

Easter storm packs a punch

C & L Electric Co-op bears brunt of storm

It already had a different feel to it. Unlike a typical Easter Sunday, this year there were no large family gatherings and church services because of the need to social distance during the coronavirus pandemic. And by evening of April 12, the weather added to the already challenging times when storms produced damaging wind gusts from 60 to 80 mph.

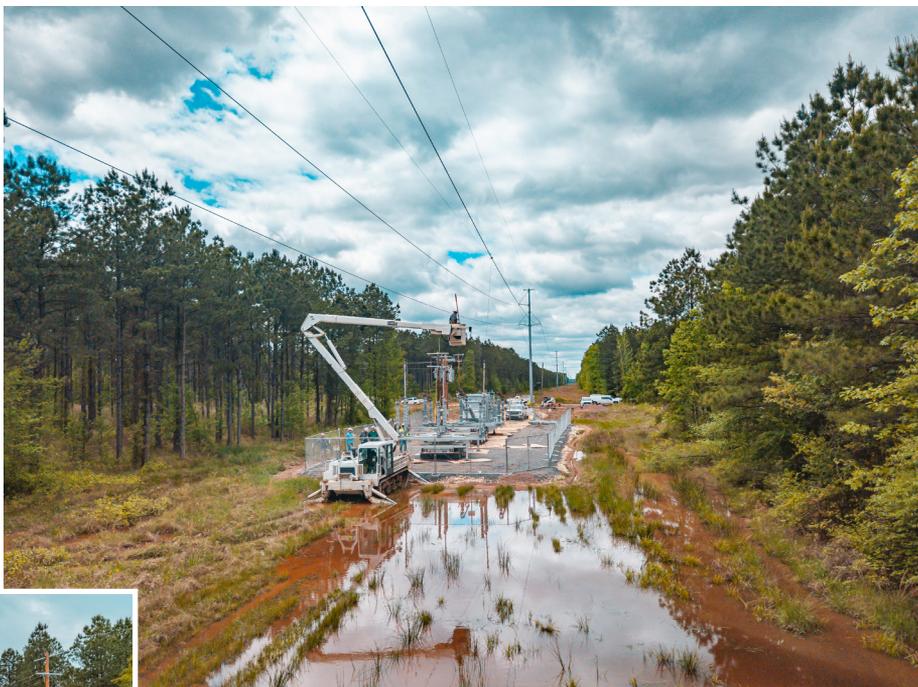
The storms caused serious damage at C & L Electric Co-op, as well as Ashley-Chicot Electric Co-op (Hamburg), Ouachita Electric Co-op (Camden), South Central Arkansas Electric Co-op (Arkadelphia) and Woodruff Electric Co-op (Forrest City). C & L was the hardest hit of the co-ops as the straight-line winds downed trees and power lines, leaving more than 21,000 members without power across the co-op's eight-county area at the peak of the outage.

C & L's distribution systems had 300 poles and other power delivery components damaged, with only one of 21 substations in operation in the storm's aftermath. Transmission lines were damaged throughout south Arkansas as well.

To restore power to C & L members, more than 225 line crews worked 16-hour days to repair the damaged system. Many of the impacted areas were challenging to repair due to terrain and other conditions, but crews constantly made progress. More than 60 of C & L's power delivery structures were replaced.

Mobile substation

The final push of C & L's outage restoration involved the deployment of an Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) mobile substation, the construction of about 2.5 miles of three-phase power lines, the construction and installation of a metering cluster and metering cabinet. This project was necessary to power the final 288 members without power in Cleveland and Dallas counties. This area was isolated from a substation feed due to damaged power lines that cross the Saline River and were impossible to access.



With sheer determination, professionalism and efficiency, AECC and C & L Electric completed the mobile substation project in just four days. The process would normally take 30 to 60 days.

After 13 days, power had been restored to all members who could receive it, and C & L crews celebrated with a classic song — "I Saw the Light."

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS...

Small steps can save you big money

If you're looking for ways to reduce your household expenses, try these simple steps to cut your spring/summer energy costs. You can find more energy-saving tips at energy.gov.



Block out the sun. Keeping the shades or blinds drawn on sun-facing windows is essential to keeping your home comfortable and your energy costs down when the temperatures start to rise. The exact savings will depend on the type of window covering and how it's used, but since the Department of Energy estimates about 76 percent of sunlight that falls on a standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, covering up some of that sunlight will definitely keep you cooler and result in savings.

Make good use of your ceiling fans. Consistently using your ceiling fan will allow you to raise your thermostat up to four degrees without any reduction in comfort, according to the Department of Energy. Just make sure your ceiling fans are turning counterclockwise for summer and that you don't leave fans running in empty rooms. Fans don't cool air — just people!



Do Laundry Lite. Washers and dryers are among the costliest household appliances to operate, according to the Department of Energy. Fortunately, there are lots of ways to curb these costs. Whenever possible, wash your clothes with cold water, which can cut a load's energy use in half. Wash only full loads; your machine will use about the same amount of energy no matter how many clothes are inside, so fill 'er up. Take advantage of the sun and hang laundry outside to dry instead of using your dryer.

Chill with the grill. As it gets warmer outside, turning on the oven will not only heat up your home, it will make your air conditioner work harder too. Cooking meals on the outdoor grill will keep the heat outside and allow you to enjoy a meal "out" without actually going out. If outdoor dining is not your thing, utilizing your microwave or a slow-cooker will also allow you to prepare food without generating extra heat.



Avoid exhausting your exhaust fans. Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you're done cooking or bathing.

Courtesy of **WISCONSIN ENERGY Cooperative NEWS**

Source: energy.gov