Restoring Power Takes A Team Effort

*To the Membership of Tri-State EMC:

Just after lunch on January 30, a tornado and strong winds caused extensive damage to our system. Immediately following the storm, the extent of the damage was largely unknown. But based on phone reports and visual inspections by our employees, we quickly decided to ask for help from our neighboring cooperatives to restore service as quickly as possible.

Fort Loudon EMC in Vonore, Tenn., was the first to respond, committing eight men and any equipment we needed. Shortly thereafter, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in Young Harris, Ga., made a similar commitment with eight men and equipment.

We worked 16-hour days, allowing necessary time for rest, until all power was restored. Within 100 hours following the storm, our task was complete, and all power was back on. I would like to express a sincere thank you to our members for their patience and understanding during power restoration efforts.

In any restoration effort, we first must get our major feeder lines repaired. Next, we repair lines that serve the highest number of members. We then work on lines that serve the fewest number of members until the effort is complete. We understand this is not always convenient, but it is a necessary part of any restoration effort. Again, thank you for your patience while repairs were being made.

I would be remiss if I didn’t also thank the many members who waved, gave a thumbs-up, offered words of encouragement and gratitude, or even offered drinks and food to the men and women working to restore power. Your support means so much to us! Also, thank you to The Sweet Shoppe and to The Church at Blue Ridge for your kindness, shown in the form of some sweet goodies!

Finally, I want to give a special thank you to not only the employees of Tri-State EMC and Real Tree Service, but also to those employees from Fort Loudon and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC who were willing to help a neighbor. Were it not for you, the members of Tri-State EMC would have been without power for much longer.

For those of you who like numbers, here are some statistics from the storm:

- The initial outage count was approximately 6,000 meters (one third of our system).
- The storm left around 80 poles broken in its aftermath.
- More than 40 transformers were damaged by the storm.
- The time to restore all power was 100 hours, which, given the amount of damage we had, I think is remarkable!

Stacey A. Chastain
General Manager
Volunteers with Snack in a Backpack Inc. pack bags of food to be delivered to more than 350 students at area schools. From left, in front of the tables, are Hervey Jones, program Director Gaye Whalton and Operation Round Up Foundation Directors Glenn Harbison and Jon Stepp. The foundation allocated $1,900 for the program.

Your Donations Add Up with Operation Round Up

Change is good. This is especially true of the small change you donate each month to help fund worthwhile projects and organizations within Tri-State EMC’s service area.

The Operation Round Up program helps in the communities where Tri-State EMC members live and work. The money collected stays where it does the most good—locally.

This innovative program may seem like small change, averaging around $6 annually per contributor. But the change really adds up. The voluntary contributions are made by rounding up participating members’ electric bills to the next dollar.

The Tri-State EMC Foundation, an independent volunteer board that oversees the distribution of funds for Operation Round Up, recently approved allocations for several more organizations in the Tri-State EMC service area. The diverse group of organizations is dedicated to serving our communities in many ways.

One of these organizations, Snack in a Backpack Inc., recently was awarded $1,900 from the Operation Round Up Foundation to help provide food for students. Snack in a Backpack Inc. serves more than 350 students in seven schools in Fannin County, Ga.—three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, the Pre-K Head Start program and the Northstar Program. It provides food for students who get their main meals at school and may have little or nothing to eat on the weekends.

Volunteers fill bags with nonperishable, healthy food items and deliver them to the designated schools, for the children to take home over the weekend. This food may also help feed other family members.

The Operation Round Up program is intended to benefit communities throughout the three-county Tri-State EMC service area. Each member is automatically enrolled in the program. Anyone who wishes not to participate may call the Tri-State EMC office at (706) 492-3251 and ask to be removed from the program. A member who initially opted not to participate, but changes his or her mind after seeing the program’s benefits, can call the co-op and ask to join.

Groups and organizations interested in applying for Operation Round Up funds may use the application forms on the website, www.tsemc.net.