

# Tideland Topics

REAL PEOPLE. REAL POWER.

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBER-OWNERS OF TIDELAND ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

## OBX BLACKOUT: Dramatic race to the finish line following accident

The initial text message from Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative to key Tideland staff didn't immediately raise alarm bells the morning of July 27.

CHEC 4:34 am Thurs, July 27

Oregon Inlet has locked out. We'll update you as soon as possible.



With the breaker locked out, transmission service was off to both Hatteras and Ocracoke islands. Shortly before 11 a.m., with the outage cause still not determined, Tideland sought permission to run Ocracoke's 3-megawatt peaking generator, which is owned by the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation. While not sized to carry the island during peak summer season, the co-op hoped to provide service on a rotating schedule to help prevent food losses. The peaking plant operated less than 10 minutes before the generator's turbo charger failed, rendering it inoperable.

Matters compounded when it was discovered that the transmission line had likely suffered catastrophic damage when crews constructing the new Bonner Bridge accidentally drove a metal casing into the buried line. Memories rushed back of a 1990 incident when a runaway barge hit and severed the Bonner Bridge. The job of splicing the transmission line 27 years earlier had taken 7 days and that was with crews having a perfect visual of the transmission line attached to the underside of the bridge.

TEMC 3:22 pm Thurs, July 27

Repairs could take days or weeks. 3 mobile generators en route to Ocracoke for Friday delivery.



Excavation immediately got underway, with bridge construction crews leading the effort to unearth the transmission line. In the meantime, both islands were subject to mandatory evacuation

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### *Bonner Bridge accident circa 1990*

In the wee hours of Friday, October 26, 1990, a dredge in Oregon Inlet crashed into the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge during a storm, leaving a 300-foot gap in Hatteras Island's only road to the mainland. The incident also severed the only cables supplying electricity for Hatteras and Ocracoke islands. It took 7 days to restore transmission service and 3 months to repair the bridge.







Message to our Member-Owners:

# The power of cooperation

By Paul Spruill  
General Manager & CEO

## Right-of-Way Maintenance Update

Tideland has hired Lucas Tree Experts to trim trees in our right-of-way. During September they will continue working in the Blounts Creek area.

Our contractors will also be mowing the right of way in the following areas:

- Old Blounts Creek Rd
- Mouth of the Creek Rd
- Ephesus Church Rd

and all adjoining small roads & lanes in the area.

Reminder: There will be weekday traffic delays along New Bern's Broad Creek Rd while Lee Electric Construction builds our new feeder lines for the Fairfield Harbour substation.

A lineman likened the Bonner Bridge transmission outage to a storm with no name. But there were plenty of names associated with the disaster recovery effort. We want to thank as many as possible beginning with our transmission provider, Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative.

We could not ask for a better partner than CHEC. Not only did they coordinate a masterful repair operation, they kept us informed every step of the way so our own members and hopeful vacationers were never in the dark. Our thanks to Lee Electrical Construction (overhead team), New River Electrical Corp. (splice team), Lumbee River EMC and Jones-Onslow EMC (equipment to help operate the Ocracoke generators), as well as crews from Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, Roanoke Electric Cooperative and Brunswick EMC, which provided labor and equipment on Hatteras Island. Our thanks

to Governor Roy Cooper for his disaster declaration that removed logistical barriers, as well as the NC Department of Transportation and the NC Ferry Division. Gregory Poole was indispensable as they quickly delivered mobile generators to Ocracoke. Our thanks to NCEMC staff and technicians who worked non-stop on the Ocracoke peaking generator and were able to bring it back on line several hours before transmission was restored. Thank you to our partners with Hyde County government. We also thank thousands of hopeful vacationers who cheered us across the finish line.

Most of all we thank our Ocracoke Island members who had faith in the co-ops, heeded our calls for assistance and conservation as needed, and showed such grace and community spirit during an extremely stressful time. You energize us.

Pennsylvania vacationer Christy Morrell emailed this photo to Tideland after transmission service was restored.



RECEIVE OUTAGE ALERTS VIA EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE

# DON'T WAIT: ACTIVATE!

Storm Season is here! Opt-in now for outage updates via text or email notification! To activate the text messaging service from your mobile phone simply text the letters **TEM C** to short code **85700**. You will immediately receive a confirmation text message. Reply with your **Tideland EMC account number** to complete the activation process.

Follow us on social media for up-to-date information!





# The OBX Blackout In Pictures

**5**  
REASONS TO  
ENROLL IN  
FLEXPAY



First damaged transmission line exposed



One phase of the 115kV transmission line



Splicing experts repair the first line. As excavation continued for the third cable the site filled with water.



Line crews pursue overhead option



Yellow line depicts path of buried transmission line with red circle being point of impact. (Credit: Sam Walker, OBXVoice)



Three mobile generators provided electricity for Tideland's Ocracoke members



Ultimately, the overhead solution crossed the finish line first with transmission restored on August 3

1.

NO SECURITY DEPOSIT OR CREDIT CHECK REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH SERVICE

2.

CONVERT AN EXISTING SECURITY DEPOSIT INTO AN IMMEDIATE ENERGY PREPAYMENT

3.

NO MORE ELECTRIC BILLS. EVER. SERIOUSLY. WE'RE NOT JOKING!

4.

NO LATE FEES, DISCONNECT OR RECONNECT FEES. EVER. HONESTLY! IT'S THE TRUTH.

5.

DEMONSTRATED REDUCTION IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION BETWEEN 7 AND 12 PERCENT. TURNS OUT WHEN YOU KNOW HOW AND WHEN YOU USE ENERGY YOU TEND TO SAVE.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FLEXPAY @ TIDELANDEMC.COM

# OBX BLACKOUT

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orders for all non-residents. With visitors gone, Tideland was able to meet the power needs of Ocracoke residents through the use of three portable generators that were put into service between Friday and Saturday. Islanders heeded Tideland's call for strict conservation, limiting their use of electricity to refrigeration and fans until utility loads flattened out. Several of the island's largest businesses also agreed to remain on their own generators. Thanks to a cold front, by Saturday evening Tideland was able to lift restrictions on air conditioning and water heating loads. The following morning island businesses were able to turn off private generators and energy restrictions were lifted for the rest of the week.

Meanwhile, CHEC had immediately put into action a two-solution strategy. While pursuing the excavation and repair of the underground transmission line they unleashed a team of overhead construction crews to simultaneously erect a new overhead transmission line. Whichever solution neared the finish line fastest would be the final route to restoring transmission service. Early on it looked like the underground splice team would make the fastest headway, completing the first splice on July 31. The public watched the entire thing play out via a live webcam strategically placed by the NC Department of Transportation.

However, as excavation continued to locate the final transmission cable, the site increasingly filled with water from Pamlico Sound and all dewatering efforts failed. In the background the overhead construction crews were working at maddening speed as if someone had shot off a starter's pistol. The morning of August 2, CHEC issued a statement that the fastest path to transmission restoration would come via the overhead solution. The splice team that had hoped to repair the underground lines now became part of the overhead solution and executed the prep work to transition from underground to overhead just before the accident site. Lee Electrical Construction crews erected 10 transmission poles and installed the requisite hardware and wire necessary to achieve transmission restoration.

With bated breath co-op officials energized the new transmission connection on Thursday, August 3, and by late afternoon power was permanently restored to Hatteras and Ocracoke islands. The islands were reopened to visitors the following day at noon and many paid tribute to the co-ops and linemen as they began long awaited beach vacations.



Folks at Tideland -  
 My family = I vacation at Hatteras every year, with a trip to Ocracoke at least once during the week.  
 Please accept this as a small token of my appreciation for all of the hard work and long hours spent to restore the power.  
 Diane Conner  
 Vinton, VA

TEMC 5:28 pm Thurs, Aug 3  
 Final transmission update:  
[www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com)  
 Bye!

REAL PEOPLE.  
 REAL POWER.

## Tideland Topics

[www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com)

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