

Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Heavy Rains and Flooding Tests Outage Response

Timeline:

- Labor Day (Monday, August 27) thunder storms move into VEC service area
- 8:30 p.m. first calls come in about power outages throughout the service area
- Crews work all night, all of Tuesday, until dark. Restoration is slowed by flooded and washed-out roads. Some areas remain inaccessible.
- Wednesday crews work from daybreak to after dark restoring power throughout the service area. Especially hard-hit is the Timber Coulee area (between Westby and Coon Valley) where nearly 40 poles went missing due to flooding and had to be replaced.
- Thursday nearly all members are restored with power
- Monday, Sept. 3, The Spring Coulee area (also between Westby and Coon Valley) needed nearly 20 poles replaced due to a second storm

Stats:

- The most members out of power at any one time was about 1,000
- The longest anyone went without power was about 2 1/2 days
- This was not the worst natural disaster Vernon Electric has seen. On July 27, 1998 a windstorm knocked power out to more members for over 4 days from Stoddard to Cashton.
- Vernon Electric Co-op crews received emergency aid from
 - ▲ MiEnergy Cooperative, Rushford, MN
 - ▲ Riverland Energy Cooperative, Arcadia, WI
 - ▲ Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, Eau Claire, WI
 - ▲ Dairyland Power Cooperative, La Crosse, WI
 - ▲ Push, Inc. (underground utility contractor), Rice Lake, WI

See Vernon Electric's Facebook page for more photos and videos of flood recovery efforts and damage (www.Facebook.com/VernonElectric)



Flooded and washed-out roads made it impossible in some locations to get to the lines that needed repaired.



Archie, who lives in the devastated part of Timber Coulee, stopped to talk to one of the crews working nearby. He told them his dog was missing and asked they keep an eye open. Later that day the dog was spotted. The crew put him in the truck for safe keeping until he could be returned. After their hard work was completed the dog was brought home to Archie.



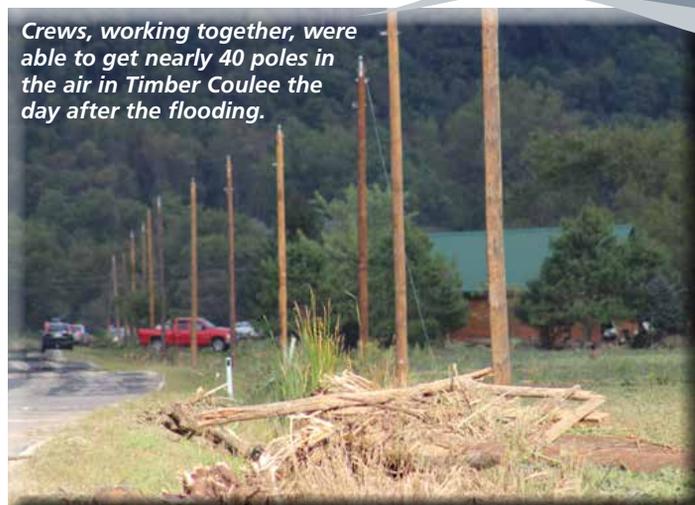
Track vehicles became indispensable to access flooded areas to make repairs. Vernon Electric has one track vehicle and borrowed three more from other co-ops.



CEO, Joe McDonald, flipped burgers in the evenings for the crews on-site of the outage repairs.



Can you see the down pole in this picture? Vernon Electric lost nearly 60 poles to the flooding. Some were never found.



Crews, working together, were able to get nearly 40 poles in the air in Timber Coulee the day after the flooding.

If looking for new household products, look for ones that have earned the ENERGY STAR.

Vernon Electric offers rebates for the following appliances that have earned an energy efficiency, ENERGY STAR rating:

ENERGY STAR Refrigerators	\$75
ENERGY STAR Dehumidifiers	\$25
ENERGY STAR Room Air Conditioners	\$25
ENERGY STAR Clothes Dryer	\$25
Heat Pump Clothes Dryer	\$50
ENERGY STAR Clothes Washers.....	\$75
ENERGY STAR Dish Washer.....	\$25
ENERGY STAR Television	\$25
ENERGY STAR Computer Monitor.....	\$25

Recycling Rebates:

Appliance must be in working order when recycled.

Recycled Freezer.....	\$25
Recycled Refrigerator.....	\$25
Recycled Room Air Conditioner.....	\$25

Rebate forms and details are available by request, visiting our office, or downloadable from our website at vernonelectric.org. Detailed receipts are required with applications. Submit rebate application within three months of purchase.

Protect Yourself from Power Outages

This past summer Vernon Electric Co-op members were hit with many storms packed with high winds, lightning, and lots of rain. As a result, line crews were kept busy – many times on weekends in dark, chaotic conditions. Fortunately, we made it through with no injuries.

Having a reliable power provider, like Vernon Electric, can cause complacency when it comes to being prepared. But power outages do and will happen. Falling trees, animals, lightning, wind, ice, and accidents, will cause unpreventable power outages and we all need to be prepared to avoid expensive losses due to power failure. Here's some ideas:

- Install a battery backup on your sump pump
- If you have a seasonal home or are away often, install moisture, heat, and freeze sensors hooked to an automated calling system that will notify you of problems
- Install a backup generator for critical loads (well, refrigerator, freezer, furnace blower, sump pump). Make sure it is tested at least once per month.

These options may sound expensive and time consuming, but they could save you many thousands of dollars in damage in the long run.



SAFE,
RELIABLE,
AFFORDABLE
ENERGY.

THEN. NOW.
ALWAYS.

We are proud to
power your life.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Beware of Scammers Posing as Utilities

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) said its Consumer Protection Hotline received more than two dozen reports recently from Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) customers complaining about fake utility representatives attempting to extort payments by threatening interruption of service. DATCP said it has also received reports about impostor WE Energies calls. "Regardless of your utility provider, if you receive a similar threatening call about your home or business utility account, hang up and do not engage the caller," the agency advised. As is customary, disconnection is threatened unless immediate payment is made, DATCP said, adding that some scammers try to bolster their credibility by mentioning a work order number, truck number, or phone number. One tactic that should immediately expose a fraudulent call is the threat of bodily harm to coerce payment. DATCP said one caller to its hotline reported such a threat. The department advises:

- A utility may contact consumers by phone if disconnection is imminent but will never demand immediate payment over the phone.
- Demanding payment by prepaid debit card, gift card, or wire transfer is a sure indicator of a scam.
- Scammers can manipulate caller ID to show the local utility company's real name or phone number.
- Consumers should hang up on suspicious callers and initiate their own contact with the utility provider to check account status and report the fraudulent call.

Complaints may be filed at <http://datcp.wi.gov> or e-mailed to datcp@datcp.wi.gov. The Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free number is 1-800-422-7128.