

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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From the General Manager/CEO



Electricity theft: not worth the risk

By Rick L. Eichelberger

EVERY YEAR, electric cooperatives across the country cope with thieves — folks who deliberately tamper with their electric meter to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it's a serious crime that can result in hefty fines and jail time.

Not only are these persons stealing from their fellow co-op members, they're also risking their lives and those of our employees. Electricity thieves may also unknowingly feed energy back into the power lines. This is dangerous for linemen who may assume the power line they are working on is shut off.

Power theft carries deadly risks. Many thieves pay for the power they steal with their lives. Sometimes, the perpetrator may not be injured, but the meter is left in such a hazardous condition that innocent family members, friends or neighbors have been injured. An Arkansas man died when trying to reconnect his own power. A Georgia man tampered with a meter and caused a fire, resulting in the death of his daughter.

According to the Business Technologies Strategies Unit, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe. A short circuit could produce an arc

flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative personnel wearing protective clothing should work on meters.

Thieves may think altering or tampering with a meter will never be detected. Employees of New Enterprise REC monitor fluctuations in use or sudden drops in use. It doesn't take long before we know a meter has been tampered with.

New Enterprise REC reminds everyone that they can help prevent and reduce power theft:

- ▶ Notify New Enterprise REC immediately if you know of an illegally connected member.
- ▶ Do not cut the seal on your meter base or tamper with your own meter for any reason.
- ▶ Apply for a legal connection if you do not have one.
- ▶ Remain aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to New Enterprise REC.

Everyone is affected by power theft, and detecting and reporting illegal activity will help reduce the price paid. 

Why was the power out in southern Morrisons Cove?

ON JUNE 20, 2017, the Waterside Substation was down for 2 ½ hours for maintenance. The substation provides power to New Enterprise REC members who live in the southern Morrisons Cove area with the power supply being delivered over the Penelec lines coming from Curryville. The substation has three main lines exiting it. One heads toward Bakers Summit, one toward New Enterprise and the other toward Woodbury. The equipment in the substation transforms the voltages to the cooperative's system voltage and it also regulates the voltage levels going to members. There are breakers that also open when a fault occurs on the line near the substation.

Routine substation maintenance includes monthly visual checks and readings, annual transformer oil testing and periodic change-outs of breakers. The reason for this planned interruption was to replace a 25-foot timber that had deteriorated, as well as eliminate obsolete equipment. The timber was replaced with a fiberglass beam made by Creative Pultrusions. A few lightning arrestors were changed out and various connections were tightened. These photos show employees at work on the project. ☀





Use caution around electric meters and equipment

Electric meters, poles, and lines keep our electric system running smoothly, but they are often overlooked and even abused. New Enterprise REC urges everyone to stay away from and be respectful of utility equipment in order to keep electrical systems running safely and reliably. Also:

- ▶ Never try to cut or trim trees that appear to be growing into power lines. Contact New Enterprise REC. We have professionals trained to safely cut and trim trees for electric line clearances.
- ▶ Don't post flyers or posters on electric poles. Damage to the poles can create a dangerous situation for those around them and cause outages affecting many others. Posters, nails, and staples can make it dangerous or impossible for linemen to climb the poles if needed. Protruding nails can damage the linemen's rubber gloves, which protect them from being electrocuted.
- ▶ Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground wire, pipes, and cables. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- ▶ Keep areas around all electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op 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

Each substation serves 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 down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

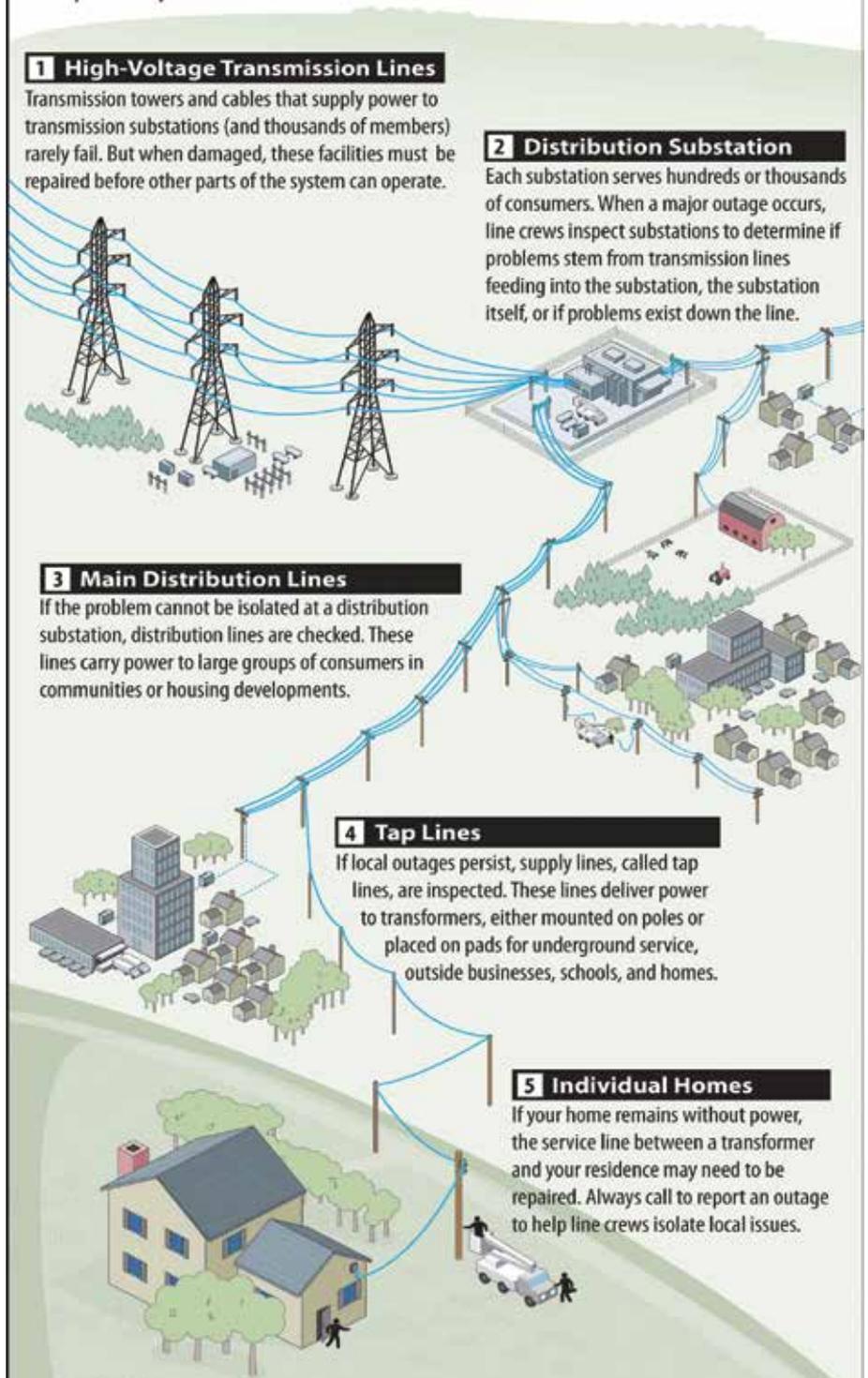
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, 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.

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 issues.



graphic by Funnell Inc.