



ROLLING HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

Rolling Hills Electric Co-op, Inc.

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Like us on Facebook

On Facebook, search for “Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.” and like our page for continued updates, energy efficiency tips, cooperative news and outage updates.



November Blizzard Brings Outages

Have we become unaccustomed to what Kansas weather might deal us? Things can change rapidly as we discovered early morning on Sunday, Nov. 25. A forecasted winter weather advisory that was upgraded to a winter blizzard warning caught us by surprise. When was the last time you recall a blizzard in your area? It has been quite a few years, hasn't it?

At one time during this blizzard, Rolling Hills had 3,400 meters without power. Eight substations were off and our dispatcher was answering calls and recording outages as quickly as possible. Outage messages, comments and statuses were being responded to on Facebook throughout the day and evening.

We offer many thanks to everyone for their patience during the outages. Whiteout conditions made it difficult for crews to begin restoration right

Your kind words and offers to provide linemen with a warm place and meal once service was restored were appreciated.

away—and safely. Also, your kind words and offers to provide linemen with a warm place and meal once service was restored were appreciated. After battling the elements, they were ready to be home, safe and sound with family and a warm house.

Facebook is the most efficient method to keep our member-owners informed should we have planned or unplanned outages and we will continue to communicate what we know when we know it on that social media platform. Once again, thank you for your support.

EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

WEATHERIZE

Seal doors and windows with caulk, weather stripping and/or plastic film.



SEAL IN WARMTH

Close blinds and curtains during the night to keep cold air out. Open them during the day to let sunlight in.



COOK UP SAVINGS

Use smaller appliances, like microwaves, toaster ovens and slow cookers when possible.



Downed & Dangerous

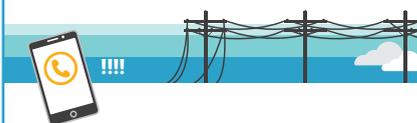
If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is de-energized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org

WATT'S HAPPENING

Storm Preparedness



Linnea Beebe

Rolling Hills Electric has routine dispatcher and storm preparedness meetings. The office or dispatcher receiving the outage call will

request your account number, name as shown on the account, address and a call back number. If there is more than one outage, our phones will be ringing constantly. In most cases, we will not be able to predict the length of your outage but we will post updates on Facebook and provide news releases to local media to help answer your questions and to help keep our phone lines open for other members trying to report their outages.

With Rolling Hills' new mapping program, linemen are able to use iPads in the field to locate outages, review comments left by the dispatcher and make notes on the service performed or the need for a return trip to replace a pole, etc.

As for storm preparedness, remember the ice storm of December 2007? At one time, Rolling Hills in Ellsworth had 90 linemen and contractors to care for. This means assigning crews to designated areas with maps, making arrangements for motels, meals, fuel, personal needs, repair shops, towing services, and other tasks associated with storm restoration.

Rolling Hills does have a Storm Preparedness Plan ready for whatever Mother Nature decides to deliver. The Operations Department will be extremely busy monitoring outages, emergency situations, material, weather and crews. The remaining office staff

will be fielding your calls and handling other designated responsibilities. If you locate a downed power line across the road or anything creating an emergency situation, please contact us with as much detail as possible.

During the ice storm restoration mentioned above, crews had breakfast and reported to the staging area by 6:30 a.m. to receive their assignments, grab a sack lunch, load up, report to assigned area(s) and then return by 9 p.m. to eat at a location able to feed our crews a hot meal at such a late hour of the evening.

We cannot stress enough the importance of having a current phone number and contact person in our system. If we do not have a valid phone number for you, we cannot call to verify that your power has been restored while the crew is still in your area. Our goal is always to get your service restored as quickly and safely as possible for both you and our crews.

If you are using a backup generator, please make sure it is operated correctly for the safety of you, our linemen and other members on the line. Generators must have a double-throw or transfer switch. If you already have or are considering purchasing a generator and need to upgrade your service loop, please call Jenny Thornton at 800-530-5572 to schedule it—hopefully before the next storm.

Rolling Hills is available to answer your questions and provide suggestions. You may call during regular business hours of Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., message me at lbeebe@rollinghills.coop or use the messenger feature on Rolling Hills Electric's Facebook page. If I can't answer your question, I will transfer you to someone who can.

Rolling Hills Employees Recognized

Rolling Hills Electric hosted its Christmas dinner for all employees and board members following the November board meeting. This allows the employees and board members a chance to visit and become better acquainted.

Following the dinner, Manager Doug Jackson recognized several employees. With retirements and shifting responsibilities, Jackson introduced and welcomed **SHANNON DUSKIE**, part-time clerk; **TANYA BUSER**, accounting assistant; **ANGIE BEHYMER**, controller; **JUSTIN ZERBE**, metering specialist/operations IT; and **CLAY PICKEL**, journeyman lineman. Also recognized was **MICHELLE BROKES**, recently appointed board member representing the Ellsworth District.

Jackson and Board President Bob Fredrickson recognized employees for 10- and 20-year anniversaries with Rolling Hills. Those receiving certificates of appreciation for 10 years of service were journeymen linemen **DOUG ERREBO**, Beloit; **TYLER ROESTI**, Ellsworth; and **LUKE ROUSH**, Beloit. **JENNY THORNTON**, Beloit, transferred from

payroll/accounting assistant to operations clerk this past spring. Receiving a certificate of appreciation and engraved wrist watch for 20 years of service with Jewell-Mitchell and Rolling Hills

is **BEN RUTHSTROM**, Osborne outpost foreman. Both Fredrickson and Jackson thanked all Rolling Hills employees for their dedication to the cooperative and the members they serve.



Board President Bob Fredrickson congratulates and presents a certificate of appreciation and watch to Ben Ruthstrom, Osborne outpost foremen, for 20 years of dedication to Jewell-Mitchell and Rolling Hills Electric.



Manager Doug Jackson introduces the new employees (from left) Shannon Duskie, Tanya Buser, Angie Behymer, Justin Zerbe and Clay Pickel.



Manager Jackson recognizes and presents certificates of appreciation to (from left) Doug Errebo, Tyler Roesti, Luke Roush and Jenny Thornton for 10 years of dedication and service to Rolling Hills Electric.

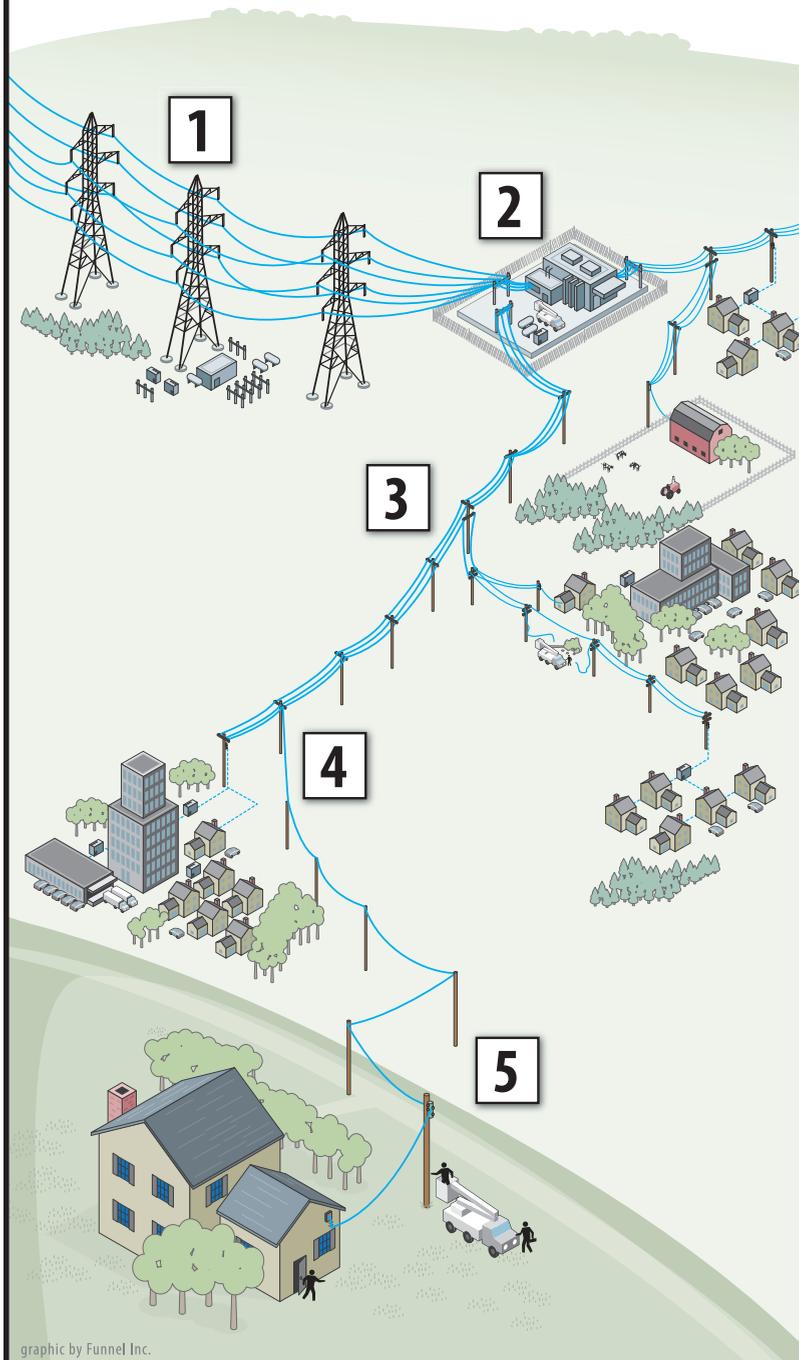
THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who received, completed and returned the Rolling Hills Electric survey.

Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op 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.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

1 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

Each substation serves 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 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, called 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 issues.