

# NorVal News

September 2022

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**Thursday, October 27, 2022**

In an effort to better prepare for the upcoming Annual Meeting, we are requesting an **RSVP**. Please call the office or email us at **[norval@norval.coop](mailto:norval@norval.coop)** if you know you are wanting to attend. All members are welcome and will receive a \$30 bill credit on their primary account upon arrival.\*

\*Must be on membership application or have signed proxy to receive bill credit!

## Keep Food Safe When the Power Goes Out

Severe winds, lightning and even squirrels can temporarily cause the power to go out. We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked with perishable foods.

Extended power outages are rare, but when they do occur, it's important to understand food safety measures to take to avoid illness.

Here are a few food safety tips to keep in mind before, during and after a power outage.

### Before an outage

A good rule of thumb is to keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items like bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal, and protein bars in your emergency kit.

If you have advance warning that an outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice—just in case the outage spans several hours. Having a cooler ready to go can buy extra time for your refrigerated, perishable items.

### During an outage

If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.


### After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items. If any foods have an unusual color, odor or texture, they should be thrown away.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out after an extended outage, there are a few items that are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

- hard cheeses that are properly wrapped
- butter or margarine that is properly wrapped
- taco, barbecue and soy sauces
- peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish

The best way to avoid illness from spoiled food during or after an outage is to follow the four-hour rule of thumb. After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit [www.ready.gov/food](http://www.ready.gov/food). 



# Manager's Update

By Craig Herbert

We hope each of you had a safe and enjoyable summer. For those of you out there farming and ranching, we hope harvest season is going well and as planned.

We here at NorVal Electric have a few changes underway to address. We are moving forward with our projects, but facing challenges with material availability caused by post-pandemic production issues. When we are fortunate enough to purchase and receive the materials that we need to complete our projects, we are paying about three to five times the amount we've paid in the last few years. Inflation is impacting the material market heavily, making it difficult for suppliers to obtain equipment to sell to merchants. This in turn is affecting our business and our productivity levels.

At this time, a standard household transformer has been quoted to ship out in a minimum of 170 weeks (3 years and 3 months). Our staff is working diligently to acquire transformers large enough to power our member homes in a timely manner.

We are doing the very best we can to serve our members and folks that want to build on our system. The continuous rising cost of living means rising costs for businesses all around. Our wholesale power supplier is undergoing a formal rate increase in January 2023, which means that our association dues will increase in order to cover inflation on operation costs. Drought and inflation, both state and nationwide, were the main factors in determining rate increases. When we experience a drought, our energy supplier has to purchase power for us on the open market. Since the open market is not the traditional route for power purchases it can be very, very expensive.

With an increase to our power costs and materials, NorVal will be looking to implement a rate increase on the power that we supply to our members. While this is not something we want to do, our primary goal is to effectively serve our members, while managing the costs to do so. We will continue to monitor all the processes that affect NorVal Electric and we will keep you informed.

## Nick's Notes

By Nick Dulaney,  
Line Superintendent

Since our last issue, we have experienced a variety of weather conditions across our system. In mid-July the townsite of Glentana sustained significant damages from a tornado that left members out of power for several days. The same storm left us with many broken poles in the Dredge Cuts area as well, leaving us quite the mess to clean up for several weeks.

In total, we lost 33 poles to high winds and storm damage. Our crews worked from sun up to sundown most days, completing the work just before the hot weather settled in. The mixture of hot weather and dry conditions caused an increase in fires across our system. We replaced several burned poles in the Lustre area from fires in early August. There were also fires that were triggered by tree branches rubbing on our lines. With that said, if you see trees intruding on our right of way, please call them in so we can get them trimmed up before the threat of any wind or inclement weather rolls in.

Construction and new services are still being built across our system. There have been a number of requests to upgrade older services as well. Our crews have also been doing a lot service upgrades at bin sites this summer to accommodate additional amperage. Please remember that our power lines hang an average of 18' to 20' high. Should you upgrade to taller farming equipment, it's important to consider the line height at your farm when moving equipment around your facility. We would appreciate our members avoiding contact with our lines at all costs. Should you be unsure of the height or how to measure the line around your facility, please give our office a call and we can certainly set up time to measure it for you.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified.

Source: Dept. of Energy

