



CO-OP CURRENT

NOVEMBER 2020



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We are Thankful!

By James Tanneberger
President and Chief Executive Officer



Thanksgiving is a time to acknowledge and give thanks for our many blessings. In addition to family, friends, and health at South Central Indiana REMC (SCI REMC), we are thankful for you, our members, and the privilege of providing you with electricity and other life-enhancing services.

We are thankful for many opportunities to be an essential part of your community. The people who work at SCI REMC are your neighbors, and so are our directors. Our members routinely elect fellow members to serve on our Board of Directors, and the directors govern the cooperative on your behalf. Together with you, we participate in the communities we serve. As a cooperative, we are unique because we are non-profit and locally owned by you, our members. We exist to serve your needs, and our mission is to improve your life through the services we provide.

Because we are a part of the local community, South Central Indiana REMC plays an active role in the local economy as well. We invest in the future of our communities in various ways. One example is Operation RoundUp. Through this program, we, together with you, have distributed over \$3.3 million to charitable organizations and civic groups since 1995. Most recently, we awarded five \$1,000 college scholarships to local high school seniors, and we continue to participate in and sponsor various local events and initiatives. We are also reaching out to members with energy efficiency tips and rebates to help save money. Another example of our community involvement is our electric safety education program. Through this program, we offer live-line safety

demonstrations to local schools, first responders, and other organizations. To learn more about our various community and youth programs, visit sciremc.com.

We care deeply about our members, and we recognize that due to COVID-19, some are facing financial hardships. As a result, we have been working with these members to establish payment plans for them and to connect them with community resources to help them navigate through this challenging time.

We are also committed to providing reliable electric service. To honor this commitment, we are now engaged in a five-year reliability improvement initiative. We plan to achieve a 30% improvement to average system reliability by 2025 and a 50% improvement by 2030. To accomplish this, we are aggressively clearing vegetation from electric easements, relocating or burying some of the lowest-performing and least accessible power lines, and installing remote switching devices to safely minimize outages.

These are a few examples of our community participation and ongoing efforts to provide excellent service to our members. Every year, we create a video highlighting some of the South Central Indiana REMC accomplishments and plans. [The 2020 video, themed Our Cooperative Strength, is posted on the cooperative website, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.](#) We encourage you to view this video.

We are a part of your community. Your concerns are our concerns, and we work hard every day to keep your power on, ensure electric rate stability, and make our community a better place to live. All of this is possible because of our members.

Thank you, South Central Indiana REMC Members, and Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

James Tanneberger



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Committed to Making Your Energy More Reliable Strategy #2

By Chris O'Neal
Manager of Vegetation Management



Last month we started a series of articles describing the four strategies we are working on to improve our system reliability 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030 without raising our members' electrical rates.

This month's newsletter will focus on **Strategy #2**. Streamlining our vegetation management process to ensure we have the right equipment, tracking systems, crew structure, and skillsets to

proactively trim in the highest need areas on a shorter cycle.

South Central Indiana REMC owns and maintains 3,843 distribution miles, 2,448 of these miles are overhead power lines, of which 1,800 miles are primary lines. Every month, our vegetation team of 37 clears approximately 20 miles of overhead primary power lines, is in contact with around 200 members, and assesses, on average, 100 orders.

Thick vegetation makes it extremely difficult for our linemen responding to outages and needing to access the powerlines. It also can cause outages due to inside the ROW (right-of-way) trees making contact with the powerlines. We initially focused on taking back these ROWs, dramatically reducing outages caused by our in ROW trees. Now, nearly all of our tree-related outages are caused by trees falling from well outside of the ROW or from tree limb re-growth encroaching from outside the ROW. This is now where our attention is directed.

We have achieved our initial goal of accelerating our primary line miles managed each year from 125 miles to over 200 miles—all done safer and at a lower cost per mile than ever before. We are optimizing efficiency by adding a second mechanical trimmer and other specialized equipment and technology and restructuring the department.

The Team is continuously watching reliability performance to ensure we are trimming in the right locations, and we have several innovative plans to meet our 2022 goal of over 250 miles. A more reliable system for everyone!

Our approaches for balancing cost and reliability

- Utilizing more specialized equipment in the field which includes: 2- Kershaw (Sky Trimmer), 3-Forestry Mulchers, 5-Elevator Bucket Trucks (75' reach)
- Using accurate data tracking software
- Splitting up the operation into three units, spacing them out around our vast service territory, reducing response times to outages, and fuel costs.
- Closely monitoring data from system operations to target breaker reclosures due to trees or vegetation, allowing us to focus on more problematic areas.
- We are looking into adding another Kershaw in the coming years to increase production. It would help to do the job more safely. It takes the person or climber out of harm's way by using specialized equipment.

