

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



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2022 ENDS WITH CRAZY OUTAGES

By **TYE WILLIAMS** | *Manager*

I started writing this article with -55F wind chills just before Christmas, and by the time I finished, our linemen had been through two tough days dealing with outages.

The first was just before Christmas, when the wind was blowing 40 mph, and the temperature was 30 below zero. In those conditions, our lines have a high probability of galloping and whipping, especially when ice buildup starts to break off of the lines. The linemen patrolled as much of our transmission line from Ekalaka to Baker as possible, but the snow drifts severely impeded their progress north and they had to turn back. As the winds died down toward the early evening, the supplier's breaker held, and power was restored. We know wind and ice will always be our enemy, so we currently have plans to install two different solutions to help minimize their effects in the coming construction season.

The day after Christmas was a different story, as the weather had calmed down, temperatures had risen and there was not a breath of wind in the air. So, when the



issue and took safety precautions to inspect the site. As it turned out, the bypass switch had an internal fault, which caused it to completely fail. This is an extremely rare occurrence, and we currently have the unit at a repair facility to determine the cause of the fault and repair the unit. With the lengthy material lead-time issues, our temporary solution will be in place for months at a minimum. As we know more, we will relate the information to the membership so you are aware of any planned outages we will have to fully repair the substation.

We had a crazy ending to 2022 with outages, but overall, Southeast Electric Cooperative had a good year financially, and a big part was due to our power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative. While a lot of Generation and Transmis-

sion suppliers raised rates in 2022 or are raising them for 2023, Basin was able to pass along a small decrease to their rates starting in 2023. Basin has set themselves up to take advantage of their "All of the Above" generation plan. Their generation includes coal plants, natural gas plants, wind farms, solar farms and power market purchases/sales. This allows them to hedge different aspects of their plant and geographical location to supply the power needs of customers, and not continuously live on the prices of one commodity for their power supply.

The stability Basin has provided to Southeast has allowed us to keep steady rates for years. Inflation and material shortages over the last two years have put pressure on Southeast to raise rates, but the continued steady power costs and recent cost decrease from Basin have given our board more time to look at rates and rate structure for the future.

If you have any questions, thoughts or concerns, please stop in or call anytime to talk with me. I hope everyone has a successful and productive 2023. RM

GENERATORS CAN BE LIFE-SAVING BUT NEED TO BE USED SAFELY

THE Power went out at 12:45 p.m. and the temperature was reaching a frigid -26 degrees, with -42 windchill. Blizzard conditions and road closures prevented linemen from attending to the lines.

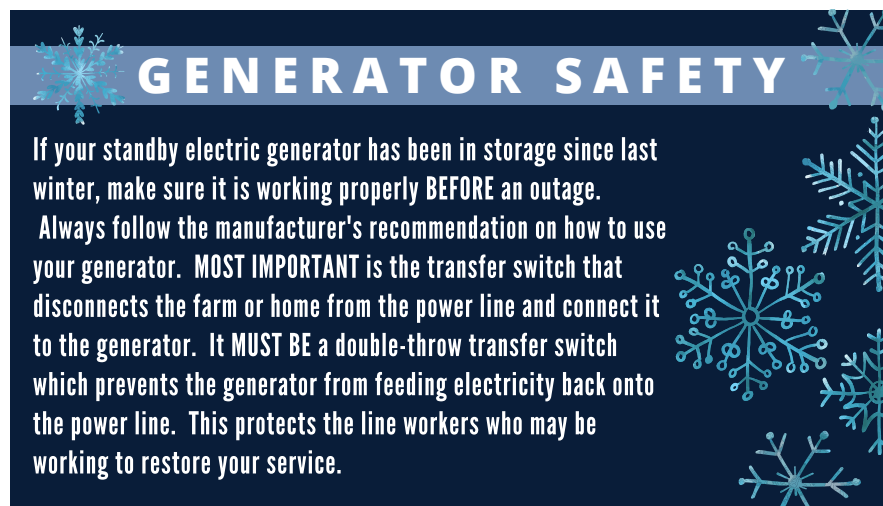
Southeast Electric Cooperative encouraged all members to start generators and Carter County DES set wheels in motion to get people to emergency shelter. One family worried about keeping their house warm so they put the generator in their attached garage, started it up and opened the door to the house.

The safety of you, our members, and our employees is a top priority at Southeast Electric Cooperative, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our line workers to travel and make repairs safely.

Portable electric generators can offer many benefits when a long-term electrical outage occurs due to a storm. However, if generators are not used properly, things could turn deadly.

Follow these tips to prevent misuse of portable electric generators:

- Follow manufacturers' directions for installation and operation.
- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use. This can cause back-feeding along powerlines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line workers making repairs.
- Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- To prevent electric shock, make



GENERATOR SAFETY

If your standby electric generator has been in storage since last winter, make sure it is working properly **BEFORE** an outage.

Always follow the manufacturer's recommendation on how to use your generator. **MOST IMPORTANT** is the transfer switch that disconnects the farm or home from the power line and connect it to the generator. It **MUST BE** a double-throw transfer switch which prevents the generator from feeding electricity back onto the power line. This protects the line workers who may be working to restore your service.

sure your generator is properly grounded. The operation manual should provide correct grounding procedures.

- Operate electric generators or other fuel-powered machines outside, where deadly carbon monoxide fumes cannot enter the home. Use the generator only in a well-ventilated and dry area located away from air intakes to the house. Do not use a generator in an attached garage.

- Do not overload the generator by operating more appliances and equipment than the generator can manage. The operating instructions should have an output rating for the generator.

- Never plug a generator into a household outlet.

- Do not refuel a generator while it is running.

- Only store fuel outside of living areas and away from heat sources such as water heater pilot lights.

- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.

- Keep children and pets away from generators.

- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears, and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not run extension cords under rugs.

- Install carbon-monoxide detectors in your home.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. They verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. With your help in following the tips above, you can keep them safe as well.

Fortunately, for the family above, the power was restored at around 5 p.m. This storm could have had a tragic ending had the power not come on.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit. 