

FROM THE MANAGER— JIM HATHAWAY

Reducing Outages: A Two Step Approach

In September two major hurricanes struck the United States. There was significant damage done and extensive power outages. Many news articles at the time talked about placing power lines underground to reduce power outages.

"We don't get hurricanes up here in Wisconsin but Mother Nature can still cause a lot of damage. So, to reduce power outages, we put cable underground as much as possible."

Ok, so why don't utilities put all their power lines underground? It would protect them against damage from storms right? The answer is mostly, but not completely. Lightning strikes can still damage underground power cables and the cabinets where they come up from the ground. Flooding can expose or wash out underground cables. Generally, however, underground power lines are less likely to be damaged by wind and storms.

So back to the question, why don't utilities put all their power lines underground? The answers are technology and cost. When utilities, including Dunn Energy, first started putting up power lines, underground power line technology had not been invented. The only option was to put

up poles and string the wire from pole to pole.

It wasn't until the 1970's that underground cable technology was improved to the point that its use was practical. By then, electric utilities, including Dunn Energy Cooperative, had built thousands of miles of overhead power lines. Replacing all these lines with underground cable would cost billions of dollars. That would increase the cost of electricity dramatically. So as long as the overhead lines are still in good shape, they remain in service.

Putting electric lines underground also costs more than building them overhead. The cable is more expensive and so is the cost of installing the lines. So today, most electric power lines remain overhead because of technology and cost. But more and more, new

power lines are being placed underground.

The co-op has about 2,000 miles of electric lines and about 30%, or 600 miles, is underground today. Replacing the remaining 1,400 miles of overhead line with underground would likely cost over \$50 million dollars. Electric rates would have to go up a lot to pay for the work.

So, we cannot replace all of our existing overhead lines with underground, but today at Dunn Energy we do try to put most of our new power lines underground. It costs more, but folks like not having poles in their yards. And placing cable underground generally does mean fewer outages. We don't get hurricanes up here in Wisconsin but Mother Nature can still cause a lot of



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Winter Test for Interruptible Heat (Dual Fuel)

Please be advised the **Winter Test for Interruptible Heat (Dual Fuel) Members is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15th.**

This date is the Wednesday of the week before Thanksgiving, the same test day as prior years.

Residential Interruptible Heat load classes will be controlled as follows:

Control Start

All Interruptible Heat load classes will begin control at 5:00 p.m. without pre-alert.

Restoral

Miscellaneous Heat loads (class 4B) will be restored at 8:30 p.m.

All other Interruptible Heat loads (classes 2A, 2B, 2C and 2W) will vary in restoral, beginning at 9:00 p.m., with all loads restored by 11 p.m.

HUNTING SAFETY

- Before you begin a hunt, note the location of power lines and other electrical equipment. Dense trees can make them hard to see.
- Obey all signs that advise electrical hazards, especially when placing a tree stand.
- Never use power poles to support a tree stand.
- Never shoot at power lines or electrical equipment.
- When setting up and taking down the stand, make sure you don't make contact with any overhead electrical equipment.
- If you're using a portable generator on your trip, don't run it in a confined area.

For more information visit:



NEVER
USE POWER POLES TO
SUPPORT A TREE STAND

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damage. So to reduce power outages, we put cable underground as much as possible.

The co-op has taken a number of other steps in recent years to reduce power outages. For a number of years now, we have invested a lot more money in cutting trees and widening our rights-of-way. Trees or branches falling on our power lines are still the number one cause of power outages, but the number of tree related outages has gone down. So have the outage hours that our members experience.

We have a number of other programs in place to reduce power outages. Poles are tested every eight years. Poles that fail the testing program are replaced before they break and cause

an outage. We have a regular line inspection program too. Our linemen patrol line every year looking for loose or damaged equipment that may cause an outage. We have also placed more circuit breakers and fuses out on the lines; this helps reduce the size of an outage. If a tree falls on the lines, instead of 20 accounts losing power, perhaps only three or four will be out of power.

In the end we try to balance preventing outages with holding down costs. Our brushing program and inspection and testing programs help keep our overhead power lines up and in service. We replace some lines with underground cable as they get older. We could bury all our

electric power lines. It would take years to accomplish and the cost of electricity would go up dramatically. By carefully managing our efforts your electric cooperative is working to keep electric rates reasonable and power outages to a minimum.

November
Calendar of Events

11 UW-Stout Jazz Concert – Memorial Student Center at 7:30 p.m. – Tickets are \$5 available online at tickets.uwstout.edu or by calling 715-232-1122

If you have any upcoming events you'd like to post in our calendar, please call Jolene at 232-6240 or email her at jolene@dunnenergy.com.

Spotlight



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

This newsletter is published for the members of Dunn Energy Cooperative. If you have questions or comments please give us a call. Visit the Energy Professionals at your local energy cooperative.



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