Electric News

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Stay Back and Stay Safe

Working with electricity can be a dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. In fact, USA Today lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why for Little Ocmulgee EMC, safety is the No. 1 priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews' safety and that of the community above all else.

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, our members. Yes, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to you, but equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance—and your help!

Distractions can be deadly

While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety.

Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews—and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can't distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet "supervising" the job.

We understand that for your family's safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize our employees by their logoed uniforms and the service trucks with our name on them. You may also recognize our lineworkers because they live right here in our local community.

Slow down and move over

In addition to giving lineworkers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help all of us.

Clear Lines Ensure Safe, Reliable Power

A Deeper Look into Little Ocmulgee EMC's Right-of-way Maintenance Program

The mission of Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC) is to provide safe, reliable power at the most affordable cost possible and to improve the quality of life for co-op members and the communities it serves. Our right-of-way (ROW) maintenance, or tree trimming, program plays a major role in helping us fulfill this mission.

What is right-of-way?

Right-of-way refers to the corridor or pathway an electric line follows, whether it's along the road or through the woods. ROW provides utility crews with access to lines for improvements, maintenance and repairs. It also provides an operational safety zone between the electric lines and trees, buildings, etc.

Each LOEMC member agrees in the membership application to grant the cooperative a right-of-way easement, giving us permission to cut and keep clear all trees within 40 feet of primary power lines and within 10 feet of secondary and service lines. This is extremely important because a clear ROW minimizes outages and improves power quality, reliability and safety.

To accomplish a five-year clearing cycle, LOEMC must continually reclear the electrical rights-of-way of trees and brush. Proper reclearing consists of removing trees, yard trees, mowing underbrush, controlling vegetation growth and trimming limbs that extend into the right-of-way.

Trees and power lines don't mix

Larger trees planted around utility rights-of-way create a safety hazard by providing children an opportunity to play near power lines. When a tree limb touches a power line, there is a definite possibility of shock to or electrocution of a child or adult touching or climbing the tree.

Trees located in a utility right-of-way increase the possibility of power outages and blinks. They also cause delays during power restoration because fallen trees and debris must be cleared before crews can gain access to poles or lines damaged during a storm.

Planting tips

Nothing adds beauty and value to a home like trees. Besides offering significant energy savings by providing summer shade and winter protection, trees help absorb noise, provide privacy, freshen and replenish the atmosphere and attract wildlife.

When deciduous trees, those that lose their leaves in the fall, are planted on the west and southwest sides of the house, they shade roof and wall surfaces in summer and provide natural air conditioning in your house. In the winter, the bare branches will let most of the sunshine through to warm the house.

A windbreak of evergreens planted on the north and west sides of your house can help achieve energy savings during the winter.

PLAY IT SAFE

- Do not attempt to cut trees or limbs near power lines.
- Please contact LOEMC and we will help you find a solution.
- After a storm, stay away from any downed power lines and trees or limbs that may be touching them.
- Don't forget to call 811 before digging. Know what's below—call before you dig!

Trouble Trees: Think You Have a Tree Threatening a Co-op Line?

If you have a tree on your property that could cause a power outage, contact Little Ocmulgee EMC at 1 (800) 342-1290. Someone from the cooperative will visit your property for an evaluation.

1. **If the tree is deemed a threat to only Little Ocmulgee's primary system…**
   The cooperative will plan to have the tree cut (removed) or trimmed at our expense.

2. **If the tree is deemed a threat to only your service wire or property…**
   You will be asked to make those arrangements at your expense. If you are concerned about safety, call the office and we will disconnect and reconnect your service during tree maintenance at no charge to you.

3. **If the tree is not deemed an immediate threat…**
   The cooperative will plan to have the tree cut (removed) or trimmed during the routine five-year systemwide rotation at our expense.

While crews may cut branches into manageable pieces during restoration efforts, they will not grind or remove stumps. The member is responsible for any debris that is left behind from storm damage or restoration efforts.

Tree Planting Guide

LARGE TREES

More than 60 feet in height
Allow for maximum height of tree at maturity. For example: A tree that will grow to 80 feet should be planted 80 feet from power lines.
(Black walnut, maple, ash, oak, pecan, sycamore, loblolly pine)

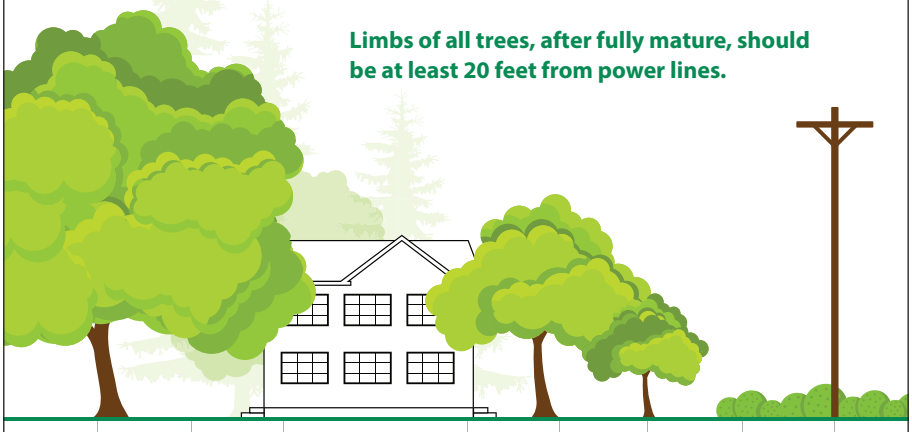
MEDIUM TREES

30-60 feet in height
Plant at least 60 feet from power lines
(Birch, Mulberry, Southern Magnolia)

SMALL TREES

Under 30 feet in height
Plant at least 30 feet from power lines
(Redbud, crabapple, flowering dogwood, Japanese maple, crape myrtle)

Limbs of all trees, after fully mature, should be at least 20 feet from power lines.



Benefits of Tree Trimming

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our members.

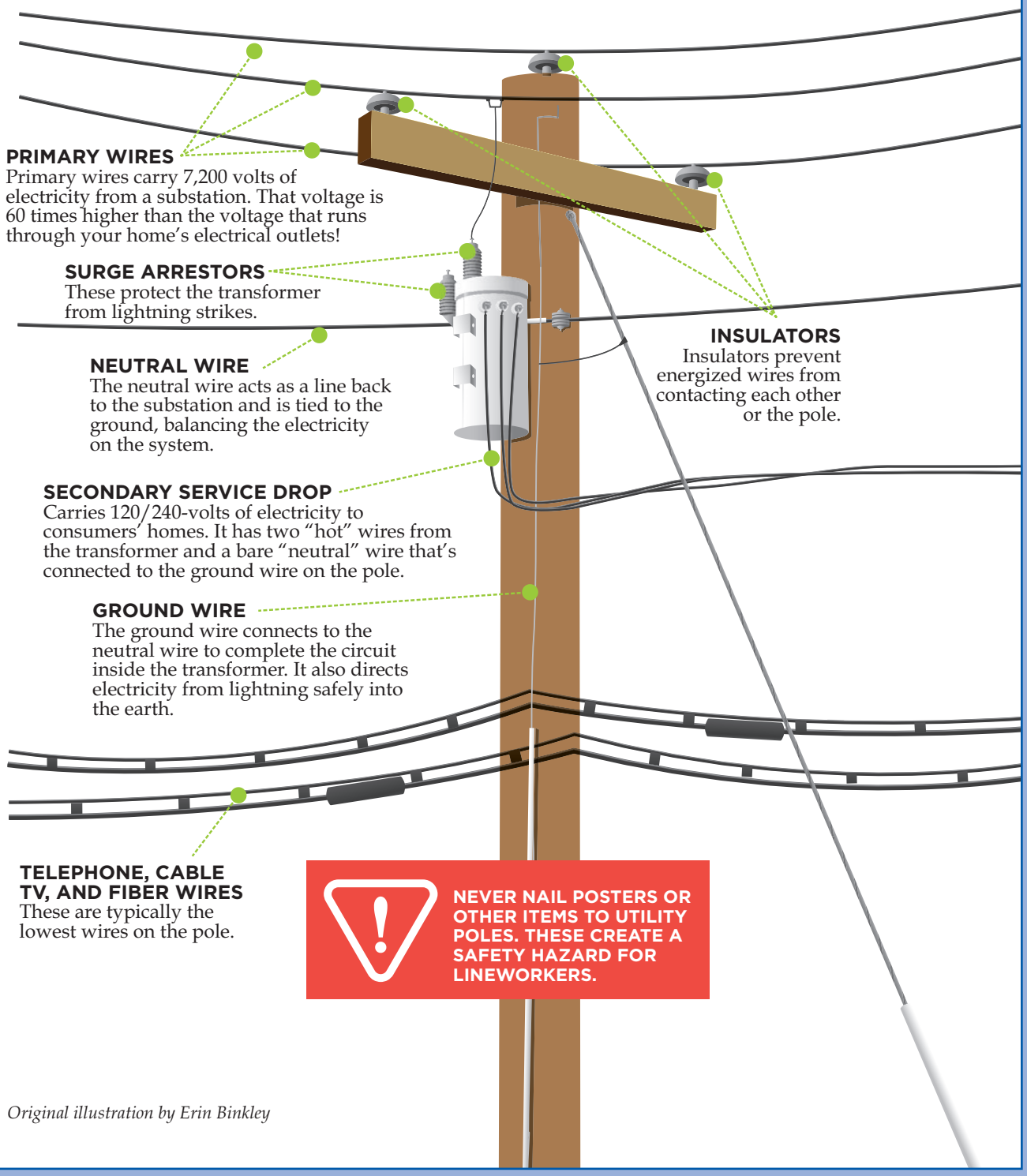
We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights-of-way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you–our members!

WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



PRIMARY WIRES
Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

SURGE ARRESTORS
These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

NEUTRAL WIRE
The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

INSULATORS
Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

SECONDARY SERVICE DROP
Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire that's connected to the ground wire on the pole.

GROUND WIRE
The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES
These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.

NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINEWORKERS.

Original illustration by Erin Binkley