

In blew the storm...

September snow leads to outages

An early September snowstorm that dumped 12-15 inches around the Valley and saw wind gusts reaching up to 80 MPH disrupted electricity for many SLV REC members.

The San Acacio area was the first affected by the squall as a sandstorm blew through on Sept. 8 leaving more than 10 poles and several lines down. REC crews worked to restore electricity to the members but were soon hit with the incoming snowstorm.

The heavy wet snow that moved in took down tree branches and electrical lines across the Valley disturbing power to nearly 6,700 REC members, mainly in the Creede, South Fork and Del Norte areas. However, outages were seen across REC's service territory.

All three line crews spent hours navigating the deep snow, removing tree branches—and in some cases, entire trees—to restore services. In addition, REC's substation techs, servicemen, staking engineers, fiber techs and various staff members braved the elements to help however they could. The customer service department fielded numerous phone calls and the dispatch area buzzed with activity. All REC employees were focused on a common goal—to restore power to members as quickly and safely as possible.

The average outage lasted a little over nine hours for members, with the longest lasting around 45 hours. In addition, a few irrigation services in the Stockade and San Acacio areas were down for a few days due to severe damages. A total of 25 poles had to be replaced in 13



Photo by Ronnie Spencer

Two of REC's linemen are discussing downed lines (shown on the left of the photo) following the Sept. 8-9 storm.

different locations. Although the outages only lasted a few days, cleanup work and repairs continued for two weeks following the storm.

REC Operations Superintendent Shawn McKibbon was impressed with his crews; "they did great, working through adverse conditions to restore power. They worked long days and worked hard to get the job done!"

Shawn wasn't the only one happy with the crews' actions following the storm; many members were thankful and appreciative as well. Numerous comments were posted on REC's Facebook page expressing gratitude and appreciation: "Be safe—thanks to all linemen... Thank you all for being so efficient. We are truly blessed with such a great team of workers... Thank

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A fallen pole was the result of a sandstorm that hit the San Acacio area on Tuesday afternoon.

Photo by Kevin McCarroll



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Power outage safety



Knowing what to do around a downed power line could save your life

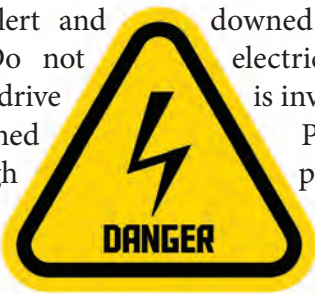
Old Man Winter can create some pretty severe storms, which can interfere with power distribution or even bring lines down.

What is the most important thing to remember about a downed power line?

DO NOT GO NEAR IT.

For any reason.

After a storm has caused damage in or alongside a roadway, be alert and slow down. Do not attempt to drive over downed lines or through water or over snow or debris that could be



covering downed lines. Driving over a line can pull more lines or related equipment down.

If you encounter a downed line, pull over and report location to 9-1-1.

Here is some additional information about downed lines, which can occur after a severe storm or an accident involving a power pole.

Q: Can I tell if a downed line is energized by looking?

A: No, there is no way to tell. Always assume a downed line (or any line) is live, even if it is not buzzing or sparking.

Q: What should I do if I am in an accident involving a power line or other electrical equipment?

A: DO NOT get out of your car or truck. It is always safer to remain inside a vehicle, which acts as an insulator and keeps you out of the path of stray electricity. Call 911, and tell the dispatcher a downed line or other electrical equipment is involved.

Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the power.

Q: Is there any reason I should get out of the vehicle?

A: Yes, but *only* when your vehicle is on fire or if you see smoke. If that is the case, make a clean jump from the vehicle without touching it (cross your arms closely to your chest), and then hop with feet together as far as you can—preferably 50 or more feet away.

Find more Q/A online at: slvrec.com/known-what-to-do-around-downed-power-line-could-save-your-life

STORM

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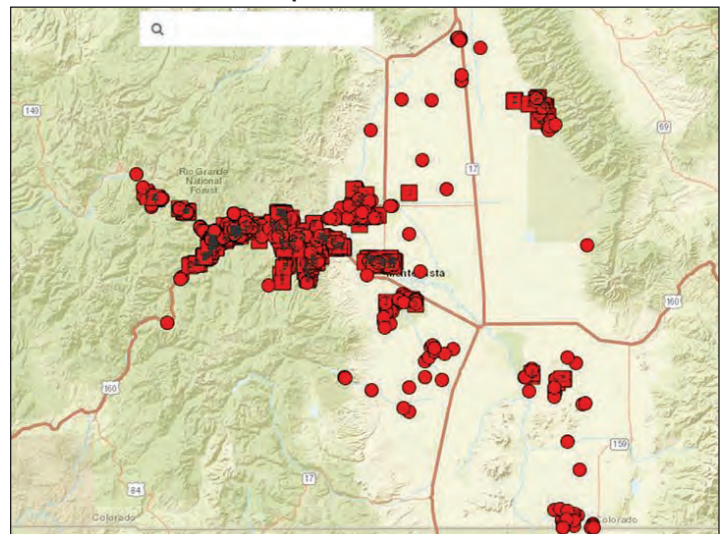
you to the SLV REC crews who worked all night in miserable conditions to get our power back on by 5 a.m. at my place in Alpine. The heavy snow has torn several tree limbs off in my yard and crushed a few others under the load..." One member sent a thank you card to the office, "Just wanted to express my thanks to SLV REC for coming to Masonic Park to get a tree off a power line on Pavilion Drive after the snowstorm. Also, your 24-hour hotline was awesome, letting us know you were aware of the outage. Let me tell you, that is not nearly as simple to get that information in Oklahoma. Thanks again!"

Following a major storm that caused so many downed limbs and power lines, it was encouraging for the crews to hear the words of thanks. SLV REC members are the best!



Photo by Ronnie Spencer

Area Serviceman Kevin McCarroll's truck got stuck as the sandstorm came up in the San Acacio area.



The above map shows how widespread the outages were.



Loren Howard

Fire safety

Certainly, this has been another difficult and tragic year with fires here in Colorado and around the country. While the smoke here in the San Luis Valley is both unsightly and can present health issues, the negative economic impact and risks to property and life are the real consequences of these fires. The Valley is no stranger to these wildfires. The 2014 West Fork Fire and the 2018 Spring Creek Fire both were challenging, scary, devastating and negatively impactful events on the Valley and residents.

REC is very conscious of fires and the causes of them. While lightning is often the cause, as is human negligence, falling trees that contact power lines and knock down the power line can also cause fires. With all the beetle kill of pine trees in the past years, this is and will increasingly be a concern. REC employs a vegetation management company to clear vegetation including brush and trees around REC's power lines on an ongoing basis. The goal is to cover the entire REC electric system every three years. This means trimming brush and trees back enough so they will not be a concern for three years. Often, the tree trimming crews are questioned why

they cut so much. Well, the answer to that, as noted, is the trimming has to keep the trees and brush away from the power lines for three years.

Another measure that REC takes to minimize the risk of fires being caused by downed power lines is to put fault detecting equipment into what is called "one-shot." What does that mean? When the electric system is in its normal configuration, a fault



(power line down, tree branch on the line, etc.) detected by a circuit breaker will open the line, wait a short time (typically 20-30 seconds) and then attempt to reclose. The circuit breaker will try this twice and if the fault continues, then the circuit breaker will "lock out" and not try again. This is the normal protection system configuration and is set this way to minimize unnecessary power interruptions in situations where the fault clears by itself. While this helps avoid unnecessary prolonged outages, attempting to reclose on a fault also increases the probability of causing a fire. Like many choices in life, this is a trade-off. During seasons or periods of high fire danger, REC errs on the side of caution, minimizing danger of fires.

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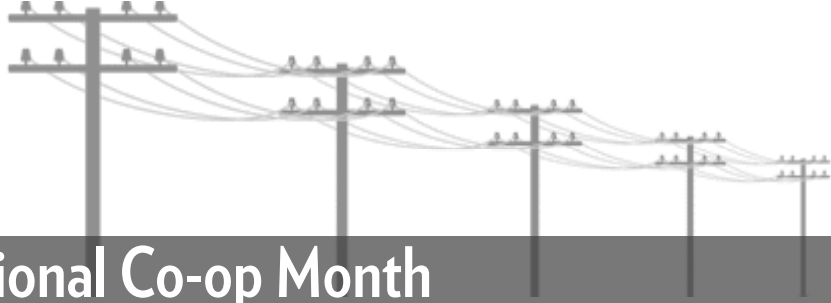
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October is National Co-op Month

Power On

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community— and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” This principle is the essential DNA of San Luis Valley REC, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.



cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, we recognize the essential role REC plays in serving special communities like ours.

Who would have fathomed in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our community *and* our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities.

Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and REC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements. We also offered payment assistance through SLV REC Foundation funds, a program made possible through your kind donations.

We, at SLV REC, care about this community—because we live here too. In 1937, SLV REC was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do – Power On.

Historical happenings

Rural Electrification Act of 1936:

Nearly 1,000 RECs were formed, not for profit, but to supply electricity to their own citizens. Two purposes: Extend power lines into rural areas & employ the unemployed during the Great Depression



Conservation Corner

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Source: www.energystar.gov





Recipe of the month

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ c. white whole wheat flour
- 1 c. brown sugar
- ¾ c. white sugar
- ¾ c. canola oil
- 1 t. pumpkin pie seasoning
- 1 t. salt
- ¾ c. pumpkin puree
- ¾ c. milk
- ¼ c. brewed espresso or strong coffee
- 1 egg
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1 c. finely chopped pecans
- 1 t. ground cinnamon

PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE COFFEE CAKE

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a stand mixer (use the whisk attachment), add flour, brown sugar, white sugar, vegetable oil, salt and pumpkin pie seasoning. Mix together until combined.
3. Remove 1½ cups of mixture and add to a small bowl; this is for your topping.
4. Next add finely chopped pecans to the topping mixture in the small bowl and then add cinnamon. Stir topping and set aside.
5. In the stand mixer, add milk, pumpkin puree, brewed espresso or coffee, egg, baking soda and baking powder.
6. Mix at slow speed until there are no more lumps.
7. Grease and flour a 9” springform cake pan (or you could use a 13”x9” glass pan), and add cake batter.
8. Next, evenly spread pecan topping over batter.
9. Place in oven 55-60 minutes (or until a toothpick comes out clean) if using a springform pan or 35-40 if using a 13”x9” pan.

Recipe by www.joyfulhealthyeats.com

Member engagement

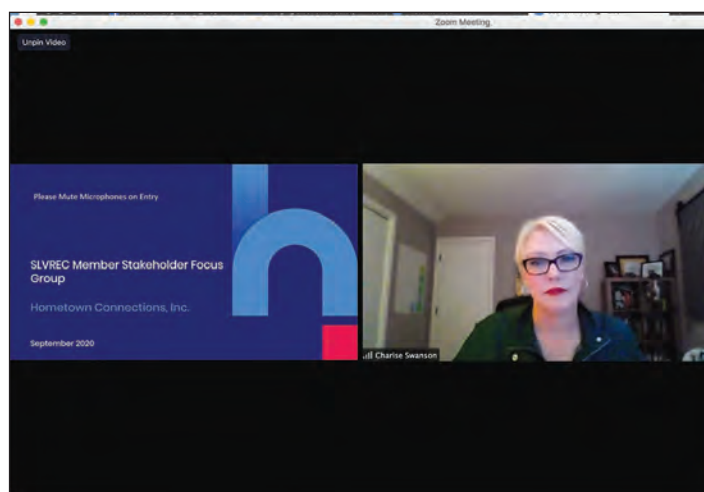
Focus groups begin

Fifteen residential members will be actively engaged in three focus group meetings as part of the stakeholder engagement process. The group encompasses residents from all six San Luis Valley counties.

The first meeting was held via Zoom on Sept. 23. An independent facilitator led discussion on the changing electric industry, as well as the development and explanation of rates. Meeting two will be held on Oct. 21; topics will include rate comparisons across the region, fairness across customer segments and SLV REC rate components and changes. The third and final meeting will be held on Nov. 18.

As the conversations develop, the participating members will have an opportunity to express their thoughts on rates, rate design and more.

A report from this meeting series will be produced



The first of three focus group meetings was held on Sept. 23 via Zoom with Hometown Connections facilitating.

and presented to the REC Board of Directors as part of the stakeholder engagement process.



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POWERING A VITAL VALLEY

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October 2020



Our lines are shaped by you,
the members we serve.
October is National Co-op Month.
#PowerOn



POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

SLVREC's office is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. (The office is currently closed to the public due to the pandemic; watch slvrec.com for updates)

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SCHEDULED MEETINGS
Board Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 27, 9:30 a.m.
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice is required.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

