

The Energy Line

Energy information for the customers of Wellsboro Electric

From the President & CEO

Wildlife & Wires

I hope you are enjoying another fantastic fall here in Canyon Country. From fall foliage to sports afield to Penn State football, autumn has a lot to offer and has always been one of my favorite times of year.

It is also the time of year when we can experience power interruptions on a picture-perfect day.

When strong winds whip through the area or a wet, heavy snow falls, most people realize there is increased potential for a power outage. They have a harder time understanding how they can lose electric service when it's calm and sunny outside.

Often the culprits are our furred and feathered friends. Industry experts estimate animal contact is the cause of about 25 percent of all power outages. In our area, animal contact usually involves birds and squirrels, although raccoons, bears, and even snakes have been known to cause power interruptions.

Animal contact is a threat to the reliability of our electric distribution system, and likewise, our system can be seen as a hazard to some species of wildlife. But it's not just our local lines that are susceptible to animal-related interruptions. Some of the interruptions our customers experience over the course of the year stem from problems with the transmission lines that bring power into the WECO system. We suspect some of these blinks and outages are also caused by animals, primarily birds.

Most of us who live in this area have noticed that in late summer and throughout the fall, birds start to gather in preparation for migration. A common sight along rural roads this time of year is a line of birds sitting atop electric lines.

Birds can perch on an energized line without injury because they don't complete a path to ground. A blink or line outage may occur, however, when a group of birds takes flight simultaneously. This sudden release of weight can create enough movement of the energized wire to cause it to contact a grounded conductor or component, creating a momentary loss of power.

Another typical occurrence would be when a bird perches atop a pole transformer and brushes its wing against an energized lead wire. This typically results in a blink or an outage, as well as electrocution for the bird.

We keep in mind the potential for animal contact when we select our equipment and construct our line. New transformer installations include insulated animal guards. In some areas we have constructed nesting platforms to encourage birds, particularly osprey, from nesting away from energized equipment.

A clear right-of-way is also important in our efforts to reduce animal contact. Keeping vegetation away from our lines helps prevent squirrels from jumping from tree limbs to our poles.

Our customers can help reduce animal contact by keeping bird feeders away from poles and by cooperating with our right-of-way clearing efforts. While trees, birds and animals are a part of our rural landscape, we need to work together so that they don't interfere with safe and reliable electric service.

Have a great fall and a wonderful holiday season. Until next time...



Craig Eccher



Wellsboro Electric

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...In this issue

Be prepared for winter outages
Even out your monthly payments
Help your neighbors in need

**Energize
the
holidays
with a
Wellsboro Electric
gift certificate.
Call 724-3516 for
details.**



A big bang for a buck



Wellsboro Electric makes it easy for customers to help out your neighbors through our \$1 Energy Fund.

By simply adding one dollar to your monthly electric bill, you can help neighbors in need right here in the Wellsboro area.

All donations are matched by Wellsboro Electric, and 100 percent of those contributions are used to provide energy grants to needy families in Wellsboro Electric's service territory.

With your help, the fund has provided over \$8,900 to 41 families so far this year.

To begin contributing to the fund, simply designate your tax-deductible contribution amount on the return stub of this month's electric bill. You may stop your donation at any time simply by notifying us in writing.

If you are currently contributing to this fund and would like to increase your donation amount, please contact us at 724-3516.

Let budget billing even out payments

You can avoid monthly fluctuations in your electric bill by signing up for Wellsboro Electric's Budget Billing plan.

The program allows you to level out your monthly payments throughout the year. Your payment amount is calculated based on the average of your electric bills for the previous 12 months.

If you are interested in setting up a budget billing plan for your account, please contact our office.

Weathering a winter power outage

We do our best to keep a steady flow of power to your homes and businesses. Unfortunately, Mother Nature doesn't always cooperate.

When severe winter storms cause widespread power outages, there is always the potential that you could be in the dark for an extended period of time. Here are some tips for weathering a wintertime loss of power:

- Before calling to report an outage, check your home's panel box — a blown fuse or tripped circuit breaker could be at fault.
- If you've determined that the source of the interruption is outside your home, call Wellsboro Electric immediately at 570-724-3516.
- If you come across downed electric lines, always assume they are live and stay away from them. Call us to report the downed wires.
- If you are without power for more than a few minutes, unplug or turn off all electric appliances and equipment. This prevents your circuits from being overloaded if refrigerators, televisions and other appliances come on simultaneously when power is restored. Keep a lamp turned on so you know when power has been restored.
- To prevent food from spoiling, keep your refrigerator or freezer doors closed. If door seals are tight, your food should be safe for several hours.
- Hang blankets over windows and doorways for additional insulation and try to confine your activities to a well-insulated room.
- Dress warmly and layer your clothing.
- Remember to check on any neighbors who may have special needs.

Pack away an outage survival kit

Power outages are particularly challenging — and potentially dangerous — during the winter months when accompanied by severe weather.

A home survival kit and emergency food and water supply can go a long way toward ensuring your safety during long outages. Be sure to have the following items on hand in the event of a winter outage:

- ✓ Battery-powered radio, flashlights and extra batteries
- ✓ Manual can and bottle opener
- ✓ Cellular or standard telephone that does not require electricity in order to function.
- ✓ First-aid kit, medications and prescriptions
- ✓ Three to five-day supply of non-perishable foods that need little or no cooking.
- ✓ Water: One gallon per person per day for drinking, cooking, washing and sanitation.
- ✓ Personal hygiene and sanitary supplies, diapers
- ✓ Ice chest and ice or frozen ice packs
- ✓ Camp stove or canned-heat stove and fuel for three to five days
- ✓ Candles and matches or a lighter

Tired of Writing Checks? Try Easy Pay

Your Wellsboro Electric bill can be deducted from your bank account each month through our Easy Pay automatic bill-payment program. By participating, you can avoid the hassle of searching for stamps, writing checks and worrying about whether your payment arrives on time. Call our office or stop by to become an Easy Pay customer.

Address changing? Put it in writing, please.

If your address has changed due to a move or 911 re-addressing, please write your new address on the back of your payment stub and return with payment. Because of the numerous address changes, we ask customers to please refrain from calling the office to report their new addresses.