

Southwest lines

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

July 2024

Weathering the Storms



SWIAREC and Chariton Valley crews working on restringing line



Nishnabotna Valley REC - Jeremiah Ruby, Garrett Bundy, Jacob Cook, and Dave Monson



Pictured left to right: Chariton Valley REC- Ryan Romano, Wyatt McCarty, Kile Overmyer and Tim Scott

On May 21st, 2024, Southwest Iowa experienced devastating tornadoes that ripped through our service territory leaving destruction in its path. Southwest Iowa REC line crews were working around the clock to restore power quickly and safely. 8 line workers traveled from Chariton Valley REC and Nishnabotna Valley REC to aid in the restoration process. All members that could be restored had electricity within 4 days and 3 hours of storms. Southwest Iowa REC line crews reported over 140 broken poles and had more than 141,000 feet of wire replaced or restrung throughout 4 affected counties. We are proud of our line crew's diligent work. Thank you to our members for your patience during the challenging days. We also want to thank the volunteers who brought food, snacks, and water to the crew. It was greatly appreciated and helped fuel restoration efforts.



10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration



Phil Kinser CEO

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then suddenly, they snap their fingers, and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen.

As the CEO & General Manager of Southwest Iowa REC, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

1. We need you. When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. You can report your outage 24/7/365 by calling 888-220-4869.

2. Our employees might be affected too. Because Southwest Iowa REC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be too.

3. It's a team effort. Every one of Southwest Iowa REC's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our personnel are taking your calls, surveying damage, clearing hazards, organizing crews, and communicating to keep everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

4. We assess the situation first. Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

5. Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time. Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services. Then we complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.

6. Our employees face many dangers. Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)

7. Flickering lights are a good thing. Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.

8. You need a backup plan. We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan—remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you're unsure what to do, call us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.

9. Our employees have to plan, and eat. If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews work long hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else.

10. Sometimes it's a waiting game. Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it through our toll-free phone number 888-220-4869.

Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

3. Main Distribution Lines:

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

4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as 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.

5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.



Pictured left to right: Back row: Charles Abarr, John A. Overholtzer. Front Row: Jack Stephens, Jamie McManis

Nominating Committee Meets

The Board appointed Nominating Committee of John A. Overholtzer, Jamie McManis, Jack Stephens, and Charles Abarr met on Wednesday, June 12th and nominated the following members of the Cooperative for the office of Director for the ensuing term of three (3) years each, all to be elected at the Annual Meeting to be held September 5th, 2024:

- Region 1 - District No. 1: Wyatt Mobley – Jason Smith (i)
- Region 1 – District No. 3: Adam Gottemoller – Dale Walkup (i)
- Region 2 – District No. 5: Adam Boswell – David Brokaw – Deena Moore (i)
- Region 2 – District No. 7: Brandon Bruning – Dana Morgan (i)

(i)incumbent director

John A. Overholtzer
Chairman – Nominating Committee

SWIAREC UPDATES

Hitt achieves First-Class Lineworker Classification

Congratulations to JD Hitt, lineman in Corning, for earning First-Class Journeyman Lineworker certification. Upon being hired at Southwest Iowa REC, every new Apprentice Lineworker is required to successfully finish a comprehensive four-module online apprenticeship program to attain their First-Class Lineworker classification. This program typically spans a duration of 3 to 4 years and necessitates passing 40 assessment tests. Remarkably, lineworkers manage to juggle these educational commitments alongside their regular duties and addressing storm-related challenges. We take immense pride in the dedication and hard work demonstrated by our lineworkers in pursuit of their professional objectives.



Smith Earns Service Award

Congratulations to Dustin Smith, for earning this 5-year service award. Dustin is a first-class journeyman lineman out of the Corning office. Thank you for your years of dedicated service.



Good luck to all the 4-Hers in the surrounding county fairs this summer!

SWIAREC & CoBank Provide Support to Stanton Community

On Thursday, May 2nd, Southwest Iowa REC CEO & General Manager Phil Kinser met with members of the Stanton Community Foundation (SCF) in Stanton to present a \$3,000 check. The funds, a \$1,500 donation from Southwest Iowa REC and a matching donation from CoBank, will help the Stanton Community Foundation's overall efforts to support development activities in and around Stanton.



Pictured left to right is Phil Kinser, and Kevin Cabbage and Sheila Mainquist representing SCF.



Please make room for roadside crews

By Abby Berry

When the power goes out, so do Southwest Iowa REC's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

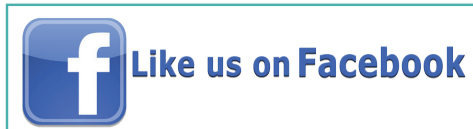
If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Iowa's Move Over Law, which was established in 2002, requires motorists to change lanes to give space for vehicles stopped along the side of the road. Anyone who violates the law could face a fine of up to \$10,000.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.



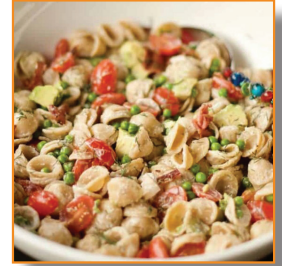
BLT Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 10 slices bacon, cooked and chopped into one inch pieces
- 16 oz. Orecchiette whole wheat pasta, or small shells or bow tie
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 avocados pitted, cut into chunks
- 10 oz. fresh English peas, cooked and drained

Instructions

1. Cook the bacon until crisp; set aside on a paper towel. Crumble when cooled.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions; strain and cool. Always use salt in the water (never oil).
3. In a small bowl, make the dressing--add the mayonnaise, lemon, salt, garlic powder, pepper and 1 tablespoon dill.
4. In a large bowl, add the cooled pasta, tomatoes, and peas. Toss to combine.
5. Add the dressing to the mixture; toss gently and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
6. Add in avocados right before serving (to not get mushy). Garnish with remaining fresh dill, and serve!



Bravo.....

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you for the scholarship. This will help me further my education at SWCC.
- Alli Baker

Dear SWIAREC,
I am truly thankful for the scholarship I received. It will be used to benefit my education and future. Thank you so much.
- Linsey Keiser

REC,
Thank you so much for selecting me as a recipient of your scholarship! It will greatly help me reduce my tuition at the University of Iowa.
- Dakota Reynolds

Southwest Iowa REC,
I appreciate the time you put into reading my application. Thank you for allowing me to meet my career goals through your generous financial support.
- Karly Millikan

Thank you so much for awarding me with REC Scholarship. I can't wait to start my schooling at ISU.
- Birk Wills

Thank you to all who helped and continue to help restore electricity during these storms! We appreciate you all.
- The Lucas Angus Family

Southwest Iowa REC,
I am beyond thankful for the scholarship you granted me. I will be using the money towards an education at Iowa State University.
- Will Bolinger

SWIAREC,
Thank you for awarding me this scholarship. I am honored to receive it. It will help me to attain my future endeavors at UNI.
-Hailey Rydberg



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Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.