

# WHEN SEVERE WEATHER STRIKES...

# WATCH OUT FOR DOWNED POWER LINES



**H**ave you ever wondered why a bird can sit on a live wire or what you should do if a power line is on the ground? Here are some Q-and-As to clear up some common misconceptions concerning power lines, birds on a wire, and other conundrums:

## What do I do if I see a downed power line?

Vacate the area. Call 9-1-1 to report it. Do not return to the area until you are given the go-ahead by authorities. Can I tell from looking (or listening) if a downed power line is still live? Absolutely not. A live wire may not spark or arc and it may not make any noise at all (although it could).

## If a line is on the ground, is it dead?

Once a line is on the ground, it is not automatically dead, even if the power is off in your area. There's a good chance the line is still energized, which not only means you should not touch it, it also means the surrounding ground and any metal objects nearby could be energized and extremely dangerous, even deadly.

## What if my car comes in contact with a downed power line?

Do not get out. Do not try to drive over it. Call 9-1-1 and wait for utility personnel to de-energize the line. If you smell gas or if there is a fire, exit your car with a solid jump landing on both feet (but don't touch the car at the same time) and DO NOT WALK, but hop away.

## Can I help someone who has been in an accident involving a downed power line?

Do not go near the scene and warn others not to do so. Although our first instinct is often to help, a person running near an energized area could get electrocuted. Instead, call 9-1-1 to report the incident.

## Do different kinds of utility lines look different?

Perhaps, but for the most part, unless you are a professional utility worker, it's difficult to know what kind of line it is and what it carries (electricity, phone service, cable TV and so on) just by looking. The safest approach you can take is to simply assume that all lines are energized.

## Why can a bird sit on a power line and not be hurt? Doesn't that mean the line is insulated?

No. A bird or other critter can sit on a power line all day happy as a lark because there is no path to ground. If the animal were to come in contact with the utility pole or other grounded source, it will be electrocuted, just as a person would be under the same circumstances.

Source: SafeElectricity.org

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## NEW ROCK ENERGY VIDEO: Severe Weather Preparedness

Severe weather can happen anytime, especially here in the Midwest. Severe weather can include hazardous conditions produced by thunderstorms, including damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, flooding and flash flooding during the spring and summer months. Rock Energy's newest video takes a look at what you need to take into consideration in order to be prepared (and stay safe) during a severe weather event. To see the new video, go to: [www.rock.coop/videos](http://www.rock.coop/videos).







# FOCUSED ON SAFETY, RELIABILITY... ONE PROJECT AT A TIME

Rock Energy dedicates a significant amount of time on pole and line inspection for two main reasons:

- 1) SAFETY**
- 2) RELIABILITY**


Working to minimize and prevent outages is a year-round effort. Our crews work diligently to make sure our equipment is in top-notch shape. If serious hazards are discovered during inspections, repairs are made immediately. We maintain proper engineering and an adequate inventory of parts, as well as continually train our employees. Everything we do focuses on providing you — our member — with reliable electricity.

## **POWER POLE REPLACEMENT**

Replacing power poles is just one of many types of projects that Rock Energy linemen perform as part of their job duties.

In order to replace a power pole, after calling in a locate, the next thing the crew needs to do is setup and inspect the area and ensure it can be connected to the electrical network and property through the point of attachment. Then they will disconnect the power to the old pole and remove it. A fresh hole is drilled and then the new pole is installed. Lastly, the new pole is connected to the electric network.

*See the pictures to the right for a visual illustration of the power pole replacement process.*



Pictured here, a Rock Energy crew drills a hole in preparation for installation of a new power pole on Clover Road in Rockton, IL.





# POWER POLE REPLACEMENT PROJECT



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# HAPPY LABOR DAY

## Have a Safe and Happy LABOR DAY!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed and REC personnel will be out on Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend and at the payment kiosk outside our South Beloit office, 15229 Willowbrook Road. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are available. If you need to report a power outage, please call 866-752-4550.

## ROCK ENERGY OFFICE LOBBIES ARE OPEN

Rock Energy Cooperative is pleased to announce that the lobbies at our South Beloit, IL, and Janesville, WI, offices are now open. We are open during our normal office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Our No. 1 priority is to ensure the health and safety of our members and staff, so please be aware that Rock Energy will continue to adhere to any CDC, state, or local mandates and guidelines. In addition, if you are feeling sick or are showing symptoms similar to those associated with the COVID virus, please consider an alternative method to pay your bill or communicate with Rock Energy employees.

There are multiple other ways members can pay their bills, other than in-person, such as:

- Mail in payment
- Drop boxes outside of our offices
- Automated phone payment
- Kiosk outside of our South Beloit office
- Auto pay
- SmartHub (for online bill payment)
- Direct Debit (from bank account)

If you have any questions about paying your bill, please feel free to contact us during regular business hours at 866-752-4550.

## 85th ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

The Rock Energy Cooperative 85th Annual Meeting has been scheduled to take place on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, WI. However, please note that the event date is subject to change pending any unforeseen COVID-related mandates.

Taking into consideration the health and well-being of our members, this year's event will be a business meeting only, expected to last around 30-45 minutes. No dinner will be served, nor scholarships presented. There will be no guest speakers or kids' activities as well. Attending parties should be limited to two people maximum per membership (yourself and one other person) in order to allow for adequate social distancing. Every attendee should bring a mask with them to the event (masks may be required).

Attending the annual meeting gives members — the most important part of our co-op family — a chance to participate in the governance of the cooperative. As always, we look forward to serving you and we hope to see you there.

**TO REGISTER TO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING, PLEASE CALL 866-752-4550.**



Eclipse Center, Beloit, WI

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### Jonas Berberich, Editor

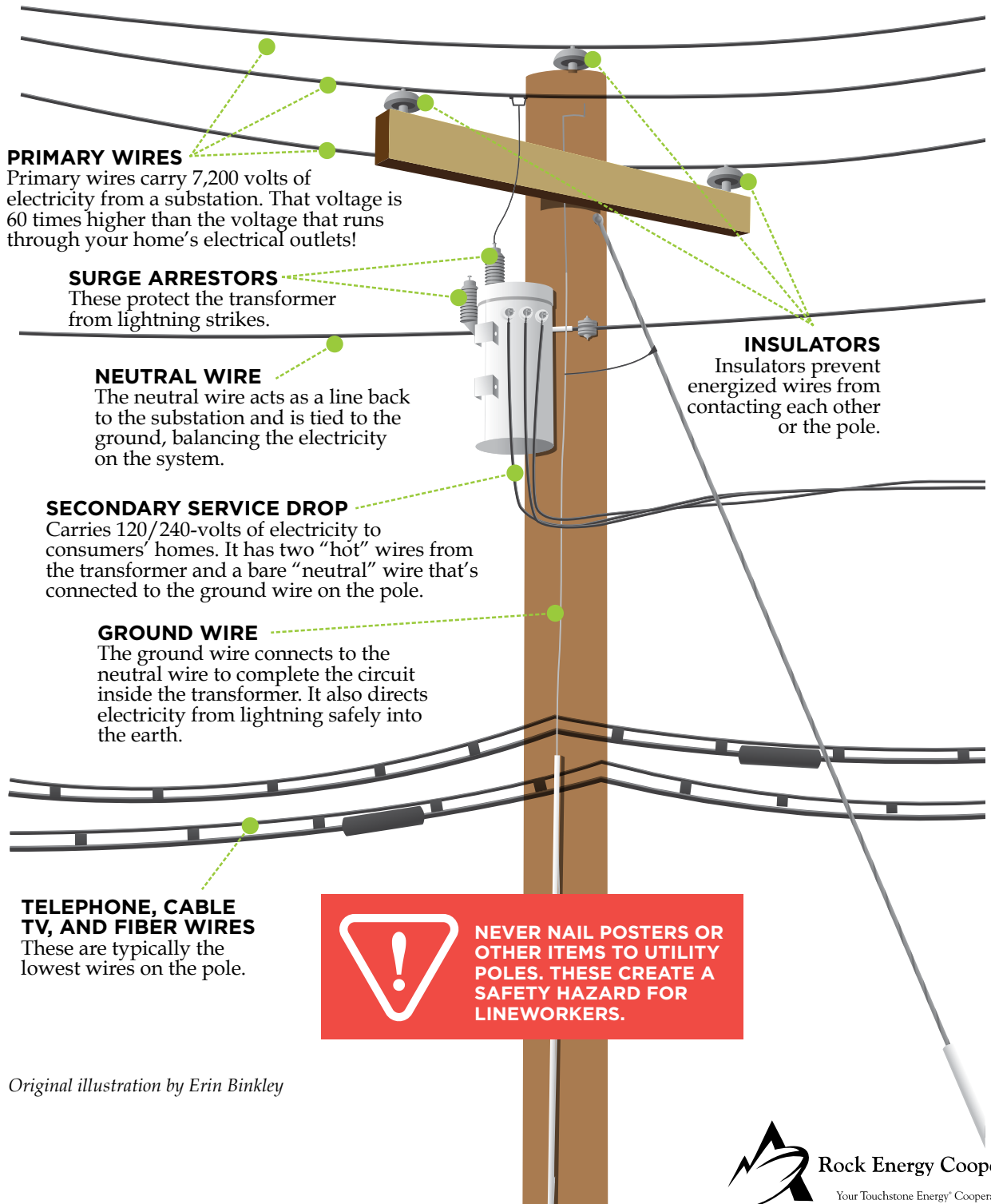


**ROCK ENERGY COOPERATIVE**  
Empowering Members Since 1936



# 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.

## 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.

## INSULATORS

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

## 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 LINEMEN.**

*Original illustration by Erin Binkley*