

Lines Clear, Lights On

Right-of-Way Department focuses on tree trimming to improve safety and reliability.

Boone Electric Cooperative's Right-of-Way Department means business when it comes to keeping your lights on. BEC tree trimmers and its contract crews have gotten more aggressive lately to tackle trees growing into power lines. And they've needed to because of the tremendous growing seasons we've experienced the past two years with all of the rain we've had. The cooperative is focusing on tree trimming and removal of trees around power lines to ensure public safety, to improve reliability and to decrease costs.

Public Safety

Trees growing into power lines are dangerous - dangerous to the public, our employees and especially to children climbing in them. Unfortunately, we have read stories of kids being electrocuted while playing in a tree and BEC does not want that to happen to anyone. Above anything else, safety comes first.

Fewer Outages

There is no question that trimming trees to create a wide, clear path around power lines reduces the number of outages. More outages are caused by trees than any other factor.

Many trees planted too close to the power lines will be removed rather than trimmed. Trimmed trees set off limb shoots that grow much faster than a regular limb. Too soon those shoots interfere with the power lines. If a tree is removed, the landowner is then able to request a tree through our Tree Replacement Program.

Shorter Outage Times

Trimming and removing trees helps lessen outage times in two ways. First, trees farther away from the power line are less likely to bring down a line in a storm, that is unless they are "danger trees." Danger trees are trees that are so tall they still pose a threat to power lines.

The new policy also shortens outage times by making it easier for line crews to repair lines that are knocked down by a



The trees under this three-phase distribution line (above) will soon be removed. Lines in this condition will take longer to restore following an outage. The tree at right was trimmed two years ago. However, fast-growing shoots have already grown past the height of the power lines.



storm. Outage times can be much longer if linemen have to first cut away fallen tree limbs and tree trunks in order to pull the power lines out of a brush- or tree-covered right of way.

Decreased costs

Boone Electric owns 2,041 miles of overhead power lines. The goal is to have our in-house crews and contract crews cover every mile of line on a five-year rotation. Clearing a wide path around the power lines on the first pass allows crews to continue on schedule rather than backtrack to areas recently trimmed to fix problem spots. Each time crews have to go back to an area before five years have passed, it increases the co-op's costs.

Please call the cooperative if there is a tree on your property that interferes with power lines, or you think will interfere in the near future. A BEC crew will come to remove the tree or trim it away from the power lines.

Boone Electric appreciates the cooperation of the entire membership regarding the more aggressive tree-trimming policy.

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Community Support Programs You Can Add to Your Bill

Operation Round-Up
Helps fund the Boone Electric Community Trust, which provides financial assistance to charitable organizations in BEC's service territory.

C.A.S.H.
Provides utility assistance to low-income senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Funds administered by City/County Health Department.

H.E.L.P.
Provides utility assistance to low-income families with children. Funds administered by City/County Health Department.



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Recognizing Our Own

Boone Electric employees are recognized by their peers.



Denise Scott, Tom Quintana, Lacey Wortmann, Keith Strawn and Jim Goodnight were all recognized for their quality of service in 2009.

Several Boone Electric Cooperative employees were recognized with awards at an all-employee training session in January. The employees were honored by their co-workers for their efforts to assist the membership and fellow employees throughout 2009.

Receiving recognition were:

Craig McBride Distinguished Service Award & Employee of the Year in an Operational Field --
Keith Strawn, Overhead Construction Foreman

Outstanding Community Service --
Tom Quintana, Utility Service Worker

Outstanding Customer Service --
Denise Scott, Receptionist

Employee of the Year Office Support --
Lacey Wortmann, Operations Dispatcher

Supervisor of the Year --
Jim Goodnight, Operations Manager



Four employees were recognized with a plaque for their years of service to the cooperative. Terry Jennings (left) was recognized for 35 years of service to the cooperative, and Doug Gardner (middle photo) for 30 years. David Haun and Roger Walker (far right) have each been with BEC for 25 years.

How is Your Money Used?

Answers to your questions about Operation Round Up and how member contributions assist in our local communities.

Every other month the Boone Electric Community Trust Board meets to review and allocate grant applications submitted by non-profit groups throughout our service territory. Since the inception of the Trust in 1997, the board has awarded nearly \$2 million to worthy causes.

But the Community Trust, and Operation Round Up, its main funding source, continues to be a mystery to many members. Hopefully these often-asked questions will clear up some of the confusion:

Q -- How does Operation Round Up work?

A -- Cooperative members voluntarily contribute to the Boone Electric Community Trust by "rounding up" their monthly bill to the next highest dollar amount. Each member's round up amount is never more than 99 cents each month. Added together, the extra change from all participating members makes a huge difference in our communities.

Q -- Who does my money help?

A -- Non-profit groups from around the service territory apply for Trust grants. Among those to receive grants in 2009 were the Central Missouri Food Bank, the Voluntary Action Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and various schools in the area.

Q -- How much will I contribute each year?

A -- Members who round up their bill each month of the year contribute an average of \$6 per year to the Community Trust. That \$6 doesn't seem like a lot. However, the cumulative amount if every Boone Electric member participated is quite large (28,933 members x \$6 = \$173,598).

Q - Could I donate more than the round up amount?

A -- Certainly. Members are welcome to include any additional donation amount with their bill, then noting it so our Customer Service Representatives know to apply the money to Operation Round Up and the Community Trust. Members can also write a separate check to donate to the fund. This past December a number of members donated their capital credit checks to the Trust.

Q -- Who decides how the money is distributed?

A -- The Boone Electric Community Trust has its own Board of Directors, separate from the Cooperative's Board. The Trust Board meets bi-monthly to review grant requests and award any funding they deem appropriate. The group is made up of community members throughout Boone County, both BEC members and non-BEC members.

Q -- How does my non-profit group apply for a Trust grant?

A -- Non-profit groups are welcome to print the Trust application from the cooperative website at www.booneelectric.coop. Or e-mail comments@booneelectric.com to receive an electronic copy of the application.

Visit the website for a schedule of application deadlines and meeting dates.

Q -- Are there guidelines for how my group uses grant money?

A -- Yes. Groups must request funding for specific items. Grants are not awarded for operating expenses such as salaries or rent. Find a complete set of guidelines at the cooperative's website, www.booneelectric.coop.



We Help You Become More Efficient

BEC paid more than \$300,000 in energy efficiency rebates in 2009.



Todd Culley
General Manager/
CEO

Last year Boone Electric Cooperative, jointly with Associated Electric Cooperative Inc., our power supplier, provided more than \$309,000 to members in energy efficiency rebates.

You've read in this newsletter and its sister publication, *Rural Missouri*, how we encourage BEC members to make their homes airtight. We encourage members to buy "Energy Star®" when replacing appliances, and to watch out for phantom loads around their home. There are a number of things members can do, and we've written about most all of them.

As you can see by the rebate amount from 2009, we are putting our money where our mouth is, literally.

Most of the money was paid to members who installed efficient heating and cooling systems. Fifty four BEC members installed a ground source heat pump, the most efficient system available for heating and cooling their homes. They each received a \$750 per ton rebate. (A ton is a measurement of the capacity to move heat).

Those members who install a Dual Fuel system (with a gas furnace backup), receive a \$450 per ton rebate. More than 100 members took advantage of this savings. (Each of these new systems must meet guidelines.)

The rebates are not just for new homes. Existing homes retrofitted with a ground source heat pump or Dual Fuel system also qualify.

Early in 2009 the cooperative introduced the Home Performance with Energy Star program, which provides rebates for various home efficiency upgrades. Among other things, members can receive money to help offset the cost of adding insulation, insulating water pipes, and even upgrading windows.

Another of the rebate programs rewards members for replacing less efficient dishwashers and washing machines with Energy Star® models.



The Home Performance with Energy Star program helps members pay for energy efficiency upgrades such as added insulation.

You might ask why we give so much money to members. It's actually quite simple. By reducing instantaneous "demand" on our system, we stretch our resources farther and help reduce the need for constructing new, very expensive, generation resources. In the long run, this helps minimize rate pressure resulting from increased capitalization costs for those new generation assets. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, higher efficiency heating and cooling equipment, combined with tightening the home, reduces your electric bill!

As a not-for-profit cooperative, we are here to serve you by improving the quality of your life through the efficient use of electricity. Call us for answers to your energy efficiency questions, and thanks again for the opportunity to provide energy to you.



Touchstone Energy

Boone Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of local, member-owned electric cooperatives providing a high standard of service to customers large and small.

In order to qualify as a Touchstone Energy partner, electric cooperatives must be active members of their community and be dedicated to serving all customers with integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to their community.