

Three ways members can report a power outage.

Whether a storm, blown transformer or downed power lines, quick reporting can help get the power back on.



With more than one way to report a power outage, it's easy for you to help us identify the problem and restore power as soon as possible. Members can report an outage by phone or online with our Outage Map. Members who register their phones, are also able to report outages by text and receive notifications from us when the power has been restored.



CALL:
800 541 2662

TEXT:
OUT to 85700

ONLINE:
Go Online and use our Outage Map.

SIGN UP FOR TEXT ALERTS: Register your phone* by texting the keyword **FEC** to **85700**.

* Cell phone numbers must be listed on your account. Call the co-op at **800 541 2662** to update your membership records.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT TEXT ALERTS AND
THE OUTAGE CENTER AT: FarmersElectric.coop**



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A powerful tool for members.



by **MARK STUBBS**
General Manager

Cooperatives across the country use a powerful tool to aid power restoration and keep you informed during an outage.

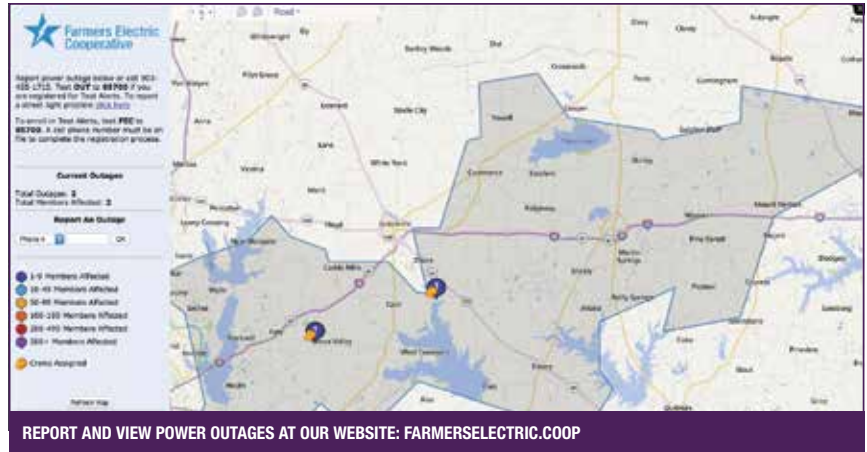
Outage maps are just what they sound like: a graphical representation of a power outage displayed on a map of your electric co-op's service area.

The typical map shows where the outage is and includes information such as the number of members without power, locations of crews and expected time of restoration.

Behind the map is a sophisticated system that provides the data needed to populate the graphic. This technology is considered to be part of the smart grid because it improves control, reduces outage length, increases reliability and provides information to employees, co-op members, and the public.

Maintaining an accurate outage map starts with devices on the co-op's lines that can report their status to the cooperative, meaning that they can report whether there is power at the meter. This data flows back over the power lines to a computer at the co-op. There it is analyzed, and the results are presented to the engineering and operations team for action.

Here's an example: Something causes a fault in the lines that blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker. The cause could be a gust of wind dropping a branch on a line; a furry critter deciding the brush around the transformer looks like dinner; or a car hitting a utility pole. Regardless



of the cause, the power is now out for a number of members.

The piece of equipment nearest the fault signals that it cannot see anything down the line—or that it has “tripped.” A program now runs to determine the extent of the outage. It collects information from other devices to determine where the flow of power stops. Once it has completed its detective work, the system generates a map showing the extent of the outage. (When the need arises, co-op employees can operate the program rather than waiting for the computer.) Because of the power of the information contained in these maps, co-ops are making them available via the internet.

Members can consult the map online rather than waiting in a telephone queue to learn about their power outage from a member service representative. They can check to see if the co-op knows whether their power is out, and when the co-op expects it to be restored—all with the click of a button!

Many people have asked how they can access the Internet if their power is out. There are a couple of ways to do

this. The first is via a smartphone or cell-enabled tablet. Another is to ask a friend or family member who has power to check for you. Or head to a place with power and computers, such as a library or internet café.

There are many ways you can access crucial information during an outage and keep yourself informed on the status of your service.

Knowledge is power, and when it comes to outages, knowledge is also a comfort because it can tell you when the lights (and the heat or AC, and the TV) are likely to come back on. With this knowledge, you can take the steps necessary to protect your family and your property. Outage maps are a great example of how co-ops work to keep members informed about their service.

Farmers Electric Cooperative provides outage information as part of our ongoing efforts to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost. Visit FarmersElectric.coop for more information. This is just another benefit of being a co-op member.

How To Clean Refrigerator Coils.

Yearly maintenance helps ensure efficiency and long life.



Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home. It requires only minimal maintenance—just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat. If the coils are covered with dust, gunk or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly, and the unit will not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grimy coating. This can be an expensive problem. But a minor time investment once a year can save you cold cash down the line.

STEP 1. Locate the refrigerator's coil, a grid-like structure, or fan that will likely have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe-kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't see them in the front or back, this may be the case with your fridge.

STEP 2. If the coil is in the back, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet if possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or ice maker to allow enough room to work.

STEP 3. Gently vacuum and clean the coil. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt wherever you see it. If you have pulled the fridge out, vacuum and wipe down the sides and back of the fridge and the floor.

STEP 4. Once the floor is dry, plug the refrigerator back in, and rearrange the power cord and supply lines so they don't get kinked or stuck under the weight of the refrigerator or behind it. Slide the refrigerator back into place. Be sure to replace the toe-kick panel if it was removed.

PLANTING TREES THIS SPRING? LOOK UP BEFORE YOU PLANT.



Spring is the best time to plant shade trees, which eventually will grow up and out and cast some nice shade on your house, keeping it cooler during summer.

But beware of where you plant. Tree branches can conduct electricity, creating a possible shock hazard for utility workers who need to service overhead power lines that are too close to towering trees.

Do some homework about the trees you've chosen before you plant them. Know how tall and wide each tree will grow. That way, you can plant it in a spot where, when it's fully grown, will still be 10 feet away from a utility pole and overhead wires. Here are a few other smart springtime cautions:

- ▶ Don't climb a ladder that's within reach of a power line.
- ▶ Hire a professional to prune tree branches that are near overhead wires. That's not a job for a do-it-yourselfer.
- ▶ Call your electric cooperative and 811 before you dig a hole to plant a tree—to make sure you won't interfere with underground lines on your property. That one is not only a safe practice; it's also the law.

Want to know more. Download our Vegetation Management PDF at:
FarmersElectric.coop/member-resources

Odds & Ends

Fair, festival, class or show—share your community event with us and we'll help you get the word out with the Farmers EC Community Calendar.

SEND TO: event@FarmersElectric.coop



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

2017 Farmers EC Scholarships

Each year, Farmers EC awards \$1,000 scholarships to outstanding high school seniors. The scholarships can be applied toward tuition, housing, meal plans and/or books at a college, university or technical school of the student's choice.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Parent or guardian must be a member of Farmers Electric Cooperative at their principal residence.
- Student must be currently enrolled as a high school senior.
- Student must be planning to attend a college, university, or technical school as a full-time student in the fall of year for which the scholarship is applied.
- Student must have at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

2017 Scholarship Application deadline April 14, 2017.

Download an application at: FarmersElectric.coop



Reminder

Daylight savings is Mar. 12.

Don't forget to set your clock forward 1 hour.



RECIPE

Sweet Potato Cornbread

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups self-rising cornmeal mix
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 cup cooked mashed sweet potato
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- 1 large egg, beaten

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Grease an 8-inch cast-iron skillet or 8-inch-square baking pan.
2. Combine all ingredients, whisking together just until dry ingredients are moistened. Spoon batter into skillet or pan.
3. Bake 20–25 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean.

Did You Know

The first Friday in March is the National Day of Unplugging—a 24-hour period when people unplug, talk, relax and do things besides using technology, electronics and social media. It can help reduce your electric bill, too! This year, the “holiday” begins the evening of March 4. **Learn more at: nationaldayofunplugging.com**

Power Tip

Consider purchasing rechargeable batteries—and an Energy Star charger for them—which are more cost-effective than disposable batteries. In the U.S. alone, the use of more energy-efficient battery chargers could save families more than \$170 million annually.