

Tideland Topics

Real People. Real Power.

Like a bridge over troubled water

Five Tideland EMC linemen were among the thousands of utility workers that reported for duty in western North Carolina following Hurricane Helene. To quote our Pantego line superintendent Michael Marslender, "It was by far the most devastating storm break I have ever worked. There was very little left to work with including roads, bridges and poles." Read more starting on Page 20.

Photo: Damage to a private bridge in Haywood EMC territory following Helene



Hurricane season ends Nov. 30

Tidelanders, while outdoor temperatures have fallen, ocean temperatures are still conducive to tropical development. Furthermore, parts of our territory are extremely vulnerable to less headline grabbing nor'easters which can deliver quite a blow to low lying, coastal areas.

Remain vigilant in your own storm preparedness and keep the steps to restoring power in mind should outages occur.

Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's how we get to work when you find yourself in the dark:

- 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:** Transmission towers and cables supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members), and they rarely fail. But when damaged these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.
- 2. Distribution Substation:** A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, our line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.
- 3. Main Distribution Lines:** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in our local communities.
- 4. Tap Lines:** If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.
- 5. Service Lines:** If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. If you experience an outage, please give us a call so we can isolate the issue.

"Our turn to give back"

Tideland crews deploy to Haywood EMC



A late night shadow of lineman Michael Baldwin cast on a tree in the mountains of Buncombe County

On Sept. 28, Tideland EMC linemen Michael Marslender, Austin Roscoe, Josh Dunbar, Michael Baldwin and Andrew Christie were deployed to Haywood EMC to assist with power restoration following Helene. The first challenge was getting there due to damage that ultimately left 1,080 roads damaged in western North Carolina, 105 of which are primary routes. Furthermore, 500 bridges were impacted with 100 needing full replacement. The NC Highway Patrol created a corridor to allow utility workers and other front line responders safe passage.

Tideland was assigned to work the three circuits originating from Haywood's Candler substation in rural Buncombe County. The substation provides power to 2,400 members. The team's workdays began at 6 a.m. and were scheduled to end by 10 p.m. nightly, but admittedly ran over a few nights.

Marslender described what would become a repeat occurrence when power was restored to an area:

shotgun blasts or fireworks. The first time it happened he was sure a fuse had blown. But when there were repeat blasts he realized that was just how members in remote mountain areas celebrate. What's referred to as a subdivision in the mountains is also quite different: four or five houses at the end of a steep one-lane road with a private bridge is the norm. With nowhere to turn around, Christie described the white knuckled experience of backing the bucket truck all the way down the same narrow roads they drove up on. In other areas they carefully navigated what remained of partially washed out roads. Occasionally they would navigate crudely erected "bridges" made by residents to reach a worksite. And it goes without saying they did a great deal of pole climbing given the challenging terrain.

By the end of their 10-day deployment, the Tideland crew had restored power to all but 50 members served by the Candler substation. Men, we thank you for your service to our sister co-op.

Message to members

All in this together

by **PAUL SPRUILL**
GENERAL MANAGER &
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The best preparation for a hurricane is, unfortunately, the hurricanes that preceded it. There are always lessons to be learned. At Tideland, every storm response is evaluated to better prepare us for the next event. Likewise, we learn from other co-ops and how similar scenarios might play out here at home. One such co-op is Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) in Live Oak, Florida. Following Helene, they deployed more than 1,482 mutual aid crew members to restore power to their 28,000 member co-op. SVEC had 767 broken poles. During Florence, Tideland had 40 broken poles with 133 crew members responding. In Irene and Dorian our broken pole totals were 135 and 80 respectively. Preparedness requires that we think larger than our own worst storm.

With everyday system reliability and storm resiliency in mind, Tideland has made targeted capital investments to harden our infrastructure. The most recent evidence of that was our relocation of 17 poles at Ocracoke to provide additional protection from ocean overwash on Highway 12. We were able to complete that work prior to the arrival of September's king tide.

Following Florence, Tideland took the unprecedented step of securing the guaranteed resources of a storm service team that has the capacity to establish a base camp for visiting crews if we were to experience an outage similar to SVEC. While we hope such an agreement never has to be activated, knowing we have the ability to house, feed and care for an army of mutual aid crews and contractors gives us a significant recovery advantage.

Lastly, I want to remind our membership of the important role both FEMA and the state of North Carolina play in the cooperative's financial recovery from a declared disaster. Tideland qualifies for FEMA's Public Assistance Program which reimburses 75% of our storm-related expenses. NC Emergency Management has historically made our losses whole by reimbursing the remaining 25%. Following Hurricane Irene, those reimbursements equated to \$125 per Tideland member. Those are dollars we did not have to recover through rates and therefore benefit everyone regardless of individual need.



Ocracoke line relocation along Highway 12 to reduce exposure to ocean overwash

Rights-of-way maintenance schedule

Tideland has hired Gunnison Tree to trim vegetative growth in our rights-of-way. During November, Gunnison will perform tree trimming on the Arapahoe and Dawson Creek circuits in Pamlico County.

Our contract construction crews with Lee Electrical will be working throughout our system to proactively replace any poles that failed to meet our integrity standards following inspections by our contractor, Osmose. One crew will work in the Grantsboro district. Another crew will work in our Pantego and Engelhard districts.

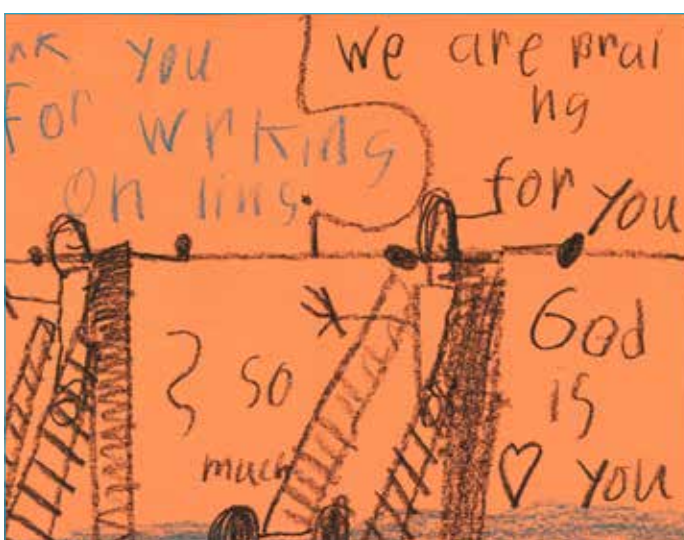
Fall is a popular time to plant new trees and shrubs so they have time to establish root systems before the heat of summer returns. Before purchasing trees, please take time to conduct a bit of research based on location and the proximity to both overhead and underground power lines. Staying well outside of the utility right-of-way when the tree reaches mature height will help the co-op reduce future tree trimming costs. And be sure root spread will not interfere with underground utilities.

Always call 811 before you dig



Thank you cards from PCA

When our linemen returned from storm duty at Haywood EMC, they had quite a bit of fan mail waiting from students at Pungo Christian Academy.



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Member Service

252.943.3046

24 Hour Outage Reporting & Automated Services

252.944.2400

Text OUT to short code 85700

Tideland EMC is an equal opportunity provider & employer

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Holiday Closing

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 28, and Friday, Nov. 29, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

To report an outage, call 252-944-2400 or text OUT to short code 85700. For 24-hour member service call 252-943-3046.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve you!