



WATTS CURRENT

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
Reliable. Affordable. Responsible



September 2022

Blinking Lights

Blinking lights and brief power interruptions are frustrating. Momentary power interruptions or "blinking lights" are most often caused by uncontrollable circumstances.

Wind, trees, lightning, birds, animals, equipment failure and humans can all disrupt the normal flow of electricity both momentarily and longer. Trying to find the exact cause of the blinks sometimes resembles trying to find the needle in the haystack, which equally frustrates the line crew.

While blinks can be annoying, they show that an electrical system is working exactly as designed. When a breaker in your house or business senses a power problem, the breaker trips and power flow stops until someone resets the breaker. Breakers on the RVEC's power lines are designed to sense a problem on the lines, stop power flow momentarily and then automatically reset – potentially avoiding a much longer outage.

Before digital clocks and computers, blinks oftentimes went unnoticed. In today's world, flashing digital displays and loss of computer data can get people excited.

RVEC member-owners need to protect computers and other sensitive electronic equipment by buying and using uninterruptible power supply (UPS) systems. These relatively simple and inexpensive measures will go a long way towards increasing power reliability and protecting fallout from blinks.

RVEC member-owners also need to notify the Cooperative when blinking light problems repeatedly occur. Then, be patient and give line crews a chance to find and correct the problem. We all want the same thing – high quality, reliable electric service. 14.25.01



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Farm Safety Tips



Sow seeds of safety for a harvest free of tragedy: make electrical safety a priority year round. Each year, farm workers are killed or injured when their equipment makes contact with overhead power lines.

Review farm activities and work practices that take place around power lines to prevent tragic accidents.

- Know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them.
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet - before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

For more information on farm/home electrical safety, visit

**Safe
Electricity.org**

— CEO Comments —



Jim Gossett

Over the last few months, you have read a lot in this space about Reliable, Affordable and Responsible energy. It is our mission. Specifically, you have read about the importance of an All-of-the-Above energy strategy means and how renewable energy growth has contributed to the closing of many baseload power plants across the country, potentially impacting the reliability of electric service.

The energy industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation as more renewable energy comes online and innovation and technology continue to advance. Green energy is certainly not new. Solar and wind power have been around for decades. Thanks to government-provided tax incentives that make renewable generation sources affordable, we have seen exponential growth in renewable energy across the country, including in our area.

Recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, (RVEC's power supplier) has adjusted our fuel mix by utilizing more renewables in our generation portfolio. Last year, 25.8 percent of the energy delivered to Corn Belt Power's member cooperatives consisted of renewable energy resources, such as wind and hydropower, up from 17 percent in 2015. 06.05.04

It takes this slow and logical approach to transition electric generation away from fossil fuels in such a way as to maintain the affordability and reliability of your power supply. An All-of-the-Above energy approach favors the incorporation of renewable resources like wind and solar to work alongside traditional reliable sources of energy like oil and natural gas.

Often, there is minimal wind or solar generation on the coldest days of the year or the hottest. The intermittency of these resources alone will not sustain the increasing energy demands of our growing economy. Until battery storage technology advances, and the cost goes down, we must rely on dependable baseload, fossil fuel power plants to keep the lights on all the time.

That was evident at 4:44 p.m. on July 11, when the Southwest Power Pool, reached a new all-time peak load of 51,377 megawatts (MW). During that time, almost 80 percent of power generated to meet the load was made of up of either coal, natural gas or nuclear.

We do not intend to scare you with these facts. Instead, it demonstrates the value of our abundant baseload generation sources in an All-of-the Above energy mix. If not for reliable baseload generation, made up of mostly fossil fuels, many of us would be in the dark during times of peak electric demand. Our goal is to safely provide our member-owners with Reliable, Affordable and Responsible energy. We intend to do just that.

Fallen Power Line Safety

- Stay far away from fallen power lines and from anything that is touching them. Assume the lines are energized and dangerous.
- Fallen lines are most common after storms and high winds. Debris from a storm can hide fallen power lines. Fallen trees may contain energized power lines.
- Shuffle, don't run, from a fallen power line. Shuffle with your feet together and on the ground. Running or taking large steps can increase the chance that you will be shocked or even killed.
- If a power line falls on your car, stay inside unless the car catches fire. In such a case, jump clear of the car without touching metal and the ground at the same time.

Report outages and hazards!

Call RVEC if your power goes out or you see an electrical hazard such as a downed power line. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day 7 days a week.



Know the Dangers of Large Equipment as Harvest Begins

As farmers begin this season's harvest, it's important to remember some important safety steps. The rush to harvest can reap grim results if steps to ensure safety are bypassed. Each year, across the U.S., hundreds of farm workers are injured and many are killed when their farming equipment makes contact with power lines. Power lines must be avoided – and taking that extra step – can ensure you continue to have a safe and productive harvest. 22.26.03

Today's farming operations often involve large and complex machinery. Large combines, raised dump beds, oversized wagons, grain augers, planters, spraying equipment and metal irrigation pipes are all excellent conductors of electricity. Equipment contacting overhead power lines is the leading cause of farm electrocution accidents in the Midwest. Everyone working on a farm should be aware of power lines and keep farm equipment away from the lines. It's also important to thoroughly evaluate new or used equipment that is being used on your property. Take special note of larger, modern equipment such as tractors and combines with higher antennas that may create a clearance threat.

Moving portable grain augers continues to pose one of the greatest threats to workers. Those who are moving the equipment on the ground can provide a direct path for electricity if there is contact with overhead wires. Grain augers should always be lowered before moving them. Things like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can create an unexpected result. When moving large equipment use a spotter or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line. Areas near grain bins pose a dangerous threat if equipment is too large or is used improperly. If you're installing new grain bins, contact RVEC to help place electrical service lines.

If the equipment you are in comes into contact with power lines make sure you:

- Stay in the cab and call for help
- If there is imminent risk of fire, jump clear of the vehicle and land with both feet on the ground at the same time – do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and ground at the same time.
- Keep your feet together and hop as far away from equipment as possible.

If you question the height of power lines nearing your working areas, don't attempt to measure the line heights yourself. Contact RVEC to help determine line height in each area of the farm.

The best way to handle a farm-related accident is prevention. Respect electricity and avoid contact with overhead lines. Look up, look down and be safe this harvest season!

Overhead power lines aren't the only risk during this season. Pole guy wires are grounded and a supporting part of the pole or structure. If one is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption and electric hazard or even cause the pole to break. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call RVEC immediately. Do not fix it yourself.

OUTAGE INFORMATION

If you don't have power or have an emergency call 712.659.3649.

RVEC phones are answered 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

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Fall Planting Can Save Energy Next Summer

Most of us plant trees and shrubs in the spring, but cool temperatures and lots of rain makes fall a good time for planting, too.

Planting shade trees near the windows on the sunny side of your house can block heat and damaging UV sunrays from getting inside during air conditioning season. Evergreens near the house can block the wind and keep it from blowing through windows when you're trying to keep your home warm in winter.

A few tips for fall planting:

- Plant in September and early October to allow enough time for roots to establish before the cold weather stops the tree from growing.
- Start your trees and shrubs in burlap or containers rather than planting their bare roots into the ground in the fall.
- Ask a landscaper or an expert at your garden center which varieties of trees do well when planted in the fall. Some, like red maple, birch, poplars and some oaks do much better when planted in the spring.
- Water plants frequently and thoroughly after planting. They need about an inch of water a week until the ground is frozen.
- Wrap the trunks of young trees with burlap or plastic in late November to protect them from frost, sunburn and animals. Remove the wrap in the spring. 38.22.01
- Spread a thick layer of mulch around newly planted trees so freezing and thawing of the soil won't heave them out of the ground.



TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS

Scammers can threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Here are a few reminders from your electric co-op.

- Co-op employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let them know as soon as possible.

Spot Your Number

Read Watts Current and watch for your location number. If you spot it, call RVEC by the 20th of the month and you will receive an electrical bill credit for \$25.00.