



# POWERLINES

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The Official Newsletter of Tri-State Electric Membership Corporation

## Right-of-Way Work Keeps You Connected



ISTOCK.COM / PHILLAUGUSTAVO

**T**he first time many people encounter the term “right-of-way” is in a driver’s manual or on a driver’s license test. It brings to mind something you have (or yield) when you’re behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.

But in the electric co-op world, “right-of-way” (ROW) takes on an important alternate meaning. It refers to the corridor or path an electric line follows, either along a road or through the woods.

Trees and branches that are downed by storms are a primary cause of power outages. Co-ops across Georgia have developed aggressive right-of-way maintenance programs, routinely trimming vegetation near power lines that could become a problem. Storms still may bring down branches or trees, but the trimmed-back vegetation is far enough from power lines that it is much less likely to fall across them.

“A good right-of-way program reduces outages a lot,” says Harry Reeves, Georgia EMC’s vice president of training, education and safety. “It also makes troubleshooting a lot easier.”

Trees along a utility ROW increase the possibility of power outages and blinks. They also can delay power restoration after storms because fallen trees and debris must be cleared before crews can gain access to damaged poles or lines.

Large trees around utility rights-of-way pose a safety hazard by providing children an opportunity to play near power lines. Power lines can carry up to 14,400 volts, and an energized tree branch is extremely dangerous—even deadly. When a tree limb comes in contact with a power line, someone touching or climbing the tree could be shocked or even electrocuted. It also can produce a spark, which can start a fire, especially if the area is very dry.

Each electric cooperative member agrees in the membership application to grant the cooperative a right-of-way easement, giving permission to cut and keep clear all trees within a set distance of primary power lines, secondary and service lines.

The distance allowed for clearing vegetation varies by co-op, from 15 feet to 25 feet on each side of a primary power line, says Reeves. The clearing cycle ranges from four to six years. Some co-ops use their own employees to do right-of-way work, while others hire contract crews.

Proper reclearing consists of removing trees, mowing underbrush, controlling vegetation growth and trimming limbs that extend into the right-of-way.

Many times trees that are outside of the allowed cutting area of the ROW are responsible for outages. The trees and/or tree limbs are not within the ROW, but the trees are tall enough to strike the wires when they fall.

If you believe that a tree on your property poses a threat to a power line, call Tri-State EMC at (706) 492-3251. If it is determined that the tree is a danger and could strike the wires in falling, it could be removed at no cost to you.

In addition, when planting a tree in your yard, keep in mind the tree’s size at maturity. The larger the full-grown tree will be, the farther it needs to be from a power line.

The need for electricity to power the many devices in modern life has increased the importance of reducing the potential for outages, including by keeping rights-of-way cleared. “The demand of technology is why we have to do such a good job,” Reeves says. “We’re so dependent on technology; we can’t do without it.”

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# You Have The Power ... to Track Daily Energy Use

**H**ave you ever thought about how much electricity you use each day? Do you wonder why your electric bill varies from month to month? Tri-State EMC offers a free, powerful tool to help you manage your energy use and have more control over your electric bill.

*MyUsage.com* helps you save money by keeping you more aware of the energy you consume every day. Because participants can monitor their electric use daily, rather than wait to see their energy use on monthly bills, TSEMC members report using less energy each day. By tracking your energy use on a regular basis, you can use energy more efficiently, which is better for the environment and your wallet.

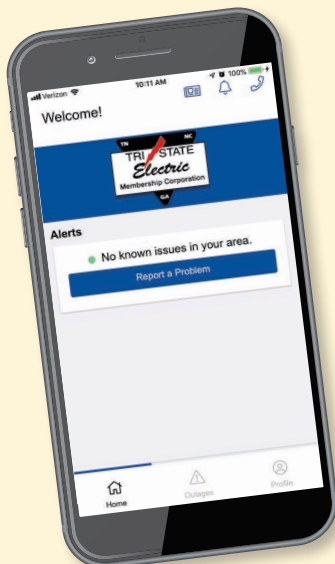
All Tri-State EMC members can sign up for this free service, whether they receive monthly bills or are a PrePay member. When you sign up, you can view your daily use online, receive alerts by email and customize them so you know when consumption goes over the limits you set.

To start tracking your use daily, visit [www.tsemc.net](http://www.tsemc.net) and click the MyUsage link.



**MYUSAGE.COM**  
Powers Awareness

## Outage Viewer Available on Our Website

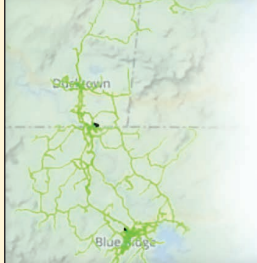


[www.tsemc.net](http://www.tsemc.net)

**T**ri-State EMC now has an outage map that anyone can see. It can be found on our website, [www.tsemc.net](http://www.tsemc.net). You can report a power outage by entering your account number, phone number or meter number. You may also report an outage through our automated telephone system or by downloading our TSEMC PowerPal App.

It is important to remember that in any outage situation, power lines may be down, so please avoid those areas.

Updating your phone number on your account is the most important thing you can do to report a power outage. With



**View & Report Outages Online**

Our online outage map puts service status at your fingertips.

**See outage map** ➔

an accurate phone number, our outage system can identify your address when you call, so you can report an outage by simply pressing 2!

You may update your account information by contacting us through our website, by telephone at (706) 492-3251 or in person at our office.