

Spotlight

FROM THE MANAGER— JIM HATHAWAY Restoring Power

On Tuesday, September 24th an F3 tornado struck Wheaton Township in western Chippewa County. A tornado watch had been issued for most of western Wisconsin earlier in the day and the weather was warm and sultry. Perfect, unfortunately, for breeding tornados. While the name of our cooperative is the Dunn Energy Cooperative, we provide electric service to parts of other counties, included hundreds of accounts in Wheaton Township.

The damage in the area was severe. Our power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, lost 9 poles on the

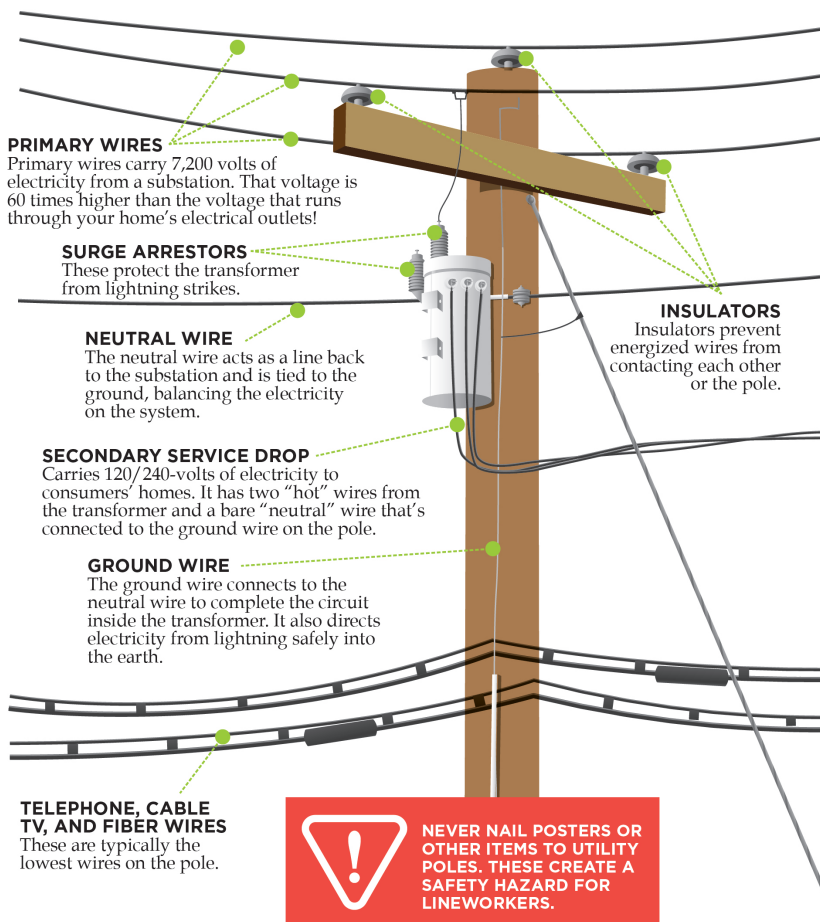
transmission line that provides electricity to six of our substations. That's about half the number of substations we have serving our territory and over 5,000 accounts were instantly out of power. We have an outage map on our website now that shows outages by township and, well, pretty much the whole map was lit up with colors that night.

Our new metering system and our new computer software provides us with a lot of detail on outages, but when a
(continued on back...)



WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



Posting Items to Utility Poles Creates Safety Risks

Signs, balloons and other materials on utilities poles are more than just an unpleasant neighborhood eyesore; they can be dangerous—even life threatening—to the professionals who maintain our vital lines of electricity, communication and other services. Safe Electricity urges everyone to help keep utility poles free of such materials.

The clamped safety boots used by line workers to climb poles are vulnerable to becoming snagged on staples and nails embedded in posts. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock. They can also injure workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces.

Posting items to power poles can also be a public safety hazard. The materials posted on the poles not only distract people as they drive, but they also degrade the quality, effectiveness and stability of the wood. Posting items to utility poles is usually a violation of local ordinances as well.

It is also just as important to avoid tampering with or disrupting the guy wires that surround utility poles. Please inform children not to play or swing on them, and maintain your distance when performing yard work. If you see the poles or guy wires are disrupted in some way, please call your local utility company immediately.



Restoring Power... *(...continued from front)*

major transmission outage occurs, it's impossible to determine what the cause of every outage is. We got calls from members reporting trees on lines and some outages were on substations that still had power. We responded to these as quickly as possible. For most though, we had to wait until Dairyland restored power.

Restoring power means isolating the damaged portion of line. That's called sectionalizing. The damaged section of line was isolated. That means the power feeds up to the point of the open switches. Beyond the damaged section of line, power was fed from a different direction. It took a little time to do the work but within four hours of the tornado hitting, power was restored to many members.

At that point we could determine from our software what damage was left. Most of the damage was in Wheaton Township, but not all of it. We had outages scattered throughout Dunn County as well. Our crews worked through the night and all the next day restoring power. By late in the day Wednesday power had been restored to every home and business that we could energize. Fortunately, no one was killed by the tornado, but a number of homes were damaged beyond repair.

We posted the information we had to our Facebook page. That seems to be the quickest way to get information out to a lot of people these days. Sometimes however, because we are so local, our employees are experiencing the same damage as our other members are. For example, the night of these storms, our Communications employee was also out of power, creating limited access to outage information. With that said, if you are wondering about an outage from a major storm, check the Dunn Energy Facebook page. It's still our fastest channel to get information to our members. As I've mentioned before, we now have an outage map on our website. It can be viewed on

cellphones as well as tablets. We don't provide detail on each account that is out of power for security purposes, but you can tell which townships have outages and how many.

We were fortunate that evening. No one was seriously hurt. That's the most important thing. And the damage to our power lines, while significant, was repairable within a day. The co-op has taken a number of steps in recent years to reduce power outages. For a number of years 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 have gone down. And so have the outage hours that our members experience.

But tornados are serious storms and we were fortunate the damage was not worse that night in September. The electric grid is a truly amazing engineering marvel. It works continuously to deliver electric power from the power plants, wind turbines and solar fields to your homes, businesses, and farms. Occasionally something happens to interrupt that power. Often, it's something small like a tree branch or squirrel that causes an outage. And usually those outages are small. Once in a while it's a big event, like September's tornado. Thankfully no one was hurt. And thanks to the hard work of our excellent employees, power was restored in a relatively short period of time.



Calendar of Events
November 2019

7 Annual Hootenanny for Wildlife Rehab & Release –
Hallie Eagles Club - 2588 Hallie Rd, Chippewa Falls, WI,
1-5 p.m. Live Music, Silent Auctions, Homemade Baked Sale;
all proceeds are for the care of rescued wildlife.

9 Holiday Craft Show – Elmwood Auditorium –
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Come for baked goods,
candies, unique gift ideas and more.

If you want to have your event included in the Spotlight newsletter you must have the information, submitted in writing, no later than the first of the month, the month before the event.

For example, if you have an event scheduled for June 12, you would have to have it submitted by May 1 to have it included in the newsletter calendar.

Events can be submitted by email to jolene@dunnenergy.com

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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.

5725 600th Street/ P.O. Box 220
Menomonie, WI 54751-0220
Phone: (715) 232-6240 or 1-800-924-0630
Web site: <http://www.dunnenergy.com>

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