

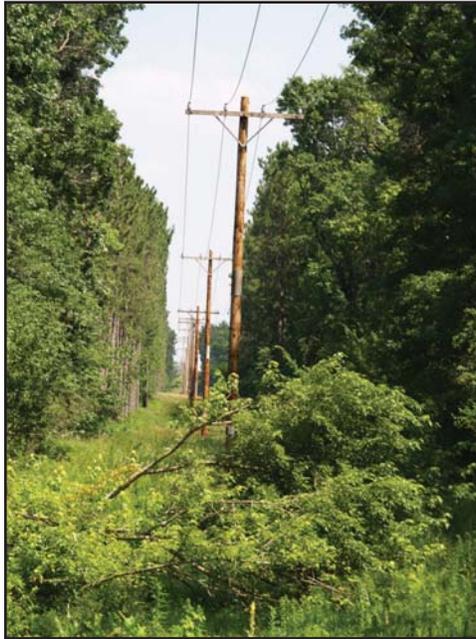
ROW maintenance cures little problems before they grow into big issues

St. Croix Electric Cooperative maintains rights-of-way areas along 800 miles of overhead power lines within its 650 square mile service area. This maintenance includes mechanical cutting, mowing and the removal of trees, as well as the selective application of herbicides to control small trees, woody plants and brush. The Cooperative's annual budget for this work is \$300,000.

The right-of-way (ROW) maintenance goal is to maintain a five- to six-year work cycle. The amount of work completed in any year is subject to weather.

Because ROW maintenance is an expensive and an ongoing activity for the Co-op, there is a lot of planning and a bit of science used in the actual work. Many little trees will grow to be big trees and, left unchecked, each Prickly Ash and Buckthorn tree will quickly spread and dominate the landscape. Eliminating small trees and woody brush in the utility maintenance area before they mature and spread, is a cost-effective means to achieve accessible right-of-ways and reduce the threat of outages from trees and vegetation.

An environmentally safe and efficient way to control small trees, woody brush and plants is to use EPA-approved herbicides. The Cooperative has hired 4 Control, of Menomonie, to selectively apply herbicides to unwanted growth along the overhead power lines in the Towns of Troy, Kinnickinnic, Pleasant Valley and Rush River. This work started Aug. 31.



A right-of-way area around overhead power lines. The tree branch in the foreground, however, reinforces the fact that even the most diligent schedule will not keep the right-of-way areas clear 100 percent of the time.

Herbicide maintenance is scheduled the year after mechanical trimming.

Properly used, herbicides provide the access the Cooperative needs to inspect and maintain poles and lines, with minimal impact to the environment. Frequently, this practice improves the condition of the property by eliminating invasive species and opening the ground to sunlight, promoting regrowth of native plants and grasses.

From the Board Room

At their regular monthly meeting on Aug. 3, the following policies were amended by the St. Croix Electric Cooperative Board of Directors:

Policy 411 Director Qualifications

The financial default criteria preventing a member from nomination, election or continuing to serve as a member of the board of directors was revised. Members seeking nomination or election to the board, are now ineligible if their electric service was disconnected for non-payment within the prior 12 months. For a current director, financial default occurs immediately at the time their electric service is disconnected for non-payment.

Policy 801 Service Calls

The charge for daytime and after-hours service calls was increased. The service call rate is charged when a line crew responds to a reported problem and the cause of the problem was due to the member's own equipment or their actions. A common example of this includes responding to a reported outage when the source of the problem was the member's circuit breaker being tripped in the home and not a problem with power delivery to the meter. The daytime service call charge increased by \$25 to \$100. The after-hours charge increased by \$50 to \$200.

Agendas for each meeting are available online at www.scecn.net.

Clean Power Plan

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"We have about 12 percent renewable energy, including wind, biomass, hydro and solar projects," Dairyland President and CEO Barb Nick said. "We have taken significant steps to protect energy consumers in our system from rate shock, while keeping our system reliable."

DPC has also reduced air emissions by burning less coal, educating about energy efficiency, and utilizing hydropower, solar, wind power, landfill gas and biomass. In the last five years, DPC has retired five coal-fired units at the Alma Station (Alma, Wis.). In the last decade, DPC has invested more

than \$300 million in air emission control equipment at existing coal plants, resulting in cumulative reductions in mercury output by more than 90 percent, particulate matter by 99 percent, sulfur dioxide by more than 90 percent and nitrogen oxides by more than 70 percent.

DPC staff is now evaluating the details of the 2,000-page CPP to determine the best ways to move forward. Specifically, staff will be assessing how the EPA modified its original proposal in response to more than 4 million public comments. Some of the key issues which DPC and other Wisconsin utilities jointly addressed with recommendations, included:

- Ensuring credit for early action to reduce emissions;
- Providing broad flexibility in the measures allowed as compliance options; and
- Allowing sufficient time to reliably achieve compliance.

"Care for the environment is at the forefront of our mission to provide our members with safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable energy," Nick said. "The issues and impacts are complicated. We will continue to advocate for a reasoned approach toward a sustainable energy future for our members."