



# LEWIS COUNTY REC

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www.lewiscountyrec.coop

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

August 2023

## From the desk of Travis Mathes, Manager of Member Services



Summer seems to have flown by and the Missouri State Fair and back to school are just around the corner, which means it is Annual Meeting time here at Lewis County REC. If you have not registered and voted by mail or absentee, you still have an opportunity to come out to the drive-thru meeting and do so. Our drive-thru meeting will be held at the office facility on

Thursday, August 3rd. You can drive-thru to register and vote from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and if you would like you can attend the in-person business meeting it will be held promptly at 6:00 p.m. in our warehouse. The same reports that will be given at the business meeting were printed in last months Rural Missouri.

I would like to personally thank all of our employees, the employees from the neighboring cooperatives that worked mutual aid, and you our members for the hard work and patients during the storms that hit our system hard on July 29th. At the height of that storm we had over 2400 meters without power. It was the hardest hitting storm we had experienced in a number of years. Our employees all stepped up to the plate and worked safely and efficiently to restore power. Thank you, for being understanding and patient and for the acts of kindness that you expressed to the linemen during this outage. Mother-Nature can really change things in our business in the blink of an eye, which brings how much all of us rely upon electricity front and center.

The interest in solar power in our area is at an all-time high. Many of you may have been targeted on social media by solar dealers trying to sell you solar panels at your farm, home, or business. These social media ads claim that you will get large rebates and high returns on your investment if you install solar. They even offer to finance the entire project for you. Don't fall victim to this sales scheme. These dealers are also using the sales pitch, "You

will never have to pay your electric provider again." This is a false statement. According to current Missouri Statute your utility will always bill you for your service availability and security lights, therefore, you will still have a monthly bill from your utility. Missouri currently does NOT offer incentives like our neighboring states do, which can have a major effect on the bottom-line price that you pay for a solar system. Most of the time when the company offers a rebate, the company is simply inflating the cost of the panels to offset the rebate. I want to caution you on the financing options offered by these companies as well. I have seen companies offering low interest up front, no money down, financing options for solar, but when you read the fine print after 24 months the financing will jump as high as 25%.

If you are thinking about solar, please, give me a call and let me talk to you about our net metering agreement and policy. Unlike the solar company that has one objective – to sell their products and services – we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine if solar is right for you. We want to insure you will get a return on your investment and/or achieve the ultimate objective you are looking for by installing solar panels. Members must have a net metering agreement in place with Lewis County REC, prior to installation of an alternative energy source. At Lewis County REC we recognize that member interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their options. Being a member owned electric cooperative, commitment to community, is one of our core principles and looking out for the best interest of our member/owners falls under that principle. Before you sign a contract with any company to install alternative energy, please, reach out to us and let us be at the table with you to make sure you are not being taken advantage of. If you have any questions give me a call today and I will be happy to work with you, as well as, provide a list of local, trusted installers that will give you an accurate quote and help you assess what alternate energy is best for you. Until next month, stay cool and healthy, and enjoy the last days of summer as fall is just around the corner!

**Please follow us on Facebook to keep up to date on what is going on at Lewis County REC, as well as, learn about safety, and energy efficiency.**

## Right of Way

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Lewis County REC works hard to ensure that our rights of way are regularly cleared of trees and brush in order to help reduce potential outages and hazards. Trees and branches growing in or near power lines can cause interruptions in your electric service and uncontrolled brush can impede access to utility structures. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline for maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 15 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 25 percent of power interruptions occur when trees grow too close to power lines. If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our lineman or contractors will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers, and mowers. In some cases, it is necessary to remove a tree altogether.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close

contact with a power line. An energized tree branch due to close proximity or contact with a power line is incredibly dangerous, even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.


Another benefit to ROW clearing is that it can decrease outage restoration time. When weather strikes, every minute spent clearing a tree or branch off of a power line equals a minute in delay of restoring your power. While winds can blow downed trees into power lines, it's often those trees that were left near the power line that cause the most damage. In addition, that damage has an economic impact on the cooperative, which in turn could affect your electric rates.

Not all outages can be prevented, but investing in vegetation management has both immediate and long-term benefits. By prioritizing our ROW management programs, Lewis County REC is investing in safety, outage reduction, rate stabilization, and increased reliability. As always, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us at (573)-215-4000.



### Bright ideas

Electric co-ops truly care about the communities they serve. You can find out more about this "Concern for Community" by following your co-op's social media, visiting its website, attending the annual meeting, and, of course, reading the local pages in Rural Missouri.



### Energy Efficiency

#### *Tip of the Month*

Ever wonder if there is a way to lower your electric bill while helping your neighbors reduce theirs too? You can do both by avoiding the use of major appliances during peak hours. That is the time of day, typically in the evening hours, when energy use is the greatest. When this happens your power supplier must add more expensive generation sources to provide reliable power.

## TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

**CALL (TOLL FREE) 1-888-454-4485  
(LOCAL) 215-4000 24 HOURS A DAY**

**Before calling, check your breakers or fuses and check with your neighbors to see if they have power**

**When calling please give the following information:  
Your name • Meter number and/or location number (if known)  
Cell Phone or Telephone Number affiliated with the account**

**CALL DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS (7:30-4:00)  
FOR ALL OTHER SERVICES**