

A Monthly Publication of The FEC Companies

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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Ice storm packs double whammy for FEC members in early January

Storm doesn't live up to forecasters predictions; damage could have been worse

When the first ice storm of 2005 began to work its way toward the service territory of Farmers' Electric Cooperative, things looked pretty bleak. Weather forecasters were predicting over an inch of ice from this storm, which would have been devastating for electric utilities across Missouri.

Fortunately, the ice storm that began during the late afternoon hours of January 4, travelled through FEC's service area, leaving the west side of the system with the brunt of the damage.

A total of 367 members were without power for an average of about four hours during portions of January 4 and January 5. The Knoxville and Polo areas were the hardest hit, with members in the Stet area also having more damage than

most. 32901

The double whammy occurred four days later when warm temperatures roll across north Missouri melting the ice from the power lines at a much faster than desire pace.

Large chunks of ice falling off all at once "throw" the power line upward into energized lines that are still sagging from the weight of the ice still remaining on the lines. This can cause the circuit breakers on the system to operate to protect the distribution system and your homes and such an occurrence can burn power lines in two.

On Sunday, January 6, the outages began to occur shortly after 10:30 a.m. The ice also caused two outages to our power supplier that knocked off the Gallatin and Nettleton substations for nearly 15 minutes. 274176

Before the weather began to stabilize, 1,503 members had lost power as a result of the rapidly falling ice. Substations that had outages occur that day included Chillicothe, Coon Creek, Jameson, Mabel, Kidder, Polo, Knoxville, Stet and the two previously mentioned substations.

All power was returned to FEC members at 7:55 p.m. Sunday.

A second ice storm threatened FEC's service area the following week and despite extremely hazardous driving conditions, there were just a few isolated outages reported. 110357

Make electric safety a job site priority every day

Here are a few tips for electrical safety on the job site:

- * Leave equipment repairs and adjustments to authorized personnel. 130701
- * Never operate an electric saw while wearing loose clothing.
- * Turn off equipment when finished with the job.
- * Keep work areas clean and dry.
- * Read and follow equipment instructions.

Essay contest deadline is Friday, February 25

Just a reminder, the deadline for Farmers' Electric's 42nd annual essay contest is 4:30 p.m., Friday, February 25.

Entries have been mailed to the junior class English instructors at 26 school districts.

Three students will win all-expense paid trips to Washington, D.C., and three students will win all-expense paid trips to the C.Y.C.L.E. conference in Jefferson City in July.

Essay entry forms may also be picked up at the cooperative office in Chillicothe.

Dinner-theater bus trip will not be held in 2005

The dinner-theater trip to the New Theatre Restaurant in Overland Park, Kansas, will not be held this year.

FEC had sponsored the trip for 12 years, however a steady decline in member participants over the years has forced the cooperative to cancel the event. 220165

FEC office will be closed Monday, February 21

Farmers' Electric Cooperative will close its office on Monday, February 21, in observance of President's Day holiday.

FEC's regular office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The home stretch

Sitting at my computer/word processors, nicknamed "Throttle," because no matter what I try to do with it, it seems to throttle my efforts. I see a gray sky, snow on the ground and my feet are cold.

By the time you read this, winter, form the most part, hopefully, is behind us. We should be entering the home stretch.

The year's work schedule for our crews has been pretty well set. Barring any unexpected events, like tornadoes and other storms, we have a plan of action. Fortunately the ice storm in early January did not pack the devastating wallop as the ones that hit our distribution system in 1994 and 2002.

The year 2005 will be another of attacking our

biggest natural enemy, brush.

A new tree cutter is in place and contract crews are getting ready to charge forward. Every tree we remove from being close to our lines, every limb hanging over our lines trimmed back, and ever small tree that has just been cut from under our power lines is one less service interruption for you, our members.

You can also help by contacting our office and letting us know about trees and/or brush threatening our power lines in your area. You can help by granting our crews and/or contractors permission to remove all trees and brush growing too close to our lines. You can help by clearing the right-of-way yourself, but only when the trees and/or brush are not up in the lines.

by dan bryan, fec ceo

NEVER do anything that would put you in close proximity of an electric line. Your safety is extremely important to us.

So what's all this have to do with February and Valentine's Day? Nothing, unless you want to have a candlelight dinner next February because your electricity has been interrupted by a tree or limb coming into contact with your electric service.

As we go down the home stretch of winter, we look forward to spring and summer and the opportunities those seasons provide us to serve your electric needs better than ever before.

