

OWEN ELECTRIC CONNECTION

March 2021 • Owen Electric • A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Pandemic anniversary marks spring's rebirth

This month marks a “pan-iversary”—one year since the coronavirus pandemic upended our lives. Now, as the deployment of vaccines provides hope that life can return to normal this year, the annual promise of spring takes on special meaning as crocus and daffodils begin to poke their heads out of the ground.

Throughout the pandemic, Owen Electric Cooperative has diligently worked to provide you with safe and reliable electricity, and we are hopeful that we will soon be able to resume normal operations and engagement with our valued members.

Meanwhile, the change of seasons is also accompanied by several safety considerations. March can come in like a lion; tree limbs can break and street signs take flight with high wind gusts.

Now is a good time to inspect your property for dead trees or overhanging branches near structures, and loose roofing materials. Please contact Owen Electric if you notice any tree limbs in contact with power lines, and do not attempt to clear them yourself.

As the weather turns warmer, it also inspires an increase in outdoor work, both on the job and at home. Awareness



RONSTIK/CANVA

of electrical safety can help ensure these activities do not result in injuries and deaths.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (www.ESFI.org) provides several important reminders:

- Ladders—even those made of wood—that come into contact with a power line can prove fatal. Keep all ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Unplug outdoor tools and appliances when not in use.
- Inspect power tools and appliances for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housing. Repair or replace damaged items.
- Water and electricity do not mix. Avoid damp conditions—including wet grass—when using electricity.

Safety remains the top priority at Owen Electric and our safety culture is crucial to ensuring that our entire co-op family, from our line technicians to the members at the end of the line, are safe and sound.

We look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2021. Know that all of us at Owen Electric are committed to serve you and staying safe while doing it.

President and CEO
Michael Cobb



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Meet your cooperative directors

We're continuing our Meet Your Cooperative Director series, inviting you to learn more about the directors that serve Owen Electric's membership. This month features John Grant, District 5-Boone County, and Rick Messingschlager, District 6-Kenton County.



PHOTOS: TIM WEBB

John Grant

John Grant began his service on the Owen Electric Board of Directors in 2003, representing the members of District 5-Southern Boone County. He has served two terms as chairman, once in 2012 and again in 2020.

Having attended Northern Kentucky University and Thomas More College, John enjoyed a 30-year career in manufacturer sales, representing 30 different companies.

"I am honored and privileged to be working at Owen Electric and enjoy working with all the outstanding and professional people who work to meet the needs of our 63,000 members each day," John says. "We are all committed to providing the best rates and service possible and making the best management decisions for all."

In his spare time, John enjoys traveling, golf, and watching the University of Kentucky Wildcats and the Cincinnati Bengals.

John and his wife, Kay, have been married 47 years and have a son, John, and four grandchildren, Elijah, Johnny, Wyatt and Nellie.

Rick Messingschlager

A lifelong resident of Kenton County, Rick Messingschlager joined the Owen Electric Board of Directors in 2014, representing District 6 and the county he's always called "home."

Rick began his career working at Cincinnati Milacron as a machinist and process engineer while also volunteering with the Independence Fire District. After 22 years with Cincinnati Milacron, he decided to pursue his career full time with the Independence Fire District and is now retired after serving for 35 years as fire chief.

Along with his son, Mark, Rick operates the family's farms, raising cattle, growing hay and silage corn. They also enjoy tractor pulling and are members of the Northern Kentucky Tug Pullers.

Calling it an "honor to serve," Rick enjoys the opportunity to represent the members of Kenton County on the board of directors.

"It didn't take me long to see that everyone at the co-op is treated as family—it is truly a pleasure serving with a co-op, where its members are also the owners," he says.

Rick is also a member of the Independence Fire District Board, acts as treasurer of the Kenton County Fire Chiefs Association, and is president of the Kenton County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Rick and his wife, Marian, have three children, Mark, Katie and Kelly, one grandchild and another on the way.

Spring forward

Plant responsibly to keep your power flowing

There's nothing quite as beautiful in nature as trees. Their buds mark the coming of spring. They provide shade and shelter in the summer. In the fall, their brilliant colors paint the landscape.

We love trees—except those growing under or too near Owen Electric power lines.

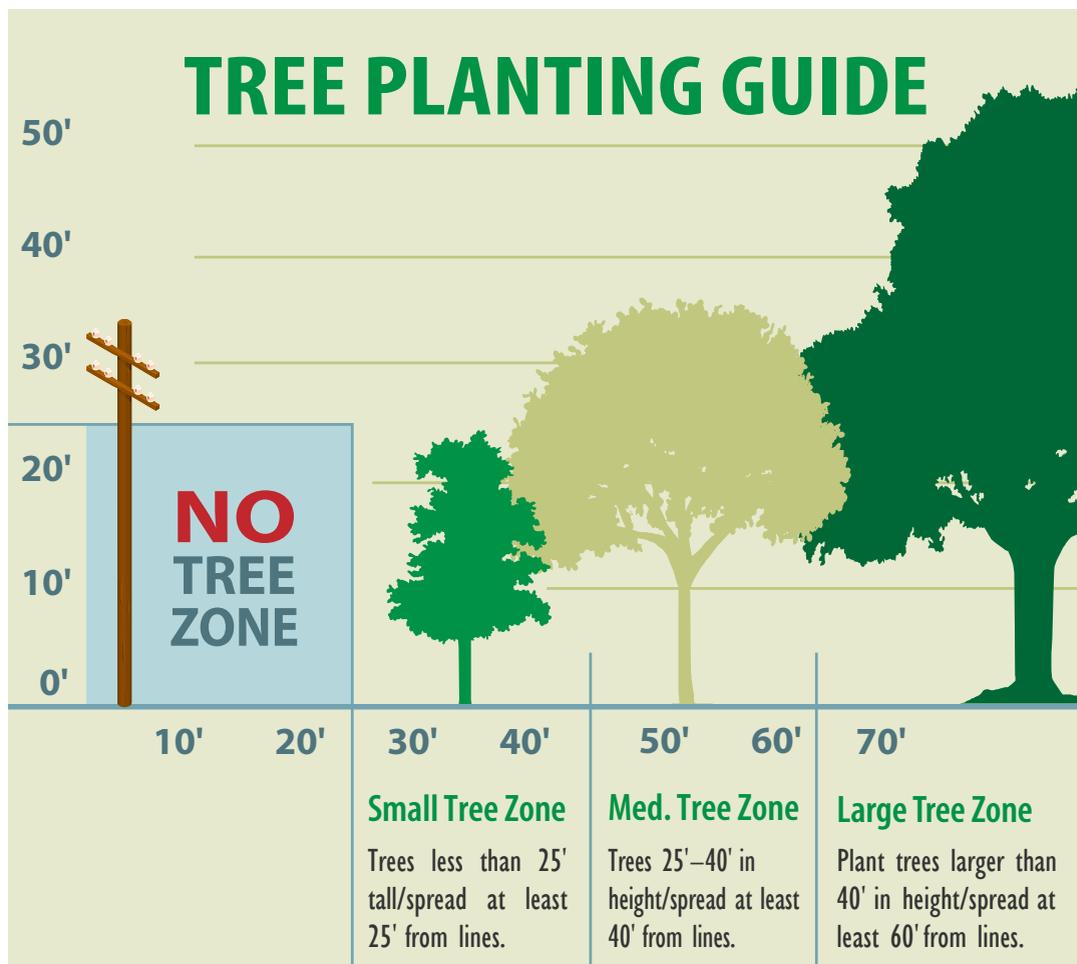
When there's stormy weather in the forecast, those natural beauties can become enemies.

Trees are one of the leading causes of electrical power interruptions. Just a single limb that comes into contact with a power line can blink lights or cause an outage.

Maintaining reliable electric service is a top priority at Owen Electric. That's why we regularly trim and clear plant growth that can potentially cause an outage or hinder power line repairs by co-op line technicians.

Owen Electric has a 15-foot easement on each side of our power lines (a total of 30 feet) and a 20-foot easement on each side of the line on three-phase lines (a total of 40 feet). These easements serve as a buffer from encroaching limbs and vegetation that can interfere with electric service for you and your neighbors. That same area also allows us to access our wires and poles for maintenance and repairs.

We're doing all we can to manage vegetation and avoid electricity interruptions caused by overgrown vegetation. But we need your help, too.



This guide can help you plan for the potential growth of trees you plant. Please remember that there is an increased easement of 20 feet on each side of three-phase power lines. If you'd like more information, contact Right-of-Way Manager Tom Nelke at (800) 372-7612, ext. 3553.

If your spring plans include planting a tree, shrub or other ornamental plants, remember to first look up and be mindful of the location of power lines. Don't plant anything in the easement zone.

Remember: That tiny sapling you are planting will one day be a fully mature tree. For example, an oak tree can grow 8 feet in just one year if rain is abundant. Use the guide pictured on this page to determine the right planting spot so your prized tree won't

cause power line conflicts when it matures.

Owen Electric is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power. As we begin clearing vegetation along utility right-of-ways in your area, we'll send out phone calls alerting you. Please ensure we have the correct phone number on your Owen Electric account so you can be notified. To update, call us at (800) 372-7612, option 4, or online at <https://owenelectric.com/update-my-information-address>.

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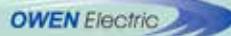
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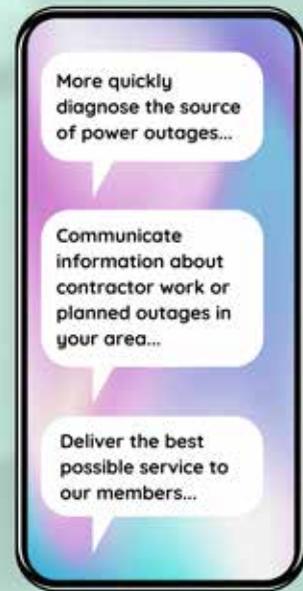


Do we have your number?

Update your contact information by calling (800) 372-7612, option 4, or at owenelectric.com.



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Together, we can overcome.

LIHEAP Crisis benefits are available now through March 31. Contact your local Community Action Agency for more info.

Contact Owen Electric to discuss setting up your past-due balance on a monthly payment plan.



SPRING INTO FARM SAFETY

IF YOU'RE INSIDE THE MACHINERY WHEN COMING IN CONTACT WITH A DOWNED POWER LINE:

- **If you can, drive safely away**, about 40 feet from the downed power line and the source of electricity.
- **If you can't drive or you are injured**, it's best to stay where you are until help arrives.
- **If a life-threatening situation arises**, jump out on both feet without touching machinery and ground at same time. Shuffle with feet together on ground until 40 feet away. Call 911.