

Spring Storm Wreaks Havoc

The NorVal Linemen were called out the morning of April 28th for an unplanned power interruption. The weather service had predicted rain turning into snow, which further complicated the power recovery efforts. But, by 3:00 p.m. that Sunday, the wintery mix had turned into an all out battle of wits with Mother Nature.

Four trucks were sent to the northern half of the NorVal service territory, to conquer and divide. However, that tactic was soon found to be a bit more complicated than anticipated! The first rain fall had quickly frozen into a muddy, slushy mess making travel nearly impossible and the roads nearly impassable. Two trucks found themselves stuck. Luckily, help was nearby! Once recovered, the crews were able to resume efforts in the near white-out conditions.

In the meantime, some of the office staff had been called into the office to man the phones. The calls flooded in giving those affected by the power outage a chance to hear from a familiar voice that the crews were hard at work trying to restore the power.

As the snow continued to fall, the crews focused on breaking the system into sections so that they could work on a more manageable scale. An imaginary line divided the work and the linemen worked with each other to patrol the line, then relay radio communications to “heat up” the line from one substation to the next.

Unfortunately, not everything works like you anticipate it should. As the crews continued to do their best to patrol the line to see where the problems were, the little daylight they had was quickly turning to night. Seeing the road and the power line was becoming increasingly difficult. As they sectionalized the line, they were able to determine that one of the

problems was on the West Transmission line. In order to get everyone back on, they began switching the feed around to redirect power from one line that they knew was safe and clear to the areas without power. When the last piece of the outage puzzle was put in place, the office staff waited with weighted breath to see if the load would hold. The entire afternoon and evening had come down to this. Sadly, it did not hold and soon members who had enjoyed lights and heat were again in the dark.

The linemen quickly came up with another plan of attack. But, as the weather conditions deteriorated making visibility impossible and travel treacherous, management decided that the safety of the crew was the most important factor and the linemen were instructed to return to the office to begin again the next morning.

Monday morning, April 29th, proved to be a better day not only for visibility, but for travel as well.

The plan was multi-pronged. NorVal’s linemen are very talented, and one of them is a pilot who offered to get a bird’s eye view of the system to find the potential problem. They quickly ascended into the skies to patrol the line, while the other crews were dispatched to patrol from the ground. A fresh set of eyes and few hours of rest were all the linemen needed.

From the air, they found broken cross arms and wire burnt down. Meanwhile, crew members worked to restore power to substations again. Once an area was powered up, they would move on to the next. By early afternoon, the entire system had been repaired and only a few straggling meters were left to be restored.

We truly appreciate the efforts of the linemen, office staff and management who worked around the clock to restore power and appreciate all the

thoughtful messages on our Facebook page! 



Truck #32, battling snow and ice covered roads.



The insulator had burnt off, causing the fault. A fly-over in the daytime made this visible.

In the recent weeks, we’ve found Facebook to be an extremely efficient way to share important details with you, our valued members. Throughout the duration of the outage at the end of April, using this platform to share important information was a quick way to update those affected on our progress to restore power. If you haven’t yet, be sure to “Like” us! Go to www.facebook.com/norvalelectric and hit the “Like” button to receive all of our updates!

As a quick example of how fast news travels, the picture above of the snow-covered bucket truck reached over 12,600 people. We are sharing energy saving tips, safety ideas, co-op updates and more. Find us on Facebook! 



Recipe Corner

Pork Chops with Roasted Apples and Brussels Sprouts

- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground red pepper
- 1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp. light brown sugar, divided
- 2 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 4 (1 in. thick) bone in, center cut pork chops
- 3 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. olive oil, divided
- 3 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 Gala apple, cut into 1/2 in. wedges
- 1 lb. fresh Brussels sprouts, trimmed and cut in half

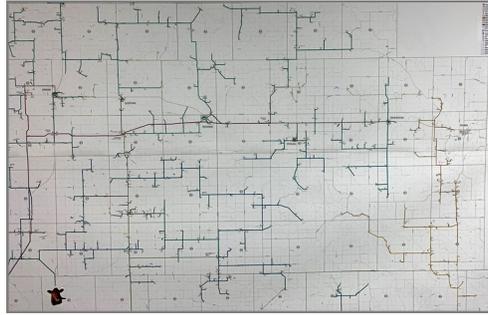
Vegetable cooking spray

Preheat oven to 425. Stir together first 5 ingredients in a small bowl plus 1 tsp. brown sugar, 1 tsp. rosemary, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/3 tsp. black pepper. Rub each pork chop with 1/2 tsp. olive oil, rub each pork chop with mixture.*

Whisk together apple cider vinegar and remaining brown sugar, rosemary, salt and black pepper. Whisk in remaining olive oil. Place apples, Brussels sprouts, and 1/4 cup mixture in a large bowl and toss to coat. Bake at 425 degrees for 12 minutes, turn pork chops over and bake 10-14 minutes until meat thermometer registers 140 degrees. Transfer pork chops to a serving platter, and cover with foil. Stir apple mixture in sheet pan. Turn oven to broil. Broil 3-4 minutes until slightly charred. Transfer mixture to bowl and toss with remaining vinegar mixture. Season with kosher salt and serve with pork chops.

*For zestier flavor chill pork chops in brown sugar mixture overnight. 🍷

Spring Storm Visually



One of the maps we use to see the power lines, substations and taps.



Behind the snow and ice are the toolboxes containing the material & tools the linemen use.



Near white-out conditions on Highway 24 North, around mile marker 33.



The drifting of the snow made travel difficult, and nearly impossible!



The road was condensed into a two-track lane!

Right: Pilot and Lineman Jayson Nelson with Co-pilot and Lineman Gavin Krauth.



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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

