Dunn Energy Cooperative
"Energy Through Excellence"
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

STRATEGIC FOCUS:

Utilize system data and examine technology that will add value and efficiency

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

The second focus area of our strategic plan is data and technology. While the basic process of generating and transmitting electricity to your home hasn't changed much, the technology behind it and the data we are able to see about it has changed dramatically. There are lots of fancy gadgets and computer programs out there that we could use. But our strategic focus has been, and will continue to be, to focus on practical technologies that will allow us to provide our members better service at a reasonable cost.

The amount of data we are able to see with a few mouse clicks is enormous. As I write this, I can see that the current load on our system is 28,576 kW. I can see that the voltage on all 3-phases of our Tainter substation is good. I can see that Dunn's portion of the Downsville solar farm has produced 294 kWh so far today. I can see that my house used 111 kWh yesterday (in-floor, off-peak electric heat; heat lamp for our lambs; and a couple of tank heaters plugged in for the cattle; plus, my two teenage daughters who love hot water from our Marathon electric water heater) and is currently using 704 watts of power and the voltage to the top side of my meter is good at over 240 volts. You can set up for alerts about your usage through SmartHub to get notified if your usage exceeds, or drops below, a certain threshold that you set. This is a great option for seasonal accounts or for members who travel often.

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When I started with the cooperative 22 years ago, we would've had to drive to each substation to get the current loading and voltage readings. I would have had to read my meter for the last two days to find out how much energy I used, and a lineman would have had to come down and measure the voltage in the meter socket. So, gathering that data would have taken an entire day. Today, it took five minutes. There is also a large amount of data you can see about your electric service by using the SmartHub application on our website or in the mobile app. You can see you daily energy use (down to 15-minute intervals), previous bills, sign up for auto pay, and make one-time payments. (10415001)

As I was writing this, an email popped up from our software company showing some of our data for the past few months. It showed me that:

- 78% of our bills are sent via mail
- 22% receive email bills
- 1,110 accounts are set up on auto-pay
- 35% of you pay your bill online

Increasing the number of members who receive email bills is definitely one of our goals for the future. This saves both time and money.

So, we have all this data. Now what can we do with it? We currently use system data to help us size lines, respond to outages, detect voltage problems, and operate our electric distribution system more efficiently. The first part of our strategic plan is to take all that data and develop a performance dashboard so we can see how we are performing in several different areas. This could be things like outage hours, auto-pay utilization, financial performance of the cooperative, member satisfaction, and a whole host of other things. We can watch these metrics to determine where we can improve and quickly see if something isn't working.

The second part of the goal encourages us to look at new practical technologies that could provide us the ability to work more safely and efficiently. We will take a look at things like AVL (Automated Vehicle Locating), which could improve our efficiency in dispatching our line trucks and, more importantly, provide a safety benefit by locating the trucks in an emergency situation. We will also be looking at our current software to determine if we are utilizing it to its fullest potential as well as looking at our other technology programs to see how everything is working and if any changes are needed.

On the member side of things, we will explore enhancements to our outage communication features and examine technology/programs that will meet members' energy needs in the future in the areas of electric vehicles, renewable energy, and load management.

If you're like me, technology and data can seem overwhelming at times. But they play such an important role in our life. Your cooperative has embraced technologies that are cost effective and help us deliver you reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy. We will continue to use technology to enhance the service we provide.

GEARING UP FOR SUMMER CONSTRUCTION

Working for You

With summer, hopefully, right around the corner I'm sure many of you are getting prepared to start some warm weather projects. The same is happening here at the cooperative. If you're traveling through the southern end of our territory this summer, you'll notice that we're moving and upgrading about five miles of line along and near Highway 85. This is a planned upgrade to help better serve the growing loads in the area.

We also have a planned project in the Colfax area where we're replacing a little over two miles of old overhead lines with upgraded underground facilities. Brushing crews are working in the Tainter, Elk Mound, and Tilden areas and our pole testers will be in the northwest part of our service territory continuing our pole testing program.

Crews will also continue to do their regular line maintenance and installation of new services.

If you are planning on installing a new electrical service this year, there are some things you should keep in mind. If your electrical load will be larger than normal (i.e., adding an EV charger, grain bins, irrigation, or electric motors), please get in touch with us early on. The lead time on getting some of the equipment necessary for larger loads is quite long. The supply chain issues that every industry is currently experiencing is affecting the electric industry as well. The sooner we get a plan in place, the better the chance for us to meet your needs in a timely manner.

In regard to other electrical installations, if you are planning to install a solar array on your property with the notion of interconnecting to use the cooperative as your assurance for power in times you might not be generating enough, like a battery back-up, here are some basic things you should know:

- Make sure to contact the cooperative before you start. We have size-to-load requirements that need to be met for systems that are interconnected with our facilities.
- A distributed generation application needs to be filled out and returned to our office.
- Utilize a local contractor. We've dealt with many members who have used out-of-state contractors who had a poor installation experience.

Whether you're building a house, putting up solar panels, or planting trees, remember to make sure you file a locate with Diggers Hotline. You can either call 811 or visit them online at diggershotline.com. It's the law.

BE PREPARED AND STAY SAFE:
STORM WATCHES VS. WARNINGS

At any moment, 1,800 thunderstorms occur worldwide, according to the National Weather Service. That is 16 million storms a year! In an average year, 1,200 tornadoes cause 60 to 65 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the United States alone.

To protect yourself, your family, and your property from seasonal thunderstorms and tornadoes, you need more than a flashlight and a few cans of food (although they are essential parts of your emergency kit). Beyond the items in your preparedness kit, it is a good idea to fully understand how dangerous storms can be and how to interpret weather alerts to minimize risk.

Watch versus Warning

When bad weather is approaching, people typically turn on the TV, pull up a weather app, or look online for information. If you see a severe weather watch or warning, something bad could be heading your way. However, many people do not consider the differences between the two. (4094003)

A watch means there is a significant chance of a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Watch and wait for more information while taking precautionary measures, like unplugging electronics and checking the contents of your emergency preparedness kit.

A warning means that a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted or seen on radar. The moment you get a warning, take shelter in the safest part of your home, which is usually in your basement or the interior part of your home.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are some of the most common yet destructive weather events on Earth. Most of the damage comes from flooding caused by heavy rains, lightning strikes, and high winds. Some storms also deliver hail and can even spawn tornadoes. Bad weather systems, such as those that cause thunderstorms, can cause broken windows, extreme water damage, fallen trees, serious fires, downed power lines, and more.

Do not ignore the potential hazards of thunderstorms. Keep flashlights or battery-operated lights well supplied with batteries or charge them regularly. Keep a supply of nonperishable food and drinking water on hand. Turn off and unplug electronic equipment to protect it from power surges. Move valuables out of the basement or other locations that may flood. If a power outage occurs, never use a portable generator in your home, enclosed structure, or garage. Do not step into a flooded basement or area since the water could be electrified.

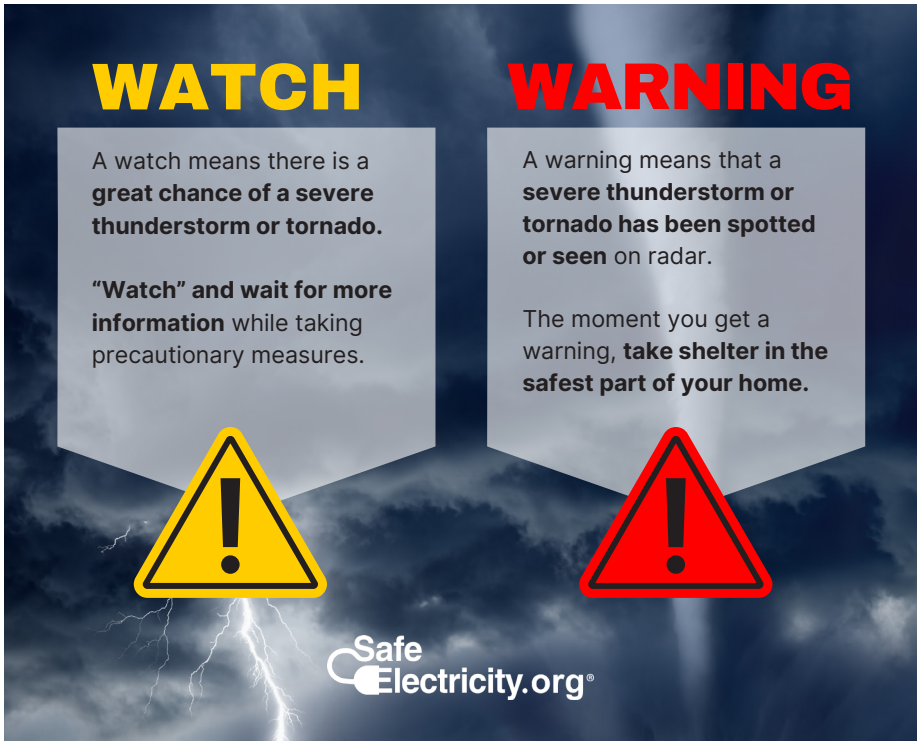
Tornadoes

The central part of the United States is sometimes referred to as Tornado Alley because it is the most common geographic location for these disastrous storms. The Great Plains have the perfect environment and climate for severe storm creation. While tornadoes can happen in any month, they are much likelier in the spring and summer than in other seasons. April, May, and June have more than twice as many reported tornadoes as any other time of the year.

To stay safe during a tornado, be aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms that could breed tornadoes. Know the best place to shelter both indoors and out, and always protect your head, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Understanding severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings can help keep you and your family safe. Do not underestimate the potential power of these weather systems. Take steps to protect yourselves and your property before a storm hits.

For more information about storm preparedness and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Hidden Account Numbers

If you find your account number hidden in the pages of this magazine and you call and tell us before the next issue is mailed, we'll put a **$50 credit** on your electric bill. Happy hunting!

Last month's winners were CJW Trucking and Kruz and Britany Konsela.

OPERATION ROUND UP

The Power of Change

Operation Round Up® uses the power of cooperation to provide much needed grant dollars for community projects, 501©3 organizations, and non-profit groups within the Dunn Energy Cooperative service territory.

If you, or a group you are a part of, are interested in applying for an Operation Round Up grant, you can find the application and our Giving Guidelines on our website at www.dunnenergy.com or by emailing Jolene for an application at jolene@dunnenergy.com. Grant applications are due March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 and reviewed shortly thereafter.

Thank you for your interest. Let's show the community the Power of Change!

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