DAVID VONDRAN
CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

What is mutual aid, and why does it matter?

Electric cooperatives employ a variety of methods to reduce the likelihood of power outages — from regular tree trimming, to equipment maintenance and repairs, to local grid updates. But outages do occur, and when they do, co-ops are ready to respond.

Another way co-ops prepare for major outages and disasters is through mutual aid, a collaborative approach to emergency planning. The mutual aid model allows electric co-ops to help each other out during times of need. This approach permits co-ops to "borrow" restoration workers from other co-ops, thereby increasing the workforce response to areas impacted by a major outage event. It's essentially about neighbors helping neighbors, even when those neighbors are fellow co-ops located hundreds of miles away.

Electric co-ops were formed to provide reliable electric service to our members at the lowest reasonable cost, and mutual aid has been a fundamental part of our DNA since co-ops were formed. The concept of mutual aid originated with the rural electrification efforts in the 1930s. From the very beginning, electric co-ops relied on each other to assist in times of need, and mutual aid provides an essential safety net in times of crisis.

Mutual aid ultimately benefits our members. During major outage events, we can increase our workforce and respond more quickly, leading to shorter outage times for members.

During major outage events, a variety of equipment is necessary to complete repairs, including bucket trucks and other specialized vehicles, utility poles, transformers and wires. Skilled lineworkers, tree trimmers, damage assessors and other key personnel are also often shared among co-ops. These experts provide critical skills and manpower to speed up the restoration process.

Today, mutual aid continues to be a vital part of how electric co-ops operate and serve members of our local communities. The goal of mutual aid is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible after a major outage event.

By sharing resources, co-ops can significantly enhance our response capabilities. In essence, mutual aid embodies the sixth cooperative principle of "Cooperation Among Cooperatives" and ensures our members receive reliable electricity even in the face of major challenges.

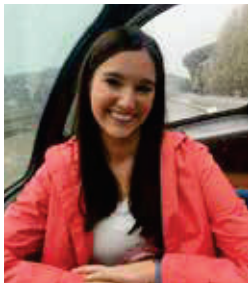
AECI

In April, the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas sent line crews to Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi to restore power after severe weather. The goal of mutual aid is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible after a major outage event.

Delegates selected for educational Youth Tour

C & L Electric Cooperative has selected Claire Haley and KyleeAnne White, both of Star City, to represent the co-op on the 2024 Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid educational trip to Washington, D.C.

They will explore the nation's capital June 15-21 with delegates from the other Arkansas electric cooperatives.



Claire Haley

KyleeAnne White

The group will join approximately 1,500 students from across the United States. During the trip, they'll learn about electric cooperatives, tour historic sites, monuments and museums and meet members of the Arkansas congressional delegation.

High school juniors may apply for Youth Tour each year. For more information on Youth Tour, visit **clelectric.com/youth-tour**.

Holiday Closing

***Our offices will be closed on Thursday, July 4, in observance of Independence* Day.**

More co-op news on page 26

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Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

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Swimming pool energy savings

BY MITCH ROSS

"Good job, buddy! You are doing it!" There are several vicarious achievements that we get to experience with our young children. Starting kindergarten, learning to ride a bike, scoring their first soccer goal, and on the list goes.

Last summer, I got to celebrate such an occasion with my then 5-year-old son, Leo, who was learning to swim. I got so much joy from sharing one of my favorite activities with him. I was able to watch him go from scared and nervous in the water to excited and confident! This summer, I'm sure I'll get to see him continue to improve his skills in the water, and it's all because we added a swimming pool to our yard.

Just as his inexperience in the water led to him feel nervous in the beginning, I was a bit nervous as well as a first-time pool owner. Apart from all the knowledge required to maintain a pool, I was worried about the extra expense on my utility bill.

As an energy auditor, I'd been to many high-energy-use homes where the primary culprit was a swimming pool. Luckily, the study I had done as an energy auditor to help others with their energy-hog pools helped me to avoid that painful experience!

MITCH ROSS

Last summer, Leo Ross learned to swim while his dad, Mitch Ross, energy efficiency manager for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, learned how to operate his new pool with energy savings.

As you get your pools ready for the summer, here are some tips to help you keep your associated energy expenses as low as possible.

Pool Pump Timer: Install and properly use a pool pump timer. This is by far the most common tip I've found helpful for pool owners. Many people let their pool pump run 24/7. This alone can add as much as $100 per month to your utility bills. It's also completely unnecessary. To know how long you should run your pool pump, there are some helpful online calculators. You just need to know approximately how many gallons of water your pool holds and the pool pump's rated horsepower. For most pools, the number is likely between 7-12 hours per day, meaning that you could save $50 or more per month by properly using a timer.

Clean Filtration: Clean filtration is efficient filtration. Keep your filters as clean as possible! As filters become clogged, the pump moves less water per hour, which leads to longer run times to keep the pool clean.

Proper Chemical Balance: Another thing I find is that homeowners will run the pump longer than they should to make up for improper chemical balance in their pools. It's always best to have your chemicals and pump run times both set appropriately for the pool.

Shut Down Pools During the Off-Season: If your pool goes unused for months, I recommend properly shutting it down so it doesn't continue to use energy.

Pool Heater: Unfortunately, even if you have the most efficient gas or electric pool heater on the market, using it is the equivalent to using an efficient HVAC system on a home with no roof! There is just no way to keep the heat from quickly escaping.

I hope these tips help alleviate some of the stress having a pool can add so that you can focus on the fun and memories this summer, as I intend to!

Mitch Ross is the energy efficiency manager for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.