



## Investments help keep the power on during a long Ohio winter



*Glenn W. Miller  
President/CEO*

SO FAR, IT APPEARS that it is going to be a long winter. As I write this article, large snowflakes fall outside my office. We are expecting 3-5 inches of snow today and a low of 5 degrees tonight.

Weather has a huge impact on our lives and specifically on our industry. Our linemen work diligently throughout the year, no matter the weather conditions, to continue to provide you reliable electric.

We would love to promise that you will never have a power outage, but as you know, that isn't realistic. What we can promise is that we will continually invest in providing the most reliable electricity possible. This includes constant research and education about the latest tools in our industry as well as adjusting and upgrading our system to the growing needs of our members. Another key factor includes a dedicated staff that works any hour of the day and every day of the year if a member is without power.

2014 begins a new four-year work plan for Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative, Inc. As a rural electric cooperative, we work closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Services to receive low-cost financing, which assists HWEC in the maintenance, improvement and growth of our infrastructure. Using such financing allows the cooperative to

maintain competitively priced electric rates.

The four-year work plan, which runs from 2014-2017, is a \$16.5 million investment for line upgrades, substation maintenance, pole replacement and new lines.

These projects are completed by our staff and additional third-party contractors while also handling general day-to-day projects and necessary maintenance.

As a member/owner of Holmes-Wayne Electric, you should be pleased with the commitment and investment to continue to maintain and develop your electric distribution company as well as the strategic planning for future growth and demand.

Committed investments like these allow for a strong infrastructure that can allow for the best reliability possible.

As we all know, we can't prevent all power outages. Car accidents, animals making contact or weather can create outages. We feel it not only is our responsibility to be proactive to prevent outages, but we also must educate and communicate to our member/owners how to plan for outages. We hope you take a few moments to review the following articles regarding power outage restoration and consider your personal preparation for possible outage situations.

May we all soon be seeing sunny days and green grass — but until then, enjoy the beauty of the season and be safe. ☺

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# Dining in the dark

## Food safety tips during a power outage

BY B. DENISE HAWKINS

**STORM-INDUCED POWER OUTAGES** can take you by surprise. If you've lost power and have a refrigerator full of food, make sure time and temperatures are on your side.

If your home's power is interrupted for two hours or less, losing perishable foods shouldn't be a concern. When an outage is prolonged, it's time to decide when to save and when to toss.

A digital quick-response thermometer can be one of the most useful tools you can wield in the battle to preserve food. The gadget checks the internal temperature of food, ensuring items are cold enough to eat safely.

Use these food safety tips to help you minimize food loss and reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

### Refrigerated food

- Keep refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours.
- If food (especially meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) has been exposed to temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more hours, or has an unusual odor, texture or color, get rid of it.
- Never taste food to determine its safety or rely on appearance or odor.
- Use perishable foods first, then frozen food.
- To keep perishable foods cold, place them in a refrigerator or cooler and cover with ice.

### Frozen food

- A full freezer stays colder longer. Freeze containers of water to help keep food cold in the freezer. If your water supply runs out, melting ice can create drinking water.
- If you keep the door closed, a full freezer keeps the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it's half-full).
- If food in the freezer is colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, is partially thawed and has ice crystals on it, you can safely refreeze it.
- Always discard frozen or perishable food items that have come into contact with raw meat juices.

Find more tips at [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov) or on our website at [www.hwecoop.com/Outage](http://www.hwecoop.com/Outage). ☞

*Sources: American Red Cross, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

*B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization for the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



# HWEC CONTINUES TREE-TRIMMING PROGRAM

## Why does Holmes-Wayne Electric trim trees?

Tree limbs and power lines aren't a good combination. HWEC service territory is beautiful and rural, with rolling hills and country scenes that include many trees. Because this area has a high density of trees, the cooperative was seeing a high number of outages and interruptions to your electric service due to tree contact with our power lines. In 2004, a tree-trimming program was implemented, which has greatly reduced tree-related outages.

## How often are trees trimmed?

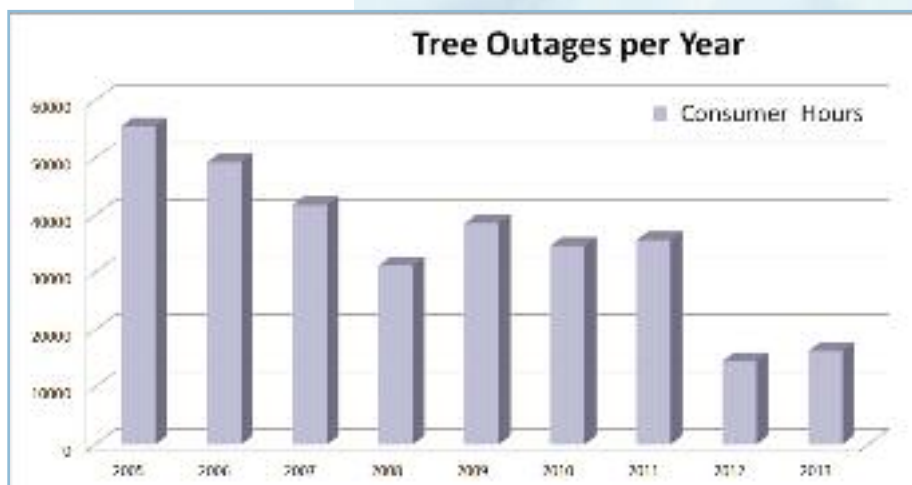
HWEC has established a four-year tree-trimming cycle. Annually, the cooperative has a bidding process for qualified third-party tree-trimming services. The HWEC board reviews the bids and selects the service provider. The contractor is required to complete the trimming process within the calendar year in order to maintain a timely cycle.

## What guidelines are used for trimming?

The cooperative's tree-trimming project is managed by Brent Schrock, HWEC right-of-way supervisor. Schrock is a certified utility arborist. All tree trimming is reviewed before and after the process. All cutting and trimming is required to be at arborist cut, which protects the trees, where economically feasible. Directional trimming not only eliminates the limbs from current contact with power lines but also strives to train the tree to grow away from the lines.

## Where should I plant a tree in my yard?

Smart planting saves the need for pruning. Trees planted along your property's border should be low-growing shrubs or tall, narrow trees planted at least 30 feet from power lines. Spreading trees, including maples and oaks, are the most common outage-causing culprits and need to be planted at least 50 feet away from the lines. Visit our website at [www.hwecoop.com](http://www.hwecoop.com) for more valuable planting information, or contact the office toll-free 866-674-1055 for a detailed brochure. ☎





# How HWEC works to restore — and prevent — power outages

LIGHTS OUT? With today's technology, we use electricity for almost every task whether at home or work. So there is no convenient time to be without it.

Power outages are triggered by the weather, animals, accidents and a variety of other issues. Line personnel must battle the elements year-round to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

"We know our members want to know why the lights are out and when they're coming back," said Ward Vaughn, Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative line supervisor. "First we must find the problems. Then we follow a series of steps to bring the lights back on. Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly and safely as possible. Then crews fix problems impacting smaller groups of members."

## How power is restored

They start with distribution substations, each of which serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, from the substation itself, or issues down the line.

All of HWEC substations receive power through high-voltage transmission lines of American Electric Power (AEP) or First Energy. We work closely with both organizations when they may have power interruptions to our substation.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines (also 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.

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired. Always call Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative to report an outage. This helps crews isolate local issues.

Members can view outages online at [www.hwecoop.com](http://www.hwecoop.com), which is updated every 15 minutes.

**'Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly and safely as possible.'**

**— Ward Vaughn,  
line supervisor**

## Preparation is key

Keys to power restoration actually begin long before the storm and outages. Preparation is a year-round commitment. On the previous page, members are able to see the benefits of HWEC's right-of-way tree trimming and spraying programs on power outages. More than a million dollars per year is spent on trimming and spraying rights-of-way to prevent outages. All substation service territory is trimmed every four years, and the following year underbrush spraying is completed.

Also in his report this month, HWEC President Glenn Miller noted that we are investing in \$16.5 million more into our distribution infrastructure over the next four years.

Additionally, the latest in technology is used to manage outages. An outage management system can predict the magnitude of outages much quicker based on a certain percentage of calls received

from one area. This allows for a quicker summary of the storm, which escalates the time management of line personnel in the most efficient and effective manner.

Also, the outage management system is linked to our geographic information system, which digitizes all of HWEC's maps, so our dispatching center can at all times have a bird's-eye view of the outages in our service territory. We distribute crews and equipment based on the number of outages in each substation area.

Finally, all of our trucks have a vehicle tracking device. This allows dispatching to create a safe environment for all line personnel as they continue to re-energize lines. It also allows for use of the closest equipment and additional personnel if needed. This is essential in the later stage of restoration as individual outages remain throughout the service territory. Crews can be dispatched in an order that allows for less time spent on the road traveling to outage locations.

All linemen can now see these features on iPads, allowing them to have the latest restoration knowledge.

All of these factors play an important part in the restoration process.

Additionally, as an organization, we annually complete an emergency restoration exercise to review processes and procedures and how we will react to different outage scenarios.

Moving forward in 2014, we are researching a mobile application that will allow for members to report outages via their smartphones.

Although we can't prevent every power outage, we continue to look at cost-effective and efficient tools to assist our members. ☺