICALS
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POWER LINE WORKER SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

McLeod Co-op Power is pleased to offer a \$500 scholarship for a student entering an accredited line technician program at a Minnesota vocational school; to help fulfill their ambition of becoming an electrical lineworker and having a career in the electric utility industry.

Applications are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 15, 2023. Application forms are available online at www.mcleodcoop.com/about/youth-programs/ or by calling (800) 494-6272.



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