

PowerLines

YOUR CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS CONNECTION

**Central Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative



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A Blink or a Surge

BY MATT BOSHAW
CEO & General Manager

As we enter March, and hopefully some nice spring weather, more outdoor activities can impact your electric service, such as trees blooming and wildlife moving. Why do these things matter to your electric service though? In the case of the trees, it is as simple as the wind having a greater impact on a tree with leaves than a tree without. Even with the effort we made to reclaim our rights-of-way by clearing trees from our power lines, trees remain the largest cause of outages on our distribution system. The blooming trees are also home to birds, squirrels and other small wildlife and spring brings greater activity for our furry and feathered friends than the cold and dormant winter.

When designing an electrical distribution system, we take steps to minimize exposure to things that cause power outages. When possible, we locate lines where they are less impacted by things that cause outages. As just mentioned, we actively clear our lines from possible tree contact. We use

wildlife guards designed to limit exposure to the critters and we place protective devices on the lines to interrupt power to as small of an area as possible when the defenses aren't enough. It is these devices that are the reason for the topic of this article, “A Blink or a Surge.”

We use a combination of devices on our lines designed to interrupt power in the event of a fault condition. Simply put, a fault is anything that creates an unintentional connection between two phase wires or a phase wire and the ground. These faults create a larger current than the system is designed for and our protective devices interrupt the power to protect anything connected to the system from that overcurrent. The two devices we use most commonly to accomplish this are fuses and reclosers. Fuses, like a circuit breaker in your home, open until the overcurrent is removed and the fuse is reset. They are used to protect smaller areas from a sustained fault condition. The recloser, as its name suggests, is a device used to open briefly during a fault allowing for a transient condition to clear itself and automatically restore

Continued on page 2

the power, creating a short interruption of power or a blink. A transient condition can be caused by a small falling branch, a squirrel and other things that may create a fault and then fall away. Fault conditions can be the source of a surge and therefore, our protective devices interrupt those resulting in a blink rather than a surge.

Surges can originate from some of the things I have described or something more dramatic and powerful, like lightning strikes. We have lightning arresting devices as well to further protect our system and your homes. Other sources of surges can originate within your home. Overloading a circuit can create a surge that will usually trip a circuit breaker or blow a fuse in your home limiting the exposure to the single circuit.

A blink and a surge can look very similar to those that originate outside your home so we understand the confusion. You may see lights flicker or go out and come back on, or surge suppressors can operate and you might have to reset a clock. The difference really lies in the fact that a blink created by devices on our system intentionally interrupts power flow to protect equipment from surges. Surges on the other hand are unplanned overvoltages that exceed the capacity of devices and can cause damage.

In addition to the steps we have taken to protect the electrical system and, by extension your homes, you can take steps to insulate your home from potential harm. Ensuring your electrical panel and service entrance are appropriately grounded is a big step toward protecting your home. This provides a path for the surge to get to the ground without going through your home. Other items that can help are making sure your wiring is up to code and that outlets and switches are safely installed. A simple continuity tester can provide initial information for outlets. High quality, appropriately sized and regularly replaced surge suppressors provide an easy and cost effective way to further protect specific sensitive devices, like televisions and computers. As with anything electrical in your home, we recommend hiring a

reputable, licensed electrician to ensure safety.

I hope I have provided some valuable information regarding the difference between a surge and a blink as well as offering steps you can take to protect your home and equipment. As always, we recommend and welcome that you call us with any questions or concerns you might have about surges or blinks. Your call provides us with the opportunity to address your concerns, check our service connection for potential issues and take action if needed. The sooner issues are addressed, the less impact they can have.



MANAGEMENT TEAM

Matthew P. Boshaw

CEO & General Manager

Chester Conti

Director of Finance and Accounting/CFO

Lisa A. Hoover

Director of Member Services

Christopher W. Kossman

Director of Information Technology

Fred E. Terwilliger

Assistant General Manager/COO



Congratulations to the 2023 Holiday Coloring Contest Winners!

Thank you to the 63 kids who participated in our 2023 Holiday Coloring Contest!



Jayden Schettler, age 6
of Shippenville



Grace Clark, age 10
of Polk



Thomas Allio, age 12,
of Tionesta

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Flooding

by Dylan Linke, Manager of Safety and Loss Control

Most of CEC’s service territory is in the hills of the Appalachian Mountain region. Rainfall or snow melt at a higher elevation can create floods by filling dry ravines with rushing water. Flash floods come quickly and can demolish a car.

More than half of flood fatalities happen on the road. People can drown when the water is deeper than expected or when they are caught in hidden debris. The engine can stop when it gets wet or the current can sweep the vehicle off the road. Follow these precautions to keep you safe.

Listen to weather and flood warnings and stay away from flood areas. If you must go somewhere, check with your local news station to see what areas to avoid. Don’t drive or walk through a flooded area, choose another path. Even a few inches of rushing water can knock you off your feet.

Be extremely careful if you come across water over a road. Shallow water can easily conceal a washout of a road or bridge and debris. Additional caution should be taken when traveling at night.

Although each emergency is unique, generally the best advice is to get out of your vehicle as soon as it stalls in floodwater. Don’t keep trying to start the vehicle or attempt to move a stalled vehicle. Just six inches of water can cause the car to go out of control and at 18 inches the vehicle will begin to float.

Once you’re out of the vehicle, head for high ground quickly and carefully.

Driving dangers are just one of the many serious hazards related to floods. Downed power lines, broken utility poles, unstable building structures, debris and landslides are also flood-related hazards to be aware of.

If you live in a flood-prone area, be prepared. Identify at least two escape routes and keep emergency supplies packed. It is also important to leave home early if you must get out rather than waiting until travel is dangerous.

Flooding is one of the most common disasters in this country, second only to fire. Learn about the flood history in your area and be prepared to travel to safety if necessary.

The information in this article was sourced from the National Weather Service and NHTSA.



PREPARATION MATTERS.

65% of Americans don't feel prepared for a natural disaster.

91% of Americans have or will experience a natural disaster.



Employee Spotlight: Tarra Stefanacci



What is something you’re most proud of? Buying my first house at 19.



What is one fun fact about yourself? I love to cook and bake.



What do you enjoy doing outside of work? I love to hunt with my dad and friends.



What is your favorite family tradition? Eating Italian food for Christmas.



Do you have any pets? I have two dogs. I have a basset hound named Tucker and a German shorthaired pointer named Benelli.

Role: Member Service Representative

Employee Since: March 2023

www.central.coop



CEC's Safety City tabletop display.

Concern For Community in Action

CEC operates according to a set of principles that all electric cooperatives follow. One of the principles is “Concern for Community.” The co-op has many programs that work to better our community. Two of these programs, Safety City and First Responders Electrical Hazards Training, specifically focus on educating the community about electricity and the dangers associated with it.

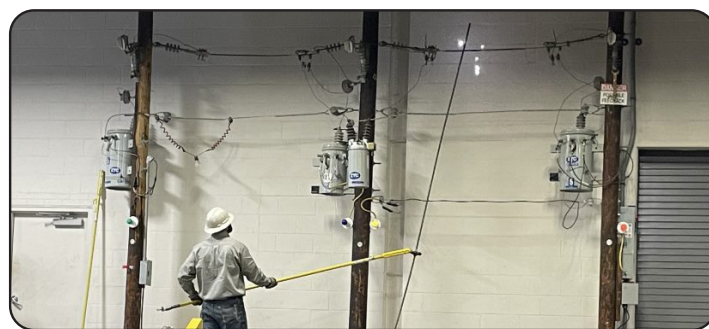
Safety City

Safety City explains how electricity works to third-and-forth-grade students by using a portable neighborhood (pictured above) equipped with buildings, homes, people, power lines and moving props. The tabletop unit allows our team of Safety City employees to teach schools, scout groups and other organizations about the benefits and dangers of electricity. Each scenario in the demonstration is something the students could see living in a rural area similar to CEC’s service territory. This presentation is a great way to supplement the students’ electricity lesson or unit.

First Responders

CEC appreciates our local first responders and the selfless dedication they show to our communities. Our First Responders program focuses on educating our community’s emergency services personnel about the dangers they may encounter while on the job or volunteering. The presentation is accompanied by our Hot Line Demonstration, which uses real electrical equipment to show the hazards and operations of a high voltage electrical distribution system (pictured in the top right.)

This year’s training will take place at CEC on Apr. 23 from 6 - 8 p.m. Please reserve your spot by Apr. 12.



CEC's Hot Line Demonstration.

Impact

While our programs mostly educate elementary-aged students and first responders, we have also had interest from the community in modified presentations when possible. School bus drivers and several groups of township officials have received modified versions of our First Responders Electrical Hazards Training. Additionally, we’ve modified Safety City to fit an older group of students.

CEC’s Safety City and First Responders programs have been quite a success in recent years. In fact, our employees have educated over 3,600 students and over 300 first responders about electrical safety within the past two years!

An added benefit of these programs is there is no cost to the membership. These programs are funded entirely by unclaimed capital credits.

If you are interested in scheduling a Safety City presentation or attending our First Responders training, please submit a form for the respective program on our website or call Kessa Moore at 800-521-0570 x2152.

by Kessa Moore, Communication Specialist



High Usage

by Connie Long, Member Energy Specialist

Often, our members will call to discuss increased charges on their bills or high usage concerns as referred to at CEC. In other words, high usage concerns are calls made due to members being concerned about high usage because there seems to be no explanation for the increase. The best thing to do is to give us a call should this be something you experience.

When your call is escalated to me, we will explore things that could be impacting your usage. First, we will explore the implications of the time of year.

- **Is your heat source electric and how warm do you keep it?** CEC recommends turning your thermostat down at night and when you are not home to keep your usage lower. This is emphasized often, so we hope it doesn't sound like a broken record yet!

- **Is it summertime and is your air conditioning and pool pump running?** Smart or programmable thermostats can help reduce the usage of air conditioning.

Remember to only run the pool pump when needed.

If our findings do not point to the time of year, there are still things we can explore by taking a deeper look at your usage. We can do this because our meters take readings every hour and send the data to us once a day. This data is helpful in identifying the exact day the usage went up and what time of day the usage is the highest. Often, this information helps members realize what may have changed in their home. Recently purchased space heaters and dehumidifiers are examples of changes that have caused higher usage for members. Unfortunately, the change can also be something more severe, like a broken or cracked water line that is causing a water pump or hot water heater to continuously run. All the data described here is available for you to review in SmartHub at any time!

The other nice feature of SmartHub is it shows the daily average temperature. So, we can compare the temperature to your usage and determine if a hot or cool stretch caused your heating or cooling unit to run more often than normal.

Unfortunately, there isn't a "one-fits-all answer" when it comes to usage since every home and lifestyle is different. So, if your usage goes up significantly and you aren't sure why, check SmartHub or give us a call.

Attention High School Seniors: 2024 PREA Scholarships

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Scholarship Trust Fund in Memory of William F. Matson is offering scholarships to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are members or employees of Pennsylvania electric cooperatives. At least five, \$1,000 one-time scholarships will be awarded.

The Jody Loudenslager Scholarship is available to any college-bound or current college student who participated in the PREA Youth Tour program.

Requirements for both scholarships are as follows:

1. Applicants must furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable) and financial aid information
2. All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com no later than May 3, 2024.

Download the application at www.prea.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

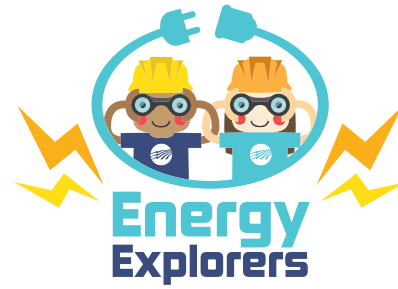
Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening to ensure it's clean. Use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.



WINTER SAFETY WORD SEARCH

March 2024



Did you know most home fires happen during colder months? Play it safe this winter season.

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the blue words in the puzzle.

A	P	I	R	P	A	J	G	F	W	D	C	Q	T	W
U	L	B	S	G	W	N	N	P	T	S	A	T	A	T
R	L	A	Y	P	J	I	U	Q	P	Q	N	G	E	O
C	T	W	R	Y	J	D	X	A	R	X	D	B	L	Z
J	F	T	P	M	K	G	C	I	B	T	L	T	C	F
X	B	K	Y	Z	S	E	M	B	Q	G	E	B	D	B
G	B	W	B	Z	H	K	T	Z	H	J	H	R	M	X
C	V	X	J	E	B	X	S	X	B	Q	C	K	V	A
V	I	M	A	B	O	K	A	T	C	S	I	K	F	E
X	Y	T	Q	Y	K	J	S	F	N	Q	V	T	J	W
L	E	V	J	A	N	V	U	W	C	B	A	P	A	W
R	T	R	E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	I	C	S	O
W	Z	B	K	R	Y	X	S	B	V	A	Q	O	U	E
S	D	R	O	C	N	O	I	S	N	E	T	X	E	P
I	F	J	R	W	K	J	B	Q	P	U	B	D	T	Z

Never overload electrical outlets with too many **electronics**.

Test smoke and carbon monoxide **alarms** every month.

Never leave a **candle** burning in an empty room.

Keep flammable items at least three feet away from a **space heater**.

Extension cords should only be used temporarily. Damaged or frayed cords should be thrown away.

From the Kitchen of:
Dorothy L. Fair

RECIPE: **MUSHROOM ZUCCHINI CASSEROLE**



INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups zucchini, cubed
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 15 mushrooms, sliced
- 1 can creamed mushroom soup
- 1/2 package chicken flavored stuffing

INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Stir and fry zucchini, carrots, green peppers, and onion in butter. Add the mushroom soup and 1/2 package of stuffing mix. Pour into a 9x12 pan and bake for 25 minutes.



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From left (back row): Robert Smith, President, Butler County; Jody Weaver, Clarion County; **(middle)** Ken Durrett, Butler County; Rick Weaver, Clarion County; John Campbell, Vice President, Forest County; **(front)** Nancy Lendyak, Armstrong County; Ken Etzel, Venango County; and Althea Smith, Secretary/Treasurer, Venango County.

 central.coop/meet-your-directors

MISSION: CEC safely provides reliable and competitively priced electricity to our consumer-members and was established by and is committed to the communities we serve.

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www.central.coop

Newsletter Editor: Kessa Moore

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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Read past issues of Power Lines and stay up to date on CEC news.

