

DISCOVERING SOUTH KENTUCKY

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Texas issues highlight importance of reliability

Story by Nick Comer and Joy Bullock

At South Kentucky RECC, we take the reliability of your electric service seriously. We want our members to be assured that when they flip a switch, their home will be lighted.

But sometimes Mother Nature intervenes, as she did in February. We experienced repeated severe ice and snow storms, knocking out power to thousands.

When power lines were knocked down, South Kentucky RECC responded immediately by sending crews to fix them. We contacted other cooperatives from around the country who sent crews to help. Working together under very challenging conditions, power was restored as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, Texas experienced one of the largest power outages in their history. Their situation was more widespread and affected millions of Texans.

The causes of these outages were different. In Texas, unlike what happened across the South Kentucky RECC service territory, power lines and poles were not the primary damage. The weather affected Texas power generation resources by freezing natural gas pipeline pumps and equipment, as well as wind turbines. Solar arrays were covered by a blanket of snow and ice. Compounding the



The situation that led to widespread outages in Texas makes us realize the importance of having 24/7/365 energy sources, including the need to retain traditional sources of power. Photo: Tim Webb

situation was the fact that several traditional electrical power generators were offline for maintenance.

This is an extremely serious situation any time it happens, but especially when temperatures are well below freezing. A single power line outage might affect thousands, but power plant outages can affect tens or even hundreds of thousands of households.

For electric utilities, the Texas experience emphasizes the the need for preparedness for extreme situations. A utility provider must be dependable 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year even in extreme circumstances.

As more renewable energy resources enter the market, like wind and solar, we must understand their limitations and vulnerabilities. Wind and sun are

The unusually frigid weather in February affected Texas power plants leading to outages affecting millions in the state. It emphasizes the need for Kentucky to prepare for extreme situations.

Continued from 28A

the needed drivers to generate these renewable electricity options. Currently, battery storage is limited and can only provide a few hours of electricity where available.

Wind turbines and solar panels have much to offer in regions where their

drivers are abundantly available. However, we cannot depend on them around the clock, particularly in the area in which we live. This shows the need to retain traditional reliable and resilient sources of power that we can switch on anytime, regardless of the weather.

While the energy market continues to change, South Kentucky RECC and our power provider will remain focused on reliability, while maintaining competitively priced services and building greater sustainability for the future. **DSK**

Prepare for outages

South Kentucky RECC works hard to keep electricity flowing to its members, but we never know when something might happen to disrupt power to our members. Whether it be Mother Nature with an ice or wind-storm, or human error in the form of a car wreck, service must be restored.

While South Kentucky RECC wants to restore power to every member as soon as possible, the immediate goal is to safely get the greatest number of members back on in the shortest time possible. Repair work that will restore service to essential facilities or to large numbers of members is done before work that will restore service to only one or two members.

South Kentucky RECC members can be instrumental by preventing outages before they ever happen. Accumulating ice on trees or limbs can bring down power lines and poles, cause outages, and threaten life and property. Even weeks after major winter storms, like

those in February, trees can become weakened and compromised, and wind can cause trees or limbs to fall on power lines.

SKRECC members can help by notifying the co-op if they see any trees or limbs growing into the lines and by allowing the trees to be trimmed or removed.

In addition, many SKRECC members live in households where someone needs some type of life support system, such as oxygen. Should you be part of such a household, it is important to have an emergency plan in place in the event of a major outage. While South Kentucky RECC does all it can, including utilizing contract labor and support labor from sister cooperatives, there may be instances that power cannot be restored for several hours or days. Members requiring life support need to have a plan and be prepared to go somewhere that has electricity to sustain their equipment.



RANDY BUCKNAM

Outages are an unwanted reality. Please be assured that South Kentucky RECC does all it can to provide the best possible service to its members and is prepared for all types of weather and the situations that come with it.



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SAFEGUARD ELECTRONICS WITH

SURGE PROTECTORS

Surge protectors help save your electronics from power surges or increases in voltage significantly above the intended level in the flow of electricity.

Nearby lightning strikes are most often associated with power surges in your home's wiring that can damage electronics and appliances. But smaller power surges are far more common and can happen at any time of day, regardless of weather.

Point-of-use surge protection devices protect the items directly plugged into them. This surge protector can't stop the surge, but it instead diverts the surge to the ground, away from your electronic devices.

REPLACING SURGE PROTECTORS

- After absorbing powerful surges and spikes, your surge protector eventually will turn into a typical power strip, unable to protect your electronics.
- When a voltage increases beyond the amount the appliance or device can handle, the surge protector diverts the extra voltage to the metal oxide varistor component in the surge protector. This extra voltage stays in the surge protector and gradually destroys that component. Eventually, the surge protector will no longer be able to absorb more surges.
- Lifespans vary depending on how many surges your surge protector is forced to try to absorb. The longer it's been since you last replaced your surge protector, the more voltage your surge protector has absorbed and the more likely you should replace it.

GONZALO CALLE/ADOBE STOCK



SKRECC

The offices of South Kentucky RECC will be CLOSED on Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day.

If you have an emergency or outage, call your local office or (800) 264-5112 for 24/7 outage reporting.

You can pay your bill online at www.skrecc.com, by phone, by smart-phone app (SKRECC), by kiosk in Somerset, or with our CheckOut program; visit skrecc.com for more details.

Vacation with Co-op Connections this summer

Visit www.connections.coop to find discounts on restaurants, lodging, theme parks and car rentals before you head out on vacation this summer.

In Kentucky alone, you can save when you stay at Kentucky state parks, as well as on local attractions, restaurants, golfing, etc.

You can get the Co-op Connections app by searching "Co-op Connections" in the App (iPhone) or Play Store (Android).

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South Kentucky RECC is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Visit www.skrecc.com to pay your bill online, to visit our outage center, or for more information about the Co-op Connections Program.

To report an outage 24/7/365, please call your local office, (800) 264-5112, or set up your account to be able to text outages. Please do not report outages via social media.

Plug into South Kentucky RECC. Follow us on social media:



Recognizing SKRECC retiree J.O. Dicken

Congress passed the 22nd Amendment, limiting a President to two terms in office; *I Love Lucy* made its television debut; and a gallon of gas was 19 cents. The year 1951 was also the year that J. O. Dicken began his storied career at South Kentucky RECC, which had only been in existence 13 years. (You can learn more about the co-op's history at www.skrecc.com.)

Dicken was just 20 years old when he started at the co-op as a lineman, making \$0.65 an hour. While that wouldn't pay for a gallon of gas today, Dicken says that was great pay for the time.

"The co-op has meant a lot to me over the years. It provided well for my family. It was one of the best employers in Clinton County," he says.

Dicken worked at South Kentucky RECC for nearly 44 years. He retired in 1995 as service foreman, a position he'd held since 1976.

During his many years at the co-op, Dicken says he saw significant changes.

"When I started working, we had to climb every pole. We had to dig the holes for the poles by hand, and that was after we had carried them in by hand to where they were going to be placed."

Dicken says the greatest changes he saw in his time at the co-op was the introduction and utilization of bucket trucks, better equipment and more technology.

In addition, he says South Kentucky RECC grew extensively. According to SKRECC records, when Dicken began, the co-op had approximately 10,000 members. When he retired in 1995, South Kentucky RECC had more than 48,000 members.

Dicken is one of many former and current co-op employees that have shaped



SKRECC ARCHIVES

Retired South Kentucky RECC employee J.O. Dicken, above, circa 1992, just a few years before he retired, and below, today, with SKRECC Field Services Manager Bruce Parkey, another 43-year employee of the co-op.



JOY BULLOCK

South Kentucky RECC since its beginning. And, while a great many things have changed, the one constant that has remained since 1938 is the co-op's care and concern for its members.

"When I started working, we had to climb every pole. We had to dig the holes for the poles by hand, and that was after we had carried them in by hand to where they were going to be placed."