

Reliability - Being prepared at all times



Jimmy Gray serves as CAEC's VP, Engineering and Operations

During severe weather, power outages occur. Fortunately for you, our members, CAEC employees are prepared to restore your electric service safely and quickly after storms. With contingency plans in place, our operations can continue under a range of emergency scenarios.

The co-op's preparedness process involves reviewing and testing our disaster recovery plan annually. Exercises are conducted to simulate catastrophes, exposing vulnerabilities that the staff can address through best practices before disasters hit.

Of course preventing outages in the first place is CAEC's priority, and vegetation management plays a significant role in reducing outages caused by trees (see page five for more information). In fact, our outage data over the past five years verifies the importance of spending maintenance dollars to keep trees and bushes from growing into the right-of-way.

In the course of storm recovery, we use tech-

nology to help us evaluate and manage our restoration process. It starts with an automated phone system that allows us to accept many more calls simultaneously and gather accurate outage information so dispatchers can route crews effectively.

Secondly, our Outage Management System (OMS) collects the calls and predicts what electric services are out and where they're located. The outage map displays this data which allows our dispatchers to quickly know if we have two or 2,000 accounts without power. We also receive information from all of our substations so if a substation, or equipment in the substation, goes out, then we know it immediately.

Finally, CAEC's advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) system helps dispatchers to determine the severity of outages. The dispatchers can "ping" the meters by sending a signal to them and the meters return a signal that tells the dispatchers whether the power is on or off.

We know, however, that no matter how short an outage may be, it is still an inconvenience and that is why your cooperative engages in best practices and invests in technology to serve you efficiently. 

YOUR BOARD		LOCATIONS
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Vegetation Management - "Danger" trees outside rights of way

During 2007 Alabama experienced a record drought that led to a devastating effect on area plant life over the following two years. As a result dead trees from outside the maintained rights of way (ROW) have continuously fallen on the lines, disrupting the flow of electricity to our member-consumers.

Managing the growth of trees and other vegetation around our 5,000 miles of distribution lines is essential to helping ensure public safety and electric system reliability. Through a system-wide Integrated Vegetation Management program, your cooperative is continually working to cost-efficiently control trees and brush that grow into power lines. This strategic approach focuses on three specific areas: 1) Removal of problem trees; 2) Proper and effective pruning of existing trees; and 3) Selective herbicide application. This program operates on a four- to five-year cycle.

If you look at the chart below, it illustrates how many tree-related outages were caused by foliage outside the ROW: 2006 – 42 percent, 2007 – 56 percent, 2008 – 73 percent and 2009 – 73 percent.

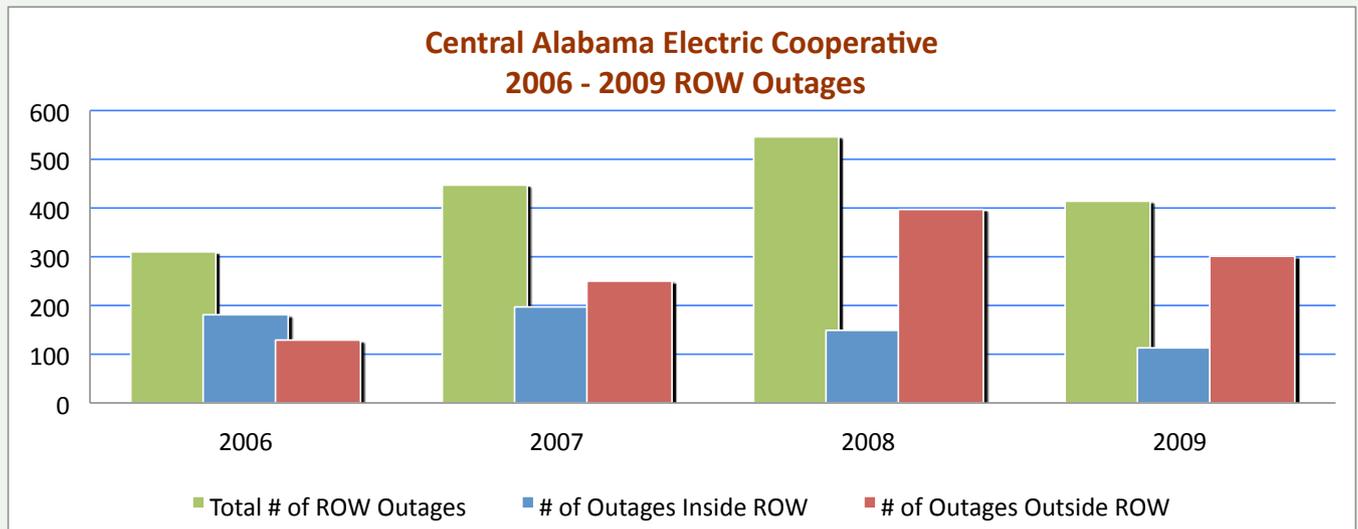
To combat these outages, CAEC's Integrated Vegetation Management program was combined with a proactive approach of clearing "danger"

trees outside the ROW. Through this effort more than 6,000 dead trees were removed within 12 months.

"We will remove dead, dying, diseased or leaning trees or branches outside the easement if they threaten the safe and reliable operation of the electric system," said Utility Arborist Manager Jacoby Dennison. With property owner participation and permission, we can address problems before they happen. Educating and communicating with members about the importance and benefits of vegetation management remains an essential part of CAEC's ROW program.

In 2009, crews trimmed 781 miles of ROW corridor (routine maintenance), applied herbicide to 1,749 miles of line ROW, cut down 4,202 trees and completed 684 tree maintenance orders. Including the 10,336 trees that were cut in 2008, a total of 14,538 trees has been cut down in the last two years. CAEC spends approximately \$2.8 million per year trimming, cutting and spraying the rights of way.

With our members' help, cooperation and assistance, many tree-related service interruptions can be avoided. Should you notice any trees or brush that need attention, contact CAEC at 1-800-545-5735. ☎



CAEC Employee Spotlight: **LINE CLEARING SPECIALIST**

This issue will feature those talented and dedicated people who maintain our rights of way in order to decrease unplanned, tree-related power outages that may affect your home.

Trees are known for their many contributions to our environment, but they also have the potential to jeopardize the delivery of one of the most important services we have — our electricity.

As the leading cause for unplanned service interruptions, trees growing close to power lines can cause electrical outages, and they can obstruct emergency access routes.

That is why vegetation management personnel, or Line Clearing Specialists, play a vital role in the cooperative's power delivery and system reliability.

“Pruning and removing trees can be dangerous and that's why we receive regular training so we know the hazards associated with the job before proceeding,” said CAEC Line Clearing Specialist James Ware, with 25 years of experience. “Taking trees down near homes and sheds to clear the power line are the most difficult trees to remove because you don't want to damage any property so we take a lot of time to get them down.”



For a new service, the Line Clearing Specialist clears a path to run electric infrastructure. This process involves removing trees, clearing underbrush and trimming nearby trees so there is adequate clearance for the line and poles. But before this takes place, permission and easement rights have to be granted for the location. This easement allows the co-op an entrance and corridor on the property to maintain and keep energized equipment and lines clear of vegetation growing near the lines – this is especially important during storm restoration.

After a severe storm, it is not uncommon for trees outside of the right-of-way to have fallen on the lines due to high winds and rain and is often the main cause of power outages for CAEC. After severe weather, the Line Clearing Specialist works alongside linemen and other field crews to assist in restoring power to the members.

Tommy Allred, a 21-year co-op veteran and line clearing specialist said, “Although there are many things you need to know about this type of work, I love doing it because no two days are the same - you just never know what you're going to get into on a daily basis and you must always take personal responsibility for safety.”



“Safety is also important for our members, which is why we try to stress that children should never climb trees near power lines and people shouldn't prune or cut trees that are close to the lines. Our members can call the co-op, and we'll drop the service line so they can have the tree trimmed, then we'll reconnect that service line for them at no charge. We just need a 24- to 48-hour notice from the member,” said Allred.

Line Clearing Specialists are re-certified annually, which involves a written test and the performance of aerial rescue techniques, administered by a utility vegetation management consulting firm. To remain proficient in the aerial rescue techniques, the specialists practice on a monthly basis at the co-op.

Having reliable power is an essential component for the technological conveniences we enjoy, which is why Line Clearing Specialists are indispensable at electric utilities like CAEC. 



Recipe for *Efficiency* from CAEC

Treescaping

One of your greatest opportunities to conserve energy is by properly selecting and planting trees around your home. Referred to as “treescaping,” the art of selecting and maintaining trees for a specific purpose or area, you can save up to 25 percent of your household energy

consumption for heating and cooling.

Tree species and proper placement are critical to energy-savings effectiveness. Below are instructions to help you in this decision-making process and steps on how to appropriately plant a tree:

Ingredients (supplies):

- Tree
- Potting Soil or Compost
- Mulch (organic materials)

Utensils (tools):

- Shovel
- Water hose
- Tape measure
- Bolt cutters or metal snips
- Compass (optional)

Directions:

Treescaping

1. For maximum energy savings, plant deciduous trees (those with seasonal leaves) to provide shade and block heat in the summertime but does not block sunlight from your home during the winter. Plant these trees on the west and south side of your home for best results.

Planting on north and west sides helps protect from winter winds.



Planting on the south and west sides helps provide shade from the summer sun.

2. For energy efficiency in the winter, plant evergreens on the north and west sides of your home. A well placed windbreak can reduce wind velocity by 80 percent.

3. Utilize the sun (rises in the east and sets in the west) or a compass for determining the correct direction to place your trees.

How to Plant Your Tree

1. Dig a hole in the soil as deep as the root ball and twice as wide.



2. Mix compost or potting soil with the soil removed from the hole if your soil is very heavy or sandy.

3. Remove the tree from its container, gently freeing its roots.

4. If the root ball is surrounded by burlap or

wire, remove this before planting.



5. Place the tree in the hole so that it sits at its original soil line.

6. Firmly, but gently

fill the hole half full of the removed soil.

7. Water well, then fill to the top with soil.

8. Form a shallow basin around the tree and fill it at least three times with water.

9. Cover the ground around the new tree with four inches of mulch, keeping mulch away from the trunk.

10. Take care of your tree - keep it well watered for the first year; twice a week is sufficient.

Be sure to make safety your top priority and don't plant near power lines. Before you dig, call 811.

Want to Attend a Conference in Orange Beach?

As a cooperative member, you and your spouse can have a great opportunity to network with other couples from across the state —by attending the 2010 Alabama Cooperative Couples Conference in Orange Beach. CAEC will sponsor two couples to take part in this three-day forum, held July 26-28.

A letter from Ralph and Joan Hickey (2009 Couples Conference attendees) to CAEC CEO & President, Tom Stackhouse, recaps many of the activities they experienced:

(Paraphrased)

My wife and I would like to thank Central Alabama Electric Cooperative for sponsoring us at the 34th annual Alabama Cooperative Couples Conference. We found the conference very informative about the importance cooperatives play in our daily life. It also gave us the opportunity to meet 24 other couples that share the same interests and values we do. We had a good mixture of couples from the various cooperatives: 11 couples from the rural electric, seven couples from various types of farm cooperatives and six couples from Federal Land Bank Associations.

The conference had four different types of cooperative sessions: Banking, Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Dairy Farmers of America and Alabama Farmers Cooperative.

The educational session answered questions from the attendees and discussed major issues such as "Cap and Trade."

We enjoyed the conference very much and we thank you again for sponsoring us.

Ralph and Joan Hickey

To be eligible, you must be a member of CAEC (past Couples Conference attendees are not eligible).

For more information about the Alabama Cooperative Couples Conference, or to apply, call 1-800-545-5735 ext. 2213 or visit www.caec.coop.

CAEC Statement of Non-Discrimination

Central Alabama Electric Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Services (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or family status shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities. The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Tom Stackhouse, President/Chief Executive Officer. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. ☞

Preparing a Family Disaster Plan

Where will your family be if a disaster strikes? They could be anywhere – at work, at school or even in the car. How will you find each other?

Disasters may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so now is the time to plan in advance how you contact one another, get back together and what to do in different situations. Below are some important items to remember when preparing your plan:

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family.
- Locate a safe room or the safest area in your home. In certain circumstances the safest area may not be in your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and know your meeting place.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, allowing all your family members to have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.

“Meet with your family to create a disaster plan then practice and maintain it.”

- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones or program them in your cell phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage especially since flood damage is not always covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio and replace its battery every six months.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.
- Assign everyone in your family a list of preparation activities, or allot a substantial amount of lead time if you don't have anyone to help you.

Meet with your family to create a disaster plan then practice and maintain it. The best plan in the world won't do you or your family much good if no one can remember it.

Be smart – be prepared – be responsible and most importantly, be safe. ☞

Portable Generator Safety

During the storm season many people prepare for the possibility of power outages by purchasing an electric generator, as a standby system, to keep lights and appliances running until service is restored. When using this equipment, there are certain tips to keep in mind in order to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electrocution and fire.

Be sure to follow the directions supplied with the generator as well as the safety tips below:

- ✓ *Never use a generator inside a home or in enclosed areas.*
- ✓ *Don't connect generators directly to your household wiring.*
- ✓ *Run your generator in a well ventilated area*

to keep carbon monoxide poisoning or possibly death from occurring.

✓ *Never plug the generator into a wall outlet (back feeding) because it can cause an electrocution risk to others served by the same utility transformer or to utility personnel working on the line.*

✓ *Don't overload your generator because it can cause damage to your equipment and create a fire hazard.*

These are important steps you can take to prevent the loss of life and property resulting from improper use of electric portable generators. ☞



Safety from CAEC: Powerful Advice



Safety. Dig it.

Utility lines are often buried as shallow as 18 inches below ground. So, before you dig for any reason, stop and call to find out the location of buried power lines. After all, safety is our number one concern.

811
Call Before
You Dig

