

## Energy-Efficiency Tip

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money. Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy-efficient model.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Annual Meeting Events

We'd like to thank our members for attending the Annual Meeting and especially for your support and understanding. Look for comments and photos from the event in the November issue of *Cooperative Living*.

## Fiber Update as of 8/23/21

Miles of backbone - 1,299

Services Installed to the home -1,511

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#### Jonesville Office

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*Powell Valley Electric Cooperative is an  
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## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR GENERAL MANAGER

Brad Coppock | General Manager

## This is What We Stand For — in October and All Year

Specific months have long been set aside to draw attention to or commemorate causes, products or areas of focus. I'm not sure whose job it is to actually decide these things, but it can be a helpful way for us to pause and recall the importance of maintaining awareness of various issues.

There are, of course, extremely worthwhile topics of which to be mindful. There's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Black History Month and National Foster Care Month. And then there are slightly less noteworthy observances with months set aside to call attention to things like celery, model railroading and bird feeding. It's interesting to see how different states step up to observe and honor different causes and products: California has set aside a month to tout the role "dried plums" (prunes, the last time I checked) play in digestive health, while the state of Tennessee has proclaimed the month of January as Be Kind to Food Servers Month.

I'm proud to be able to share with you that October is "Co-op Month." (Although, in my opinion, a period of 31 days is not nearly long enough to recognize and celebrate all the ways co-ops make our lives better.) This designation attempts to draw attention to many different kinds of cooperatives, not just those that distribute electricity to their members. Along with Powell Valley Electric Cooperative, companies like ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI and Land O' Lakes are in business to benefit those they serve. Like co-ops all across Tennessee and Virginia (as well as our nation and even in other countries), they adhere to the same set of seven principles that we do.

An easy way to understand this is to think about what makes co-ops special — and different from the way other businesses and organizations are governed and operated. These seven core values that guide us and characterize our unique business model are:

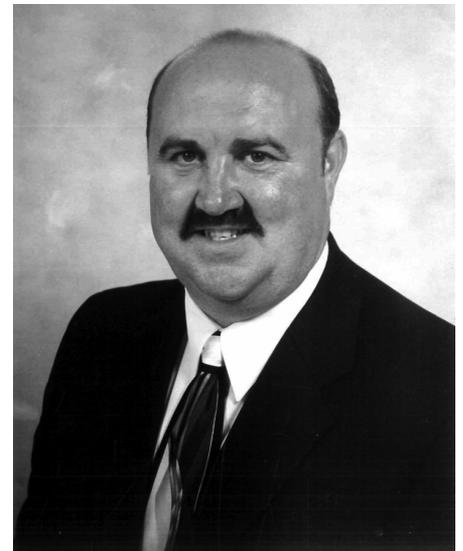
- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Taken together, these principles capture the things we work toward, care about and believe in. We are governed by those we serve and exist solely to benefit our members. We look beyond the profit motive that guides most businesses to operate, instead, we look for the greater good. The services we provide are available to all. We help each other during times of crisis. We are future-minded with an emphasis on remembering that what we do today will benefit generations to come. We look outward with an eye toward making the communities we serve stronger and better.

The Seven Cooperative Principles embody what we call "the cooperative difference." They set us apart and make us who we are. And that, my friends, is something to celebrate. So even though the official commemoration of Co-op Month is relegated to October, feel free to join me and all the other employees of Powell Valley Electric Cooperative in honoring the contributions we make to our communities all throughout the year.



# Remembering a Friend: Honoring the Memory of Mike Sharp



On Monday, August 9, 2021, the cooperative lost a good friend and one of its staunchest supporters. It was with distinct sadness that we learned of the passing of Mikel R. Sharp, a member of the Board of Directors of Powell Valley Electric Cooperative since 1989. A lifelong resident of Claiborne County, Director Sharp represented the members in District 1 of the cooperative's service area. He also served four years on the Tennessee Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees.

Mike was a great advocate for the community and the cooperative. He believed in people and certainly in the cooperative's mission to improve the quality of peoples' lives by providing safe and affordable power. Mike did not do this in a way that would call attention to himself. He had a friendly demeanor, a ready smile, and a willingness to work steadily toward a good solution, but he was also mindful of his responsibilities to the cooperative and as a good citizen. As a board member he was very instrumental in the progress and great strides that the cooperative has made over the years.

Mike will be remembered at the cooperative for his 32 years of loyal and dedicated service to the community he loved. He left a legacy of good will among us. Mike was a true friend to the members all across our service area and he will be greatly missed.

## Rechargeable Leaf Blowers Better for Environment

Fall is leaf-blowing season and a good time to replace your heavy, gas-fueled blower with a rechargeable cordless model that is lighter-weight and better for the environment. Powered by lithium batteries, new cordless leaf blowers are powerful and start with a squeeze of a trigger; there's no cord to pull. And these cordless blowers do not need fuel; the batteries can be recharged again and again simply by plugging them into an electrical outlet in your garage. Rechargeable blowers are quieter than traditional gas models and weigh about half as much. They're also less expensive. Tool reviewers generally say gas motors are slightly more powerful than battery blowers, but the cordless rechargeable models are catching up. And they say that unless you're blowing thick layers of damp leaves, the rechargeable tool's power is sufficient. If you plan to buy a new leaf blower:

- Consider the rules of your community. Some neighborhoods have banned gas leaf blowers because they make too much noise.
- Gauge how much weight you can comfortably handle while using a leaf blower. Gas models have heavy, built-in motors so they're heavier and harder to handle than the cordless models.
- Do you want a blower that also vacuums up the leaves once you've blown them into a pile? Blow-and-vac models are available in both gas and battery styles.

## Fall Into a New Habit

With daylight saving time ending Nov. 7, remember to change something other than your clock. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that you also change the batteries in your smoke detector. According to NFPA, smoke detectors have cut the number of home fire deaths in half since they were installed in homes during the 1970s. Unfortunately, a third of those smoke alarms won't sound due to dead, missing or disconnected batteries, according to NFPA. While changing your batteries, keep these other smoke alarm tips from NFPA in mind:



- Don't paint the smoke alarm or place decorations near it that might prevent it from working properly.
- Test smoke alarms monthly by using the alarm's test button.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm to keep it in proper working order.
- Your smoke alarm should be replaced once every 10 years.
- Never "borrow" a battery from a smoke alarm.

# Plan Ahead for Power Outages

While any number of things can cause a power outage during the winter months, most likely it is weather-related as heavy wet snow, high winds or ice has interfered with the electrical lines. Because it is impossible to predict what the future holds, it is important to make preparations throughout the year for unforeseen circumstances. Being prepared is the first line of defense, so this is why each year we share with you some tips that could help make these situations a little more bearable.

- Prepare a winter survival kit.
  - Stock up and store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dried fruit, powdered milk — and remember to set aside water.
  - Be sure to refill all prescriptions.
  - Gather emergency materials, such as a first-aid kit, blankets, flashlights, candles and matches, wood for the fireplace or wood stove, portable fire extinguisher, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.
  - Wear extra layers of clothing and use several layers of blankets. Close off all unused rooms that do not need to be heated.
  - Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors CLOSED!
  - Winterize your home.
    - Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
    - Add caulk and weatherstripping to windows and doors.
    - Remember to insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
    - Remember to always stay away from downed power lines.

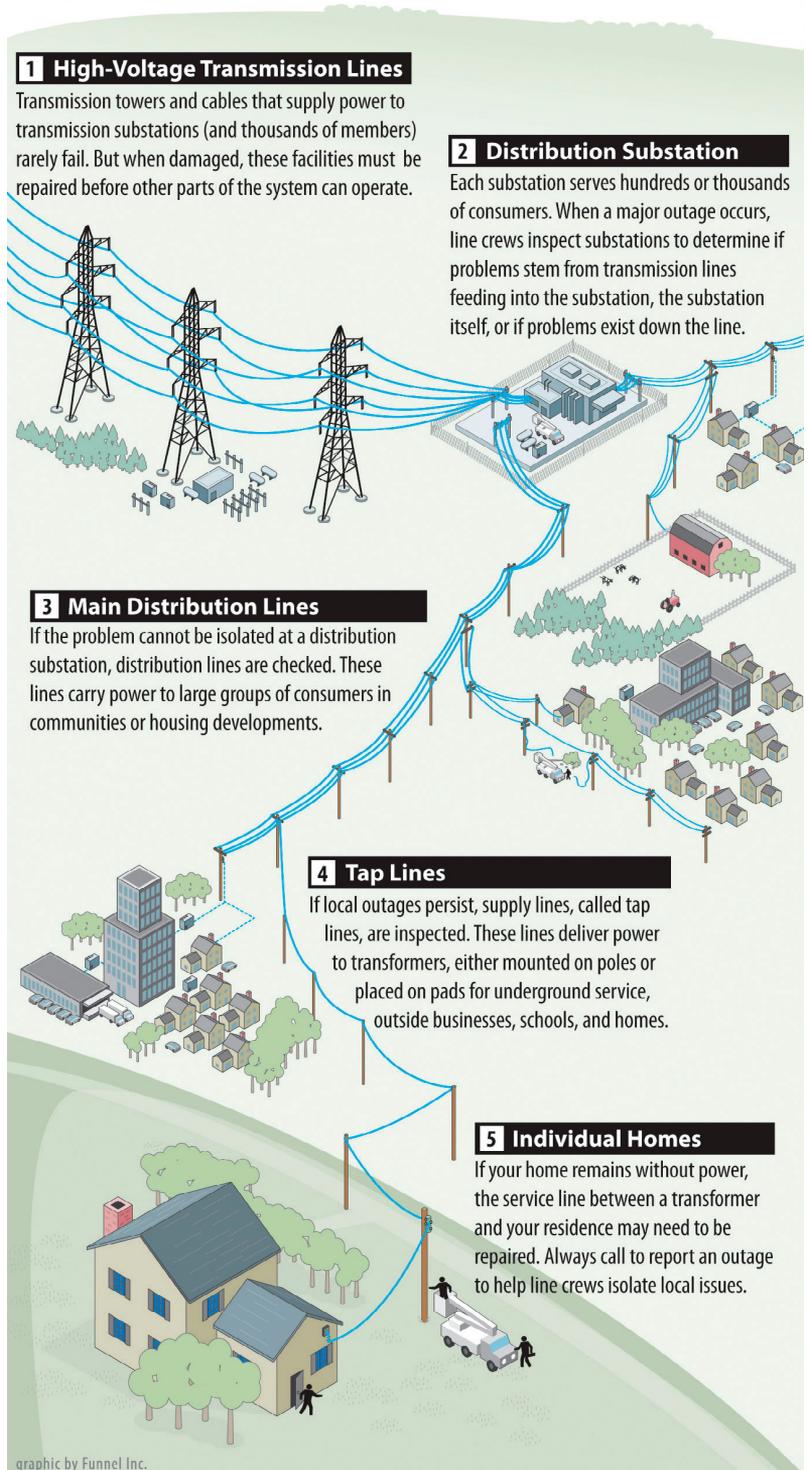
Powell Valley Electric Cooperative works throughout the year to plan ahead and prevent any problems that might cause a disruption of electric service. If bad weather hits and you find yourself without electricity, be assured that Powell Valley Electric Cooperative employees are working to restore your electric service as quickly and safely as possible.

## Restoration Updates

When the storm hits and you find yourself suddenly in the dark, PVEC knows how important it is to have the most up-to-date information. An outage map is now available on PVEC's website. The outage map will display the locations of any current service interruptions. To report an outage, please contact your local area office at: Jonesville: 276-346-6003, Sneedville: 423-733-2207, New Tazewell: 423-626-5204.

## THE POWER RESTORATION PROCESS

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Below are the steps we take during power restoration, in case you find yourself in the dark.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

# Get Familiar with Cyber Basics

## October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

At a time when we are more connected than ever, being “cyber smart” is of the utmost importance. This year has already seen more than a fair share of cyber attacks and breaches, including the high-profile attacks on the Colonial Pipeline and other critical infrastructure. Furthermore, as has been underlined by these recent breaches, cyber attacks are becoming more sophisticated with more evolved bad actors cropping up each day. Luckily, there are several steps that we can take on a daily basis to mitigate risks and stay one step ahead of malefactors. Here are a few quick tips:

### Enable multi-factor authentication.

Multi-factor authentication adds that necessary second check to verify your identity when logging in to one of your accounts. By requiring multiple methods of authentication, your account is further protected from being compromised, even if a bad actor hijacks your password. In this way, MFAs make it more difficult for password cracking tools to enable attackers to break into accounts.

### Use strong passphrases/password manager.

This may seem obvious, but all too often securing strong passphrases/password managers is overlooked. People spending more time online during the pandemic has certainly contributed to more bad actors prowling for accounts to attack. Using long, complex and unique passwords is a good way to stop your account from being hacked, and an easy way of keeping track and remembering your passwords is by using a password manager.

### Perform software updates.

When a device prompts that it's time to update the software, it may be tempting to simply click postpone, and ignore the message. However, having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system on devices is one of the best defenses against online threats. So, don't wait – update.

### Do your research.

Common sense is a crucial part of maintaining good online hygiene, and an intuitive step to stay safe online is to do some research before downloading anything new you are downloading to your device, such as apps. Before downloading any new learning app on your device, make sure that it's authentic by checking who created the app, what the user reviews say, and if there are any articles published online about the app's privacy and security features.

### Check your settings.

Be diligent to double check your privacy and security settings and be aware who can access your documents. This extends from Google docs, to Zoom calls, and beyond. For meetings on Zoom, for example, create passwords so only those invited to the session can attend, and restrict who can share their screen or files with the rest of the attendees.

Being cyber smart and maintaining stellar online hygiene is the best way to protect yourself and others from cyber attacks. No single tip is fool-proof but taken together they can make a real difference for taking control of your online presence. Following these tips is also easy, and free. By taking preventive measures and making a habit of practicing online safety, you can decrease your odds of being hacked exponentially – and prevent lost time and money, as well as annoyance.



# Safety Tips

Ronnie Williams  
Tazewell Area Supervisor

If you were to come across downed power lines, the best guidance can be summed up in just four words: “Don't go near them.” That's it, plain and simple. A downed power line might look harmless; in reality, though, it's often anything but. You might have to take a long detour in your car to avoid it. It could cause an interruption in your electric service. It may even be weirdly fascinating. But it can also be deadly. It's impossible to tell by looking at it if a downed power line is still carrying electricity. You might find yourself in proximity to a downed power line as a result of being involved in or witness to an auto accident where a vehicle strikes a utility pole and wires come down or perhaps a wind or ice storm brings down a tree on power lines that are located on your property. But in either case, Powell Valley Electric wants members to stay safe around downed power lines. Here are some important things to remember if you happen to encounter a downed line:

- Always assume a downed power line is live and dangerous. It can still be energized even if you can't see arcing, sparks, smoke or hear a buzzing sound.
- Maintain a distance of at least 35 feet from the line (or farther away if conditions are wet), and warn others to stay away.
- Never attempt to drive over a downed power line or move one with another object — even something like a broomstick or a tree branch. Even normally nonconductive materials can conduct electricity if they are slightly wet.
- If you're in a vehicle — even if the lines are not touching it — stay put and call 911. In the aftermath of an accident, resist the urge to get out and inspect damage or check on others who may have been involved. Remain inside until emergency help arrives. PVEC will de-energize the line before first responders attempt to help you.
- If you must exit your vehicle due to fire or smoke, remove any loose clothing, stand on your door frame and jump clear — keeping both feet together and taking care to avoid touching the ground and your vehicle at the same time. Then, keeping your feet close together, shuffle until you're about three car lengths away from the downed line. Lifting or separating your feet can cause your body to become a “path to ground” and may result in your electrocution.
- Other things — trees, cars, fences, basketball hoops — might have become energized due to contact with downed power lines and can also pose a danger. Give these objects a wide berth to minimize your risk of electrical shock.

- If a storm causes downed power lines on your property, call 911 and keep others — including pets — as far away as possible.

By its very nature, electricity is always seeking a path to the ground. It wants to move from a high-voltage zone to a zone of lower voltage — and it could do that through your body. Many people think that you actually would have to touch a downed power line to be harmed, but that is definitely not the case. You can be seriously injured or even killed by stepping into the area of deadly voltage radiating from the point where the wire touches the ground or by contacting a nearby electrified object. As soon as PVEC is notified, employees will take immediate action to de-energize the line. Until then, the best advice is to stay away to stay safe!