

Make Storm Safety a Priority

Know what to do during lightning, flash floods and when power lines are down



Wyatt Stahl likes to dress up like his grandpa, Rusty Sherman, Graham County Electric Cooperative's assistant lineman superintendent—one of the people responsible for restoring power after an outage.

Photo by Rusty Sherman

Electrical safety during and after storms are a priority for electric companies throughout the country. Like the recent storms in Texas, Arizona can have a number of flash floods, lightning strikes, downed power lines and power outages.

Graham County Electric Cooperative prepares each year with your safety in mind by training our linemen and scheduling two on-call crews for quick response during the monsoon season.

You also can prepare for storms—whether in your home or elsewhere—with an eye toward electrical safety.

Outside During a Lightning Storm

What if a lightning storm strikes while you are outside?

- Move to a low point. Go to a ditch, if possible.
- Stay away from trees. Lightning hits the tallest available object, so get down low in a crouched position if you are in an exposed area.
- Avoid metal. Do not hold on to metal items such as golf clubs, tools, bats or fishing rods. Stay away from clotheslines, poles, fences and metal sheds.
- Stay away from water, including pools, lakes, puddles or damp areas, such as grass.

Inside During a Lightning Storm

Observe the following safety tips if you notice lightning while you are inside:

- Avoid contact with water and plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and outer doors. Lightning can strike even inside the house.
- If possible, unplug electronic equipment before the storm arrives. However, avoid contact with electrical equipment and cords during the storm.

- Use corded telephones only for emergencies.

Stay In Your Car During Lightning

If there is lightning outside while you are driving in your car:

- Do not leave your vehicle during a thunderstorm. A vehicle is considered safe during a storm if it is fully enclosed with a metal top such as a hard-top car, minivan, bus, truck, etc.
- While inside a safe vehicle, do not use electronic devices such as radio communications. If possible, lower the antenna of your radio.
- Remember that flash floods are common in the dry deserts of Arizona. They often happen quickly and sometimes without visible signs of rain.

Do's and Don'ts During a Flash Flood

Be prepared for flash floods:

- Listen to the radio or television for information in your area.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, washes and other areas known to flood suddenly. Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks during threatening conditions.
- If you are outside, move to higher ground.
- If you are in your home and feel you are in danger, do not wait for instructions to move. If you evacuate your home, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves and disconnect electrical appliances. However, do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- Do not walk through moving water. Just six inches of moving water can make you fall.
- Do not drive into flooded areas or if a road is covered with running water. You do not know how stable the roadway



If a power line comes down on your vehicle, stay inside unless it is unsafe to do so, such as in the event of fire. If you must get out, be cautious and avoid becoming a path for the electricity to the ground.

is under the moving water, and the car could be swept away with you inside.

Caution Near Downed Power Lines

If you encounter a downed power line:

- Call 911 immediately to report a fallen power line.
- Never assume the power line is de-energized. Even though it may be on the ground or other equipment, electricity still may be flowing.
- Never touch a downed power line or anything touching the wire.
- Do not touch anyone in contact with a fallen power line or other equipment.
- Do not drive over a fallen line.

Additional Power Line Safety

If a power line falls onto your car or you failed to see a downed line and drive onto it, take these steps:

- If you are in your car and it is in contact with the downed line, stay in your car. Warn others to stay away.
- If you must leave your car because it is on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the “live” car and the ground at the same time. You must avoid being the path of electricity from the car to the ground. Shuffle away from the car.

GCEC wants you to be safe during summer storms and will do everything within its power to keep the lights on. ■

Prepare an Outage Kit

Despite your utility’s best efforts to keep your power on, Mother Nature sometimes has the last word.

Weather can wreak havoc on the power system, toppling poles, bringing down lines and leaving customers without electricity.

To better cope, make sure your home is equipped with a power outage kit. It should include:

- ▶ A flashlight and extra batteries.
- ▶ Candles and matches.
- ▶ A battery-powered radio.
- ▶ Emergency phone numbers for your utility, doctor, fire department and police.
- ▶ A telephone connected directly to the phone jack. Cordless phones and phones with answering machines require electricity.
- ▶ A first-aid kit and an ample supply of all medications you regularly use.
- ▶ Extra blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothes.
- ▶ At least one gallon of drinking water for each person per day.
- ▶ A manual can opener and nonperishable food. Canned or instant food and freeze-dried meals are good to have on hand, but often require hot water and/or a source of heat to prepare (a camp stove and fuel may be handy, but be sure to use it outdoors). Breakfast bars, crackers, peanut butter, and canned or dried fruit require no preparation. Don’t forget paper plates.
- ▶ A cooler for storing frequently used foods. Food will keep several hours in a closed refrigerator and up to two days in the freezer. It will spoil more quickly if the door is opened or the refrigerator or freezer isn’t full.
- ▶ Firewood and kindling if you have a woodstove or fireplace.



Be Safe Around Natural Gas

Call 811 before you begin any kind of digging

If you have a natural gas line running underground from the gas meter to a structure or a gas-burning appliance, please take note: In accordance with federal regulations, Graham County Utilities offers recommendations regarding your underground gas pipeline.

GCU operates the gas system with an emphasis on safety. The co-op is required to design, operate and maintain the underground natural gas pipeline system in accordance with prescribed federal safety standards.

GCU does not maintain the gas pipeline downstream of the gas meter. That is the responsibility of the customer who owns that pipe line.

If the buried pipe is not properly maintained, it may be subject to corrosion if the pipeline is metallic, and/or leakage.

To ensure the continued safe and reliable operation of these lines, the buried pipe should be checked periodically.

You or the building owner are advised

to contact a licensed plumber or heating contractor to help you locate and inspect your buried gas line.

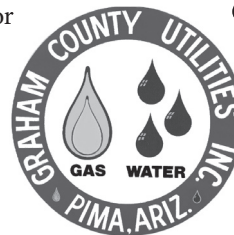
Natural gas appliances such as furnaces, water heaters and stoves should be serviced by a licensed contractor, as noted in the operating manuals.

General Safety Rules

By itself, natural gas will not burn, but combustion can occur when a mixture of natural gas (5 to 15 percent) and air (85 to 95 percent) are combined.

Because natural gas is odorless, the gas supplier adds a chemical called mercaptan, which smells like rotten eggs. If the odor is strong in your home or business:

- Do not light matches.
- Do not turn lights on or off.
- Do not use the telephone.
- Notify everyone in the home or building to vacate the premises.
- Call the gas company or dial 911 from a nearby home or building.
- Do not re-enter your home until the gas company has informed you it is safe.



Observe These Guidelines

Take note of these additional safety tips:

- Follow manufacturer instructions for the use and care of gas appliances.
- Make sure appliances are properly vented.
- Keep combustibles—paper, rags, fluids, paints and curtains—away from your gas furnace, water heater, stove and dryer.
- Keep a fire extinguisher near gas appliances at all times.
- Keep appliances clean of debris, dust, grease and other materials.
- Install smoke detectors, and test and properly maintain them.
- Keep flues and chimneys clear of all debris.
- Make sure your heating system is inspected annually by a professional.
- If the pilot light or main burner does not ignite or stay lit, call a professional.
- Before digging around or starting any digging project around a buried gas line, call the one-call center at 811. ■

Employee Spotlight Line Crew Foreman Myles Ray

Myles Ray loves the outdoors, which is one reason he has enjoyed working for Graham County Electric for more than 22 years.

His journey does not start with electricity, but in Graham County Utilities' water department. When he was hired in 1993, it was a temporary position. GCU had applied for a grant to rebuild the Town of Pima's water system.

After working in the gas/water department, Myles was accepted into GCEC's lineman apprenticeship program.

The strenuous three- to four-year nationally recognized certified program consists of intense book work and field training with monthly testing, which Myles completed in three years.

"Myles' test scores were always well above the



Myles Ray, left, works with Ryan Botkins on top of a power pole. Below, Myles heads out on a job.

already-high passing grade expectation," says GCEC General Manager Steve Lines. "During the four-year program, there were different field training requirements that Myles excelled in."

The on-the-job training program consisted of working on lower voltage and climbing poles. Myles remembers beginning his work on less than 600-voltage wires, then advancing to single phase of

7,200 volts and three phase of 14,400 volts. Typical home services is 120 to 240 volts.

After graduating from the program, Myles advanced to journeyman lineman before assuming his current position as line foreman supervising a crew of five or six employees.

As a line crew foreman, Myles oversees the pole maintenance program. Between 300 and 500 poles a year are changed out. His crew also constructs new line, restores power and cleans rights of way. All of those tasks help keep power flowing to the members and reduce line loss.

As to the job's risks, "it's when you take short cuts—that is when you get in trouble," Myles says. "A lineman typically does 90 percent of line repairs on an energized line."

He recalls working in a bucket truck in the middle of a storm, with lightning all around him, in the dark.

"This is when we really earn our money in a dangerous situation, but you have to do it the safest way you can," he says.

Born in California, Myles lived in Bisbee about four years, but primarily was raised in Safford. He loves being outside, working on the ranch and hunting. He also has a good sense of humor.

Prior to joining the staff at GCEC, Myles worked for the City of Safford in the electric department for a year and with TRIO Power, building the steel transmission line from Tucson to 3-Way for more than three years.

"I appreciate Myles' continued commitment to GCEC members to keep their lights on," says Steve. "Myles is a prime example that home-grown journeyman linemen, with the apprenticeship program, are a good investment that pays off in the future for the co-op." ■



PUBLIC NOTICE OF HEARING ON APPLICATION OF ARIZONA ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE FOR AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT AN ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE ADJUSTMENT RIDER SURCHARGE MECHANISM DOCKET NO. E-01773A-12-0305

On April 30, 2014, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative Inc. (AEPSCO) filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission (Commission) an Application for Approval of a proposed Environmental Compliance Adjustment Rider and plan of administration (ECAR Application). AEPSCO was authorized to file the ECAR Application in this docket by Commission Decision No. 74173, which authorized AEPSCO's rate reduction request.

Graham County Electric Cooperative purchases electric generation services from AEPSCO. If approved as filed, the ECAR will allow AEPSCO to seek recovery of capital costs and chemical operating costs associated with environmental compliance for its generating facilities by passing those costs directly through to **Graham County Electric Cooperative** without the necessity of filing a rate increase request with the Commission. **Graham County Electric Cooperative** is not requesting an increase in rates from the Commission, but if the ECAR Application is approved, and AEPSCO is subsequently authorized to charge **Graham County Electric Cooperative** for ECAR costs through the ECAR surcharge, **Graham County Electric Cooperative** may elect to pass those Commission-approved ECAR surcharges through to its retail members via its purchased power adjustor. The Commission has therefore directed that notice of AEPSCO's ECAR Application be provided through **Graham County Electric Cooperative's** newsletter.

The Commission requested, and AEPSCO provided, estimates of possible **Graham County Electric Cooperative** retail member average monthly residential usage bill impacts in the event the ECAR Application is approved, and if AEPSCO is subsequently authorized to charge **Graham County Electric Cooperative** for ECAR costs through the ECAR surcharge, and if **Graham County Electric Cooperative** elects to pass those Commission-approved ECAR surcharges through to its retail members, as shown in the chart at right (page 29).

AEPSCO is scheduled to file testimony in support of its ECAR Application on June 19, 2015. The Commission's Utilities Division (Staff) will file testimony with its recommendations to the Commission on the ECAR Application on July 31, 2015, and any intervenors may file testimony with their recommendations to the Commission on the ECAR Application on August 14, 2015. A hearing will then be held during which evidence will be taken from the parties. Comments from the public will also be taken at the hearing. **THE COMMISSION IS NOT BOUND BY THE PROPOSALS MADE BY AEPSCO, STAFF OR ANY INTERVENORS.**

How You Can View or Obtain a Copy of the Application and Filings. Copies of the application and all other filings pertaining to the application are available from AEPSCO at 1000 S. Highway 80, Benson, AZ 85602; at the Commission's Docket Control Center at 1200 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ; and on the Internet via the Commission's website (www.azcc.gov) using the e-Docket function.

Arizona Corporation Commission Public Hearing Information. The Commission will hold a hearing on this matter beginning August 24, 2015, at 10 a.m., at the Commission's offices, 1200 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ. Public comments will be taken on the first day of the hearing. You may also file your written comments electronically by going to the Commission's homepage at www.azcc.gov and clicking on "Submit a Public Comment" button or mailing a letter referencing **Docket No. E-01773A-12-0305** to Arizona Corporation Commission, Consumer Services Section, 1200 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007. If you require assistance, you may contact the Consumer Services Section at 1-800-222-7000 or 602-542-4251.

Interested parties may participate in this matter through (1) filing for intervention and becoming

Year	Possible Monthly Impact From Capital Costs	Possible Monthly Impact From Chemical Operating Costs	Possible Total Monthly Impact
2016	\$0.11 to \$0.19	\$0.61 to \$2.10	\$0.72 to \$2.29
2017	\$0.53 to \$0.90	\$0.84 to \$2.91	\$1.37 to \$3.81
2018	\$0.94 to \$1.61	\$0.59 to \$2.34	\$1.53 to \$3.95
Years After 2018	No estimates provided	No estimates provided	No estimates provided

a formal party to the proceeding; or (2) written or oral public comment. Any interested person may file written public comments regarding AEPCO’s application in Docket No. E-01773A-12-0305 at any time.

If you do not intervene in this proceeding, you will receive no further notice of the proceedings in this docket. However, all documents filed in this docket are available online (usually within 24 hours after docketing) at the Commission’s website, www.azcc.gov, using the e-Docket function, located at the bottom of the website homepage. RSS feeds are also available through e-Docket.

About Intervention. The law provides for an open public hearing at which, under appropriate circumstances, interested parties may intervene. Any person or entity entitled by law to intervene and having a direct and substantial interest in the matter will be permitted to intervene. **If you wish to intervene, you must file an original and 13 copies of a written motion to intervene with the Commission, and you must send copies of the motion to AEPCO or its counsel and to all parties of record in the case. Your motion to intervene must contain the following:**

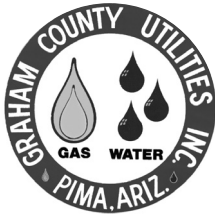
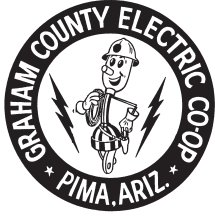
1. Your name, address, telephone number and that of any other person upon whom service of documents is to be made;
2. A short statement of your interest in the proceeding;
3. A statement certifying that you have mailed a copy of the motion to intervene to AEPCO or its counsel and to all parties of record in the case; and
4. If you are not an individual representing yourself and you are not represented by an attorney who

is an active member of the Arizona State Bar, any appropriate documentation demonstrating the intervenor’s compliance with Arizona Supreme Court Rules 31, 38, and 42, as applicable.

The granting of motions to intervene is governed by A.A.C. R14-3-105, except that **all motions to intervene must be filed on or before August 7, 2015.** The granting of intervention, among other things, entitles a party to present sworn evidence at the hearing and to cross examine other witnesses. However, failure to intervene will not preclude any interested person or entity from appearing at the hearing and making a statement on their own behalf. All parties must comply with Arizona Supreme Court Rules 31, 38, and 42 and A.R.S. § 40-243 with respect to the practice of law.

If you do intervene, and wish to present direct testimony and associated exhibits at the hearing, you must, on or before August 14, 2015: (1) reduce your direct testimony and associated exhibits to writing, (2) file the original and 13 copies with the Commission’s Docket Control Center by 4 p.m., and (3) mail a copy to each party.

Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”)/Equal Access Information. The Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to its public meetings. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter, as well as request this document in an alternative format, by contacting the ADA Coordinator, Shaylin Bernal, at SABernal@azcc.gov, voice phone number 602-542-3931. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.



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Manager's Message

Crew Trains for Monsoon Season

It is that time of year we start anticipating the summer monsoons here in Graham County. Everyone hopes for a good, wet summer because we all know our valley needs the rain. However, no one hopes or wishes for a lot of power outages. Along with the good side of rain often comes a side of severe lightning and wind that can cause power outages.

Around the middle of June, co-op line crew personnel have what we call pre-storm training—something I started 14 years ago. Line and dispatch employees come in for at least half a day to review outage response procedures, substation feeder lines, switching procedures and, most of all, safety procedures for both response crews and you, our member. They also discuss lessons learned from outages during the prior monsoon season so we can improve on getting your power back on as quickly and safely as possible.

Our after-hour dispatch service is handled by our own co-op employees, mainly by some of the women in our office lobby. They take weekly turns being on call and answering after-hour calls. This service is done in-house because we want to keep the local co-op connection with our members. We could have a call center take our after-hour calls, but our members would be talking to someone somewhere in Tennessee. We believe members prefer a local familiar voice.

We ask members to be patient during widespread outages because phone lines may be busy. We appreciate your calls, especially when you are reporting downed power lines or other things affecting delivery of power. Always remember in an emergency situation, when our phone lines are busy, you can call Graham County Sheriff's dispatch. They are in contact with our crews.

As part of your training, please read pages 4 and 5 of this edition for storm outage suggestions. On page 25, which is our spotlight page, we recognize one of our linemen who will be out restoring your power.

Let's all hope for some good rainstorms this summer to replenish our water supply. Let's also hope we have as few power outages as possible during this monsoon season.

—**General Manager Steve Lines**



Above, a power pole is down after a storm. Right, Graham County Electric Cooperative Lineman Chris Hancock works on lines during a freak snowstorm.

