

OWEN ELECTRIC CONNECTION

March 2022 • Owen Electric • A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Prepare for spring storms now

Storms can be unpredictable—December’s tornado outbreak taught us that. We were fortunate to be spared the destruction that south-western Kentucky experienced, and when the storms had passed, we were able to send 17 lineworkers to support and assist three sister cooperatives in their power restoration efforts.

Fortunately, storms of that magnitude are rare, but by preparing now, you and your family can have supplies ready and a plan in place when severe weather threatens. Here are three things you can do now, just in case:

- Begin by creating a family disaster plan; this is a great activity to include the entire family in. If your area has a public warning system, know what the sounds mean and what actions you need to take if you hear them. Consider that your family may not be together when an emergency happens—where will you meet if you can’t communicate? Have a plan to take care of your pets, and post emergency numbers where they are visible and handy. Make sure the adults living in the household know how to shut off water and gas. Write down this information and keep it in a safe place that everyone in your home can access.



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- Second, pay attention to the path of approaching storms, and stay tuned to your local weather station or National Weather Service. Purchase a battery-operated weather radio or have battery backup chargers ready to keep your mobile device powered.
- Finally, put together an emergency kit. Include a copy of your disaster plan, a flashlight, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, water, work gloves, toiletries and tools. You might also include medications, books, paper and pencils.

If you have a backup generator, make sure you know how to use it properly. If used incorrectly, a generator can backfeed electricity onto otherwise de-energized lines, creating a serious electrocution hazard for lineworkers making repairs. Also, to

reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, never run a generator in an enclosed space, and always have working carbon monoxide detectors.

Also, it is not a bad idea to check the trees around your home and property regularly for dead or loose branches. Trimming and removing them can prevent damage or injury later.

We pray a disaster never strikes, but it’s always a good idea to be prepared for an unforeseen emergency. At Owen Electric, safety is paramount. We’ll always strive to keep our members and employees safe.

President and CEO
Michael Cobb



Mutual aid fosters solidarity among co-ops

December 10 is a date that won't soon be forgotten by the thousands of people affected by the tornado outbreak. When disaster strikes and power outages result, we know our fellow co-ops can be counted on to respond quickly and assist in making repairs. Likewise, we are happy to respond when other co-ops are in need. Owen Electric sent three crews to southwestern Kentucky cooperatives: Farmers RECC in Glasgow; Inter-County Energy in Danville; and Warren RECC in Bowling Green.



Owen Electric crew, from left, Alan Brann, Kevin Hill, James Juett, Orman Glass, John Lilly, Ricky Mason, John Fitzgerald, Brad Forsee, Mint Miller and Tony Bach assisted Warren RECC. Photo: Alan Brann



Kevin Hill, crew foreman, snapped this photo of a beautiful sunrise as his fellow linemen made repairs to lines.



From left, Nate Pickett, Bryan Viers, Dylan Howell and Charlie Colligan assisted Farmers RECC and Warren RECC. Photo: Whitney Duvall



From left, Joe Waichulis, Josh Hearn, Dalton Anderson and Matt Blevins assisted Inter-County Energy and Warren RECC. Photo: Whitney Duvall

Becky Mefford: Making a difference in the lives of Owen County youth

2021 #WhoPowersYou second place winner

Becky Mefford's office in the Owen County High School building isn't large, but the work she does to help underprivileged kids in Owen County certainly is. Shelves on one side of the narrow room are lined with food, and clothing items ready to go to students in need of a coat or shoes are scattered here and there. "We're out of Pop Tarts today, sorry," she tells a student looking for breakfast. It's the kind of office where kids stick their heads in the door looking for something they just can't get from home, and she knows them all by name by the time they hit high school.

Mefford has been the Owen County Youth Services Center coordinator for 15 years, and for her work making a difference in the lives of children, she was named the second place winner in Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives' Who Powers You contest.

The contest was created to reward and support co-op members who are making a difference in the communities served by Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, which serves more than 1.1 million people in 87 counties.

Mefford works with Owen County youth from fifth grade through senior year in high school, and describes her job as trying to remove barriers for students to achieve a quality education. "It's a variety of things. Whatever we can do to help students graduate, be successful, and go on to future careers," Mefford says. But Jamie Olds, who nominated Mefford for the award, says she does so much more than that.

"I feel she goes above and beyond for the community of Owen County, and I feel this is a way to celebrate the heroes, who at times, seem to go unnoticed in our communities," Olds says. "Without people like Becky and these services—there would be a great void if they were



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not available. This is a position that takes calls and meets needs no matter the time of day or night, holiday, etc. She is an individual #WhoPowersMe with inspiration to look for more opportunities to give back!"

Along with mental health and social services, food pantry items, power pack programs and suicide prevention, Mefford also is trying to get students ready for college and what comes after. But for some of these students, she's just trying to meet their most basic needs and propel them from one day to the next toward a high school diploma, and hopefully a life beyond that free from poverty.

But sometimes, even talking about how massive the need is in her hometown, where she went to elementary, middle and high school and where she raises her own children, is more than she can say aloud.

"It's like putting a Band-Aid on a gaping wound a lot of days, but I love

it," Mefford says through tears that she couldn't hold any longer. "It's important for me because I feel like it's something I've been called to do. It's a mission to love God and love others, and I feel like I'm able to do that in my job."

"Becky deserves to be recognized as a reminder that her work does matter and people do notice the sacrifices that she has to make, they are worth it," Olds says in her nomination.

"I do it for the kids and families, most definitely, or otherwise I'd have been gone," Mefford laughs. "You do for one what you wish you could do for them all."

Mefford said she's donating her \$750 second place check to the program, because this has been a particularly hard year, and the program is behind this year because "there are just so many needs," Mefford says, again through welling eyes. "My budget is tight, usually, so I'm excited to get it."

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Office Hours:

Monday – Friday

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Toll-free 1-800-372-7612

Owenton Office

8205 Hwy 127 N.

P.O. Box 400

Owenton, KY 40359-0400

(502) 484-3471

Boone County Office

Florence Government Center

8100 Ewing Blvd.

Florence, KY 41042

Grant County Office

300 Arbor Drive, Suite 1

Dry Ridge, KY 41035

Pendleton County Office

10599 Hwy 27 N.

Butler, KY 41006

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WIRE scholarship applications available

The Kentucky Chapter of Women in Rural Electrification (WIRE) is offering three \$1,000 scholarships to Kentucky college students.

The scholarships are open to any applicant who meets the following criteria:

- Student or student's family must be served by a Kentucky rural electric cooperative.
- Student must have completed at least 60 credit hours at the end of the 2021 fall college term.
- Student must attend a Kentucky college or university.

The scholarship application deadline

is June 14, 2022. Scholarship recipients will be notified in July.

Scholarships will be awarded based on academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, career goals, recommendations from professors and community leaders, and financial need. Scholarship applications can be found online. Go to <https://kyelectric.coop>, and search "WIRE."

Mail applications to:

Mary Beth Dennis

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives

P.O. Box 32170

Louisville, KY 40232

AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

7 Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives are autonomous organizations created to help the members who control them. If they enter into agreements with other organizations or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



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