

BREMCO on High Alert for Storm

Written by Steve Frank

Tuesday, 11 February 2014 09:56

Line technicians and all employees of Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation are on high alert, ready to respond should outages occur as a result of a major storm event predicted for the cooperative's service area. Blue Ridge Electric reminds members to report outages to the cooperative's PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383.

In preparation for snow accumulations and possible freezing rain and sleet, line crews are double-checking equipment and topping off the gas tanks of service fleet vehicles. Member services staff and other employees are also preparing and ready to assist members.

The cooperative reminds the public to be aware of the dangers of downed power lines which can result from severe weather, especially if icing occurs. Vehicles skidding and colliding into power poles can also cause downed power lines. The public is advised to stay far away from downed power lines because they can still be energized and therefore dangerous or even deadly. No one except a trained line technician should handle or be near a downed power line. The public is asked to report downed power lines by calling any local Blue Ridge Electric office. Blue Ridge Electric offers members the following emergency planning tips to help prepare for outages:

Keep the following emergency supplies on hand:

- A battery operated radio and fresh batteries for the latest weather and power restoration updates
- Flashlights, along with extra batteries
- Water for drinking and cooking.
- Nonperishable food
- Manual can opener
- Battery operated clock
- Extra blankets, sleeping bags, quilts
- Paper plates, cups, and utensils
- A grill for cooking (along with extra supplies). Be sure to use the grill, as well as gas stoves, outside your home in a well-ventilated area to avoid a fire hazard or dangerous fumes of carbon monoxide!!

If your power is interrupted, you should:

- Report the outage by calling PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383
- Keep warm by layering your cloths and using blankets
- Preserve heat by closing off any unused rooms in your house.
- Guard against spoiled food by refraining from opening your refrigerator or freezer door
- Prevent a hazardous situation by making sure your range and oven are turned off.
- If you use a portable generator, prevent a fatality or injury by making sure generators are safely connected. Back-feed into the utility system from improperly installed generators can harm or even kill a line technician who is working on power restoration. Improperly installed generators can also damage your appliances. Be sure a qualified, licensed electrician installs a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch to connect the generator to the electrical system. This is required by the National Electrical Code, and the generator connection must also meet local ordinances. Contact a licensed electrician for more information.