

THE ENERGY LINE



Energy information for the customers of Wellsboro Electric



Barney Farnsworth
President & CEO

2020 a year of big achievements and challenges

With the end of a very challenging but productive year at hand, I'm pleased to provide an update on key projects Wellsboro Electric completed in 2020 along with work we'll be performing in the new year and beyond.

COVID has made this a difficult and trying year for everyone. If you've been struggling to keep up with your electric bill, I'd encourage you to contact our office to learn about payment plans we offer, as well as programs, such as Dollar Energy Fund and LIHEAP, that provide energy assistance to those in need. More information about these two programs can be found on the flip side of this newsletter.

Despite the pandemic, we were able to complete a multi-year reliability project this fall that involved construction of a new transmission line from Niles Valley to our Buena Vista Street substation and corresponding upgrades to our substation. The new 115,000 volt transmission line was energized in September, and we've already seen an increase in reliability across the entire WECO territory as a result of the project. Many of the blinks we were experiencing on our system have all but gone away since we moved to the new transmission feed.

With that major project in the books, we're now moving our entire focus to distribution system enhancements. There are two projects we'll be focused on in 2021. The first involves adding special devices called automatic reclosers on most if not all of our circuits over the next year. Reclosers help clear momentary faults, or blinks, on the system before totally taking customers out of power. They are used to replace traditional fuses, which blow immediately due to a fault. A momentary fault can be caused by a bird, squirrel or tree making

brief contact with our lines. When this momentary fault occurs, the recloser opens, causing a momentary outage or blink. If the fault was truly momentary, when the automatic recloser resets, the line returns to an energized state. However, if after three attempts at reclosing, the fault remains on the line, the recloser will remain open until our linemen can make the necessary repairs. A permanent fault would be caused when a tree remains on the line or wires fall to the ground. In those cases, we want the power to remain de-energized to keep customers safe.

The second project involves replacing old porcelain equipment on our system that has begun failing in recent years. Porcelain equipment is being replaced with new polymer technology. Adding the reclosers and replacing the porcelain equipment will take 1 to 2 years to complete and will further help reduce outages on our system.

We will continue focusing on pole replacements and increased tree trimming as additional steps to improve reliability and keep your lights on. In 2020, we completed 82 miles of trimming and replaced about 300 poles. These maintenance activities are essential to improved reliability, especially with the patterns of wetter weather and gustier winds we've experienced in recent years.

Long-term plans include building what we call "loops" in strategic locations on the system that will enable us to keep more customers with power while we're doing routine work and upgrades on our system. It will also enable us to get customers back on quicker in the future during outages caused by storms, tree contacts or motor vehicle accidents. The loops are in the works but take significant time for planning, acquiring the necessary rights of way and completing the work. Some of the loop projects will take multiple years to complete.

Wishing all of our customers a safe winter and a happy holiday season.

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SmartHub offers account management at your fingertips

SmartHub lets you manage all aspects of your Wellsboro Electric account online or with your mobile device.



With SmartHub, you can:

- View bills online
- View your billing history
- Change account information
- Pay your bill online (*third party vendor fee applies*)
- Receive billing and high/low energy use notifications
- Sign up for Easy Pay, our automatic payment program
- Monitor daily electric use.
- Report outages

To create a SmartHub account, go to www.wellsboroelectric.com, click on the SmartHub link and follow the on-screen instructions. SmartHub also features a mobile application available for Android and iOS smartphones and tablets. Visit your app store for a free download.

Internet survey request

Develop Tioga is conducting a broadband survey across Tioga and Potter counties. The survey will remain open until Dec. 22, and Wellsboro Electric customers are encouraged to participate to provide insight into the internet needs of the region.

This survey will help determine where gaps exist in broadband service and how best to develop a plan to close those gaps.

The survey can be found at <https://arcg.is/1HXDfT>. Additional information is available at developotioga.org.

Paper copies of the survey are available by contacting Develop Tioga at (570) 723-8232.

You can help neighbors in need during these challenging times

Financial hardships have caused many families in our region to struggle to keep up with their energy bills.

You can assist those impacted by job loss or other financial hardship during these challenging times by participating in Wellsboro Electric's Dollar Energy Fund. By adding one dollar or more to your electric bill each month, you will be helping your neighbors in the Wellsboro area.

Your tax-deductible contribution to the Dollar Energy Fund is matched by Wellsboro Electric, and 100 percent of the contributions are used to provide energy assistance grants to families in WECO's territory.

To participate, check the Dollar Energy Fund box on your electric bill, enter your contribution amount, and return it to Wellsboro Electric.



Need help paying your heating bill?

If you need help paying your heating bill or have a heating emergency, help may be available to you through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The program provides energy-assistance grants to help low-income households pay their heating bills through the winter. Crisis grants are also available to help those who have emergency situations in which they are in danger of being without heat.

If you have a heating emergency, or for more information about LIHEAP, call the Tioga County Assistance Office at 570-724-4051 or the toll-free LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095. You can also apply for energy assistance online at: www.compass.state.pa.us.

2021 tree-trimming work set to begin

Work to trim trees and clear vegetation on Wellsboro Electric rights of way will resume in the spring of 2021

Jaflo Inc. has been awarded a 3-year contract to perform right-of-way maintenance on the Wellsboro system, beginning in 2021.

Jaflo will be trimming and clearing approximately 75 miles of right-of-way in 2021. Crews will be primarily working along Route 6 and intersecting roads, from the eastern portion of Wellsboro Borough east to the Whitneyville area.

Right-of-way maintenance helps increase the reliability of electric service by establishing a buffer between the trees and electric lines, a common source of power interruptions due to rain and wind.

A Jaflo representative will be visiting property owners prior to beginning work in the areas to be trimmed. Customers with questions about the right-of-way program may contact Tyler Mead, WECO director of operations, by calling (570)724-3516.