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Butler REC **NEWS**

FROM THE MANAGER

Butler REC Spared from Damage During April Storms

It is my belief that the good Lord was watching out for us the weekend of April 14-15. Everything looked like the cooperative's system and your properties were in the direct path of some violent tornados. It quickly brought back memories of the 1991 tornado in Andover.

In 1991, my family was living just west of Towanda and we witnessed that devastating storm along with several of our friends who were over for a barbecue. We watched as the storm dropped debris from Andover and other communities in our yard. It was headed straight for us, but when it reached the Walnut River it turned and followed it toward the east edge of Towanda. I had hoped to never experience that type of violent destruction again.

I know that some of you probably received some damage from the recent outbreak of storms, but as a cooperative we miraculously didn't lose a single power pole and had power restored back to everyone by early Sunday morning. Our crews did a fantastic job. We then sent eight volunteers and four trucks to provide assistance to our sister cooperatives, Ark Valley in South Hutchinson and Midwest Energy in Hays. They have been very appreciative of our help and for me I would much rather send help than receive it in these situations.

What a couple of months we have had weather-wise here at Butler REC. The unseasonably warm weather has been a real shock to the cooperative and our propane subsidiary's monthly revenue. Electric usage

was down as much as 15 percent over normal years, meaning that your bills should be somewhat lower.

On the other side of the ledger, the Wolf Creek Nuclear plant was down for 74 days while they repaired a wiring problem in the switch yard and a feed water pipe that provides cooling in the case of an emergency. This caused your power cost adjustment (PCA) to be very high and it will continue to be an issue for the rest of the year as we elected to spread the costs for replacement power over a longer period of time. This way, you don't get hit with the costs all at once.

I know from my experience of growing up on a farm and dairy that this is a busy time of year for our farmers. Lots of planting, cultivating and spraying goes on during this time of year. That brings me to remind you to be safe around the electric lines with your equipment.

I have heard too many tragic stories that have happened when farm equipment has contacted electric lines. Equipment keeps getting bigger and that means power line clearance is getting smaller. If by accident you do happen to get caught up in the power lines stay in the equipment or vehicle until help arrives or in case of an emergency make sure you know how to jump clear and land with both feet close together. One short discussion with your farm help could save a life. If you have questions about farm safety around electric lines go to our website under services and click on the safety link.

Have a wonderful and safe month of May.

R. Dale Short, Manager



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Power Line Safety After the Storm

With the outbreak of tornados that we had last month Butler REC would like to remind everybody of the potential hazards that storms can cause. Storms can happen any time of the year. We want everyone to be aware and cautious of potential hazards that could be encountered during storm clean up and recovery:

► **When you see power lines on the ground following a storm, stay**

away, warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility.

Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line making them also very dangerous, so stay away from all of them. Never drive over a downed line; it could cause poles or other equip-

ment to come crashing down.

► **Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard.** Keep in mind a downed power line that is energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous, traveling through the ground to other metal objects like chain link fences or metal culverts.

► **Keep in mind that a line that is indeed “dead” could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.**

► **If you are in a car which has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in your vehicle and wait until the utility has arrived and de-energized the line.** Warn others not to approach the car. If you must leave your car—only in the case of fire—jump free without touching the ground and auto at the same time, keeping both feet together. Then continue to keep both feet together and hop to safety.

► **A live wire touching the ground causes electricity to fan out in a pool and the action of walking or running allows one foot to move from one voltage zone to another.** Your body then becomes the path for the electricity and electrocution is the tragic result.

► **If you use a portable generator, be sure a transfer safety switch has been installed or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator.** This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what is known as “back feed.” Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

If you see a potential threat such as sagging lines or trees in lines, please contact our office at 800-464-0060 or for more information about safety around power lines visit SafeElectricity.org.

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Have a Successful Planting Season Rooted in Safety

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Butler REC wants to urge farm workers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.



Always be aware of the location of power lines when operating farm equipment.

- ▶ Always be aware of the location of power lines, and designate pre-planned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- ▶ Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- ▶ Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole, or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.
- ▶ When guy wires (a grounded wire used to stabilize utility poles) are broken, these normally neutral wires can be anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire

and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.

- ▶ If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives.
- ▶ If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment before the power has been shut off.

Managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these safety precautions, and danger areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled.

If you have questions or concerns about electrical safety please contact our office at 800-464-0060.

Visit our Website & Join us on Facebook



Visit our website at www.butler.coop. On our website, you



will find a calendar of events, frequently asked questions, bill pay and energy calculators—just to name a few tools!

You can also become a fan of Butler REC on Facebook by clicking the Facebook “like” button on our homepage.

Check our Facebook page for updates, outage information and energy efficiency tips.

Joining us on Facebook is a great way to stay in touch with our members.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Want to beat the heat? Run appliances, like dish washers and dryers, late in the evening to keep the heat from affecting your comfort. Use cold water to wash clothes, and remember to unplug electric chargers, televisions, and any appliances when you are not using them.



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