



# 'WHEN WILL THE POWER BE BACK ON?'

## Understanding what happens when an outage occurs



By Danielle Endvick, Member Services

The phone rang, and I rolled over in the darkness to glimpse the red digital numbers on the clock. I groaned, realizing it was far earlier than I planned to awaken. My husband, who works for the local city crew, had the after-hours phone for the weekend. He quickly jotted down an address as the caller reported a power outage on Bridge Street.

Hanging up, he dialed the Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) outage line to make a report before heading to town to see if he could spot the problem. As a newly minted CVEC employee, I tagged along to learn what happens when an outage occurs.

Meanwhile, two of our cooperative's linemen were also receiving notice and trading cozy beds for a trek into the darkness and a downpour.

Linemen Greg and Quentin were quickly on the scene. Incoming outage reports from additional houses helped pinpoint the affected area. As the rain gave way and gray skies greeted a new day, the linemen drove along, scanning for downed power lines or visible issues on the wires. It took some troubleshooting, but they discovered a blown fuse, likely caused by a lightning strike. They made quick work of fixing it, and soon dark windows showed glimmers of light. In just over an hour from the initial report, before most households had even awakened to find something amiss, the crew had restored power.

Later that day, the crew was called in for an outage of nearly 300 homes in Holcombe. I observed the social media commentary on the community page, as residents worried and wondered, "When will the power be back on?"

Here at CVEC, we understand. Electricity can be a necessity, which is why we encourage those with medical equipment or other critical needs to have a back-up source of

power for emergencies. Members are welcome to contact our staff electrician to learn more about sizing a generator to fit their needs.

Unfortunately, there is not always a clear-cut answer for how long it will take to get your power back on.

In farming, when a calf is born breech, a few-minute event can turn into hours. While making auto repairs, a simple changing of sparkplugs can rapidly become more complicated if a plug breaks off. Likewise, the timeline for solving an outage is unique to each situation, and our crew rarely knows what they face when they head out on a call. For example, if a tree takes down a pole and requires time to clear, or when the troubleshooting phase takes longer due to a problem on a remote stretch of the line, you may face a longer outage. This particular afternoon outage happened when a piece of cable came into contact with a live phase, most likely because of a lightning strike. Locating the fault took longer than anticipated because nothing looked out of place at first glance.

The CVEC crew has become so efficient at troubleshooting and fixing outages that some members have come to expect, rather than appreciate, when the power is quickly restored. Having experienced some of the weather conditions our crew works in and knowing that they give up precious moments in their personal lives to serve on the lines, I encourage you to take a few minutes to appreciate the human beings behind the work the next time you experience an outage. Know that our linemen are working deftly, with 7,200 volts of electricity, to get your power, and life as we are lucky to know it, back to normal as soon as they safely can.



### Timeline of an Outage

#### **The report.**

Someone experiencing an outage calls the 24/7 outage line at 715-239-6800.

#### **Arrival and line inspection.**

The crew may drive by multiple times as they check the breaker and the line. This is a time-consuming step, but critical for safety. Re-energizing the line without knowing the cause would be very dangerous. It's important to visually check for fallen trees, tree limbs, old line repairs that have failed, car accidents, damage from animals or lightning, or other equipment failure.

#### **All safety procedures are in place. We can begin the work.**

Depending on the issue, the crew may be working to clear debris from lines, repairing and splicing a broken line, or replacing failed equipment.

#### **Power restored. Outage over!**

Households cheer and lineworkers return home to their families.

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#### **The drive.**

An after-hours outage requires lineworkers to respond from home. Depending on where the outage is, the drive into the shop for equipment and across the service territory could take an hour.

#### **Outage cause located, but safety first.**

Once we find the cause of the outage, there are safety steps that must be taken to ensure lineworkers go home to their families. The most important thing we do is isolate and ground the line to protect from back feed.

#### **Repairs complete.**

Next, the rest of the line must be inspected for additional problems. Then, we return to the breaker and call dispatch to get clearance to re-energize. We check to be sure all lineworkers are in the clear before closing the breaker and restoring power.



# A PLACE TO HEAL



## Holcombe Area Veterans Memorial creates space to honor those who served

By Danielle Endvick, Member Services

Veterans and their loved ones will soon have a place for honoring all who have served in the past, present, and future, as progress continues on the Holcombe Area Veterans Memorial. The tribute will be located just west of Highway 27 on 263rd Avenue in Holcombe.

According to David Conrad, U.S. Army veteran and a founding member of the memorial committee, the space is designed to provide a place of honor and reflection.

“We hope it’s a space the whole community can enjoy,” Conrad said. “The memorial itself is just phase one. Eventually, we’d like to have a pavilion, bathrooms, and eventually a museum where we can tell the stories of local veterans. With every veteran, there’s a story – whether you’re talking about our World War II veterans, someone who spent almost 40 years in the military like me, or someone who played the important role of serving in our guard or reserves.”

Conrad hopes the memorial becomes a place where those stories can bridge generations. The committee encourages those who memorialize loved ones to include stories and artifacts from their time in service.



Local veterans like Dave Staudacher, left, and Jim Mataczynski are the driving force behind the Holcombe Area Veterans Memorial.

“We want to create a place where young people can see that record and find out about their grandfather’s time in service,” he said. “Someday we’d like to have a kiosk that could allow visitors to easily access that information. Just like the memorials out in Washington, D.C., we want people to be able to touch the names on the wall and remember that service person.”

The site was excavated this summer, and concrete will be poured and flagpoles installed by Veterans Day. Designed as a 5 Point Star to recognize each branch of military service, the memorial will feature granite tablets engraved with the names of veterans who either lived, worked, attended school, or retired in Holcombe.

“It’s going to be a place of healing,” says Jim Mataczynski, chairman of the memorial’s planning committee, who served as a Navy Seabee heavy equipment mechanic in early 1970s. “I get goosebumps every time I come out here. I see what it’s going to look like, and I see the faces of the names we’re recognizing.”

Although the main memorial will be reserved for veterans with ties to Holcombe, legacy stones can be purchased for veterans from neighboring communities. Honorees may be a veteran or non-veteran, living or not, and an individual or organization. Funds raised through legacy stone sales will help provide for the park’s development and upkeep. Two sizes of legacy stones are available, 8"x8" for \$250 or 12"x12" for \$500.

**A Goal by Veterans Day** Mataczynski notes that a second phase will include the addition of a meditation garden, bell tower, pavilion, and POW-MIA media center, where the veterans’ records will be housed.

He hopes the space will also provide a place where

Join Us November 4th

Raise the Flag Celebration  
and Fundraiser

★ 11:30a - Veterans Memorial ★  
Raising of the flags ceremony at the Memorial

★ 12:00-4:00p - Holcombe Town Hall ★  
Soup/Sandwich Lunch  
Silent Auction  
Family Fun




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ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION  
AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MEMORIAL

veterans who are returning home can gather for workshops and process the weight of their service.

“Some of these boys—especially those who were in combat, but even those who never went into battle—have heavy things weighing on their minds,” Mataczynski said. “Long-term, we’d like to be able to host workshops and offer support for veterans who are transitioning back into the community.”

Committee Historian and U.S. Navy veteran Dave Staudacher is excited to create a place where history can come alive. He hopes visitors will wander and explore the stones. Dave and his wife, Sue, donated the land for the memorial.

Construction costs have risen dramatically in the few years since the memorial was conceptualized. The committee has raised over \$100,000 in donations and hopes to raise an additional \$30,000 by Veterans Day.

The community is invited to join in a Raise the Flag Celebration November 4 at the memorial site, followed by a soup and sandwich luncheon fundraiser from noon to 4 p.m. at Holcombe Town Hall.

“It’s all an opportunity for the community to see the vision we have for this space,” Mataczynski said.

**Volunteers Needed** The group welcomes volunteers, whether they have military ties or not. Many contractors have donated time, and Mataczynski notes that the committee could benefit from expertise in engineering and landscaping or from more boots on the ground for fundraising and events.

“You do not need to be a veteran to be a part of this memorial,” Mataczynski said. “We have many different tasks people can help with.”

Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative supported the memorial’s start-up fund with a \$500 donation in 2022. CVEC also secured approval from Dairyland Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, for use of the adjacent substation property for overflow event parking at the memorial.

“As a veteran myself, I commend the folks who have been working to make this vision become a reality in the community,” said CVEC Board Chairman and U.S. Army Reserve veteran John Petska. “It’s a worthwhile cause to recognize all the veterans from the past and carry their stories forward into the future.”

For now, this committed group of veterans is looking forward to the completion of phase one, and the sight of flags flying as cars enter Holcombe on Highway 27. But the potential for where it goes from there continues to grow.

“The more this project progresses, the more the passion for it and the vision for what we could do here grows,” Mataczynski said. “As long as there are veterans coming up and skirmishes and wars, this will never be done. Until the

world can find peace, this memorial will continue to grow.”

*Interested in recognizing a veteran in your life or want to make a donation? Learn more at [www.holcombeareaveteransmemorial.com](http://www.holcombeareaveteransmemorial.com).*

*Endvick is member services representative for Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative. She can be reached at [dendvick@cve.coop](mailto:dendvick@cve.coop) or 715-239-6800.*

## CVFC SALUTES OUR Veterans

On November 11, we honor the men and women who have served this country to protect our freedoms by remembering Veterans Day. Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative would like to thank all military veterans, especially the following cooperative family members who are near and dear to us. We are grateful for your service and bravery.

### Military Veterans

<b>Dan Liske, CVEC</b> District 1 Director: 3 years U.S. Army, WI Army National Guard – Years of Service: 22 (1971-1993)	<b>Joe Melville, CVEC</b> District 5 Director: 1 year U.S. Army, WI Army National Guard, First Sergeant – Years of Service: 22 (1986-2008)	<b>John Petska, CVEC</b> District 7 Director: 26 years U.S. Army Reserve – Years of Service: 6 (1964-1970)
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Left to right, John Petska, Joe Melville, Dan Liske.

### Veterans from our Extended Co-op Family

#### Active Duty

**Tyler Scheidler**, son of Kevin, CVEC line superintendent, and Tonya Scheidler  
U.S. Navy – Years of Service: 7 (2016-current)



Tyler Scheidler

#### Retired

**James Brandli**, husband of CVEC Operations Dept. employee Janet Brandli  
U.S. Navy (Journalist Second Class) Years of Service: 15 (1980-1985)

**Terry Kent**, husband of CVEC Accountant Della Kent  
Wisconsin Army National Guard (Cook/Light Wheel Mechanic), Years of service: 10 (1982 – 1992)



Left: James Brandli (far right) served aboard the USS Guam (LPH-9). Right: Terry Kent.



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**CELEBRATING OUR CO-OP COMMUNITY!**

### Bach Retires from CVEC After 23 Years

The CVEC family wishes a happy retirement to June Bach, who retired from the role of office manager Oct. 6 after 23 years of service to the cooperative. “June has been an important cog that kept the wheels turning here at CVEC for decades,” notes President/CEO Russ Falkenberg. “We appreciate all of her hard work and dedication and wish her a long and healthy retirement.”



June Bach at a recent CVEC Annual Meeting.

### Load Growth a Focus of Economic Development Gathering

CVEC recently hosted a gathering focused on ensuring we have adequate capacity for load growth for economic development. Joining in a conversation to envision a brighter future for our members were (from left) CVEC President/CEO Russ Falkenberg, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Regional Economic Development Director Ray French, Dairyland Power Cooperative Economic Development Manager Donna Walker, CVEC Operations Manager Nic Alberson, Chippewa Economic Development Corporation CEO Charlie Walker, and Momentum West Wisconsin Executive Director Steve Jahn.



### Zimmerman Recognized in Ceremony at CVEC

On Sept. 28, CVEC welcomed Senator Jesse James and Representative Rob Summerfield for a ceremony honoring Keith Zimmerman, a dedicated CVEC employee of 35 years who passed away in July from liver cancer.

Keith’s family received a plaque in honor of the longtime lineman and his service both to the co-op and to the U.S. Army.



Sen. Jesse James, left, and Rep. Rob Summerfield, far right, present a plaque of honor and flags to the Zimmerman family.

### Dual Fuel Heating Systems to Be Tested November 15

From 7-11 a.m. on November 15, CVEC will test our load management system for members who participate in the dual fuel or off-peak heating program. Electric heat will be shut off at this time for members with back-up heating systems. If you experience a problem during the test, contact your heating contractor. If there is an issue with your load management receiver or if you have questions, contact CVEC at 715-239-6800.

### Come see the CVEC Spirit of Christmas Tree

Beginning November 1, you can find Spirit of Christmas tags hanging from the CVEC Lobby Christmas Tree. Want to bring joy to a child this holiday season? Stop in and select a tag from the tree, shop for suggested items, and simply return the unwrapped gifts to CVEC by November 30.



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- District 2 – Steve Johnson
- District 3 – Frank Draxler
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- District 5 – Joe Melville
- District 6 – Steve Wall
- District 7 – John Petska

**Russ Falkenberg, Jr., President/CEO**



Follow us on Facebook Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30–4 p.m.

**Danielle Endvick, Editor**