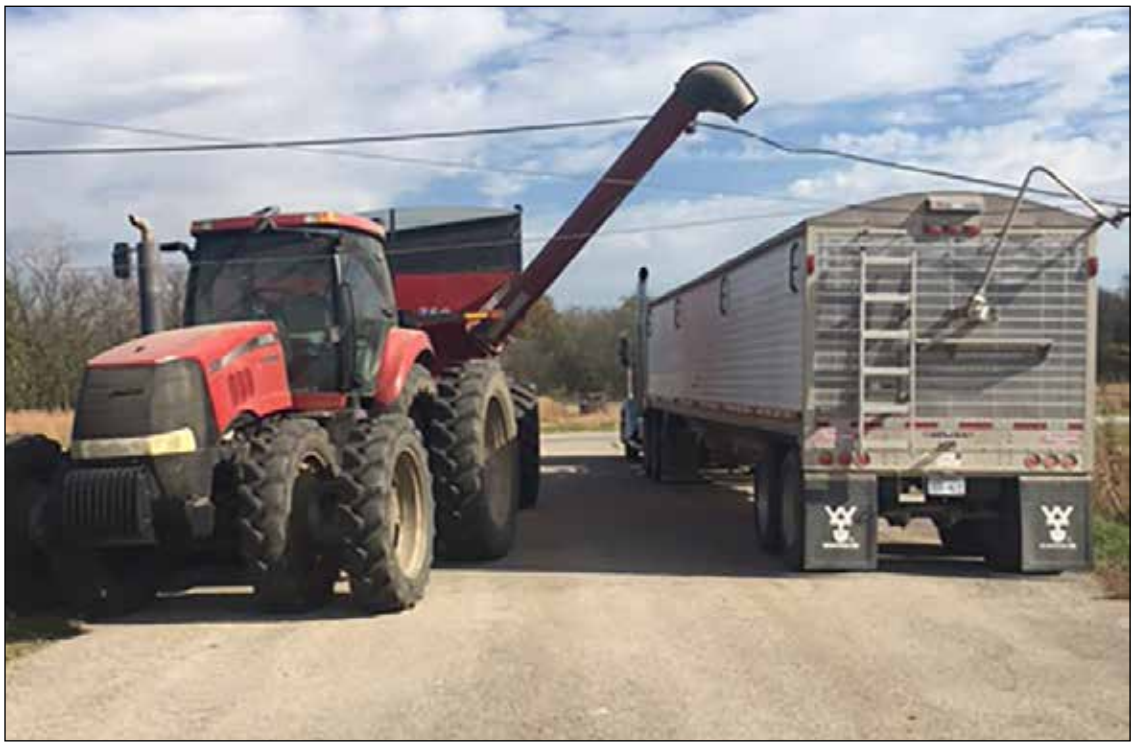
Quarterly Newsletter
Heartbeat

Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Issue #62 Fall 2016



Look out for overhead power line dangers

Usually, power lines are high in the air and out of reach, leaving everyone safe on the ground. But sometimes farm equipment gets up too high, or incidents bring those power lines low to the ground, where they present a serious danger to people. Learn more on page 3.

Safety is always on my mind at Heartland

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

DALE COOMES HEARTLAND CEO

Maybe I didn't love you
Quite as often as I could have
And maybe I didn't treat you
Quite as good as I should have
If I made you feel second best
Girl I'm sorry I was blind
You were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

What in the world do those lyrics have to do with this column in the Heartbeat? Well, besides being the opening stanza of a song made famous by various artists such as Brenda Lee, Elvis Presley and Willie Nelson, it kind of describes how we need to view safety – always on my mind. And if safety is not always on my mind, then maybe those lyrics would be sung in a sadder version that might go like this.

Maybe I didn't watch you
Quite as closely as I should have
And maybe I didn't warn you
Quite as strongly as I should have
If I let you work unsafely
Guess I'm sorry I was wrong
But you were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

Those are even more somber and sad lyrics than the original song. Always on my mind – that is the key. Safety must be – always on my mind.

It takes many things to ensure a high level of safety where no one gets hurt, ever. There must be leadership, participation and buy-in, communication, clarity, rules, regulations, best practices, safe operating practices, alarms, guards, warning lights, protective equipment, barriers, hazard remediation, performance measurement systems and just plain common sense. All these items are critical in establishing and maintaining a safe workplace.

See INFORMED, page 2

INFORMED: From page 1

But there is still one thing that is more important than all of them. That is safety – always on my mind.

We know that no one intends to have a near miss or an accident. Most of the time those accidents or near misses happen because someone didn't have safety on their mind. Something snuck up on them and they weren't prepared to be safe.

If we are aware of what will hurt us, we shouldn't hurt ourselves. That's where always on my mind comes in.

Constant awareness of hazards or dangers is what we want always on our minds. A popular safety campaign that has been around for a long time says "Look Up and Live." That is part of safety always on my mind. Looking up and recognizing a potential hazard involving the power lines will ensure you live.

Running a grain cart in the middle of a quarter-section field is most likely not hazardous, but folding or unfolding the auger on the field edge under or near the power lines may be.

Safety – always on my mind – will help us to recognize those hazards and allow for them.

Let's make a commitment to safety – always on my mind. It is something we spend a lot of time discussing and promoting here at Heartland.

If we can convince everyone else to have safety – always on my mind – then we have a good chance of preventing accidents.

Elvis is believed to have sung that song because of his recent separation from Priscilla.

Let's stick with the original lyrics of the song and forget my sad version of the lyrics.

HEARTLAND'S COLD WEATHER RULE

(1) The provisions of the COLD WEATHER RULE establish the disconnection procedures for delinquent accounts of any Residential Customer of the Cooperative throughout the cold weather period, which extends from November 1 through March 31.

(2) The Cooperative will not initiate the disconnection process for Residential Customers' service between November 1 and March 31 when the National Weather Service office forecasts the temperature to drop below 35 degrees (the activating temperature) within the following 48 hour period unless:

(a) It is at the Customer's request;

(b) The service is abandoned;

(c) A dangerous condition exists on the Customer's premises;

(d) The Customer violates any rule of the Cooperative, which adversely affects the safety of the Customer or other persons, or the physical integrity of the Cooperative's delivery system; or

(e) The Customer causes or permits tampering as defined in section 6.J.

In any of these situations, the Cooperative may disconnect the service immediately. Services disconnected under (c), (d) or (e) above may be restored as soon as possible after the physical problems defined in (c), (d), and (e) above have been corrected.

(3) To avoid disconnection during the cold weather period and qualify for the benefits of the COLD WEATHER RULE the Customer must meet the requirements of the GOOD FAITH TEST. To meet the requirements of the GOOD FAITH TEST, the Customer will:

(a) Inform the Cooperative of the Customer's inability to pay the bill in full;

(b) Give sufficient information to allow the Cooperative to make payment agreement;

(c) Make an initial payment of the most recent bill for consumption plus one-third of the arrearage;

(d) Enter a level payment plan agreement for past, current and future charges for electric service with arrears paid in equal installments over the next two months. The Customer and the Cooperative may negotiate other payment arrangements mutually agreeable, individualized to the Customer's situation providing the most appropriate terms, after the Customer has been informed that he or she has at least two months in which to pay;

(e) Apply for federal, state, local or other funds for which the Customer is eligible;

(f) Not obtain electric service by tampering as defined in Section 6. J.; and

(g) Not default on a payment plan.

(4) In addition to fulfillment of the procedures outlined in Section 5, (with the exception of C.2., which is replaced with the more stringent requirement of (a) below), the Cooperative will:

(a) On the day prior to disconnection, make at least one telephone call attempt with the Customer of record or make one attempt at a personal contact with the Customer of record if telephone contact on that day is not made. If the Customer is not contacted during the phone call(s) or the personal contact the day prior to termination of service, the Cooperative employee will leave a disconnect message on the door on the day prior to disconnect;

(b) On the day of disconnection, receive a 24-hour forecast above the activating temperature from the National Weather Service. If the temperature is then forecast to be below the activating temperature, the disconnection may not be carried out and the Cooperative must wait for another 48-hour forecast above the activating temperature to initiate the disconnection procedures;

(c) Inform the Customer in the telephone contact(s), the written notice, the personal contact and the disconnect message on the door, of the existence of the Cold Weather Rule and that the Customer can avoid disconnection by bringing the Customer's electric bill current;

(d) Inform the Customer of, or provide a list of, organizations where funds are available to pay electric bills.

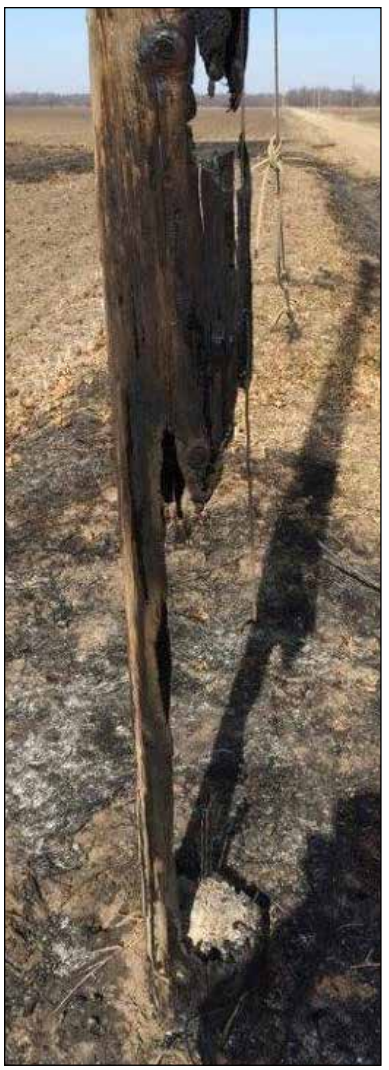
Car crashes, fires, farm equipment all require caution

Up in the air, power lines are usually out of reach. Those of us on the ground hardly notice the wires far above our heads.

But unfortunately, things sometime happen that bring utility poles and power lines down to the ground, and that's a dangerous situation for all involved.

Recently, Heartland worked with first responders in the Pittsburg and Girard area to help train everyone how to stay safe when accidents happen.

The training scenario involved a car that had crashed into a utility pole, bringing power lines down to rest on top of the car. First responders arriving on the scene learned the importance of keeping a proper distance from the crashed car. They were also reminded that people in a vehicle in contact with power lines need to remain in the car until utility crews arrive to disconnect power. Too many people assume that when power lines come down, power goes out. That is not always the case. If a live line is in contact with a vehicle, any occupant may be electrocuted when they step from the vehicle.



This can happen in a high-speed crash, or even something as simple as a driver backing into a meter pole in a driveway.

In addition to automobile accidents, large farm machinery is another frequent piece of equipment that can rip down utility poles or get tangled in power lines.

"There is a lot of big equipment out there," says Paul Norris, Heartland's director of operations. "It's easy to hook a pole or a guy wire and pull it down."

Planting and harvesting seasons are of course the times of year when farm-machinery accidents happen, as farmers rush to get their work done as weather permits.

Ag-related fires are another problem. When farmers burn off their wheat fields, sometimes utility poles get burned as well.

"Some poles can burn like a cigarette and fall, and other times they remain standing until a wind or a little bump makes it crash down," said Norris.

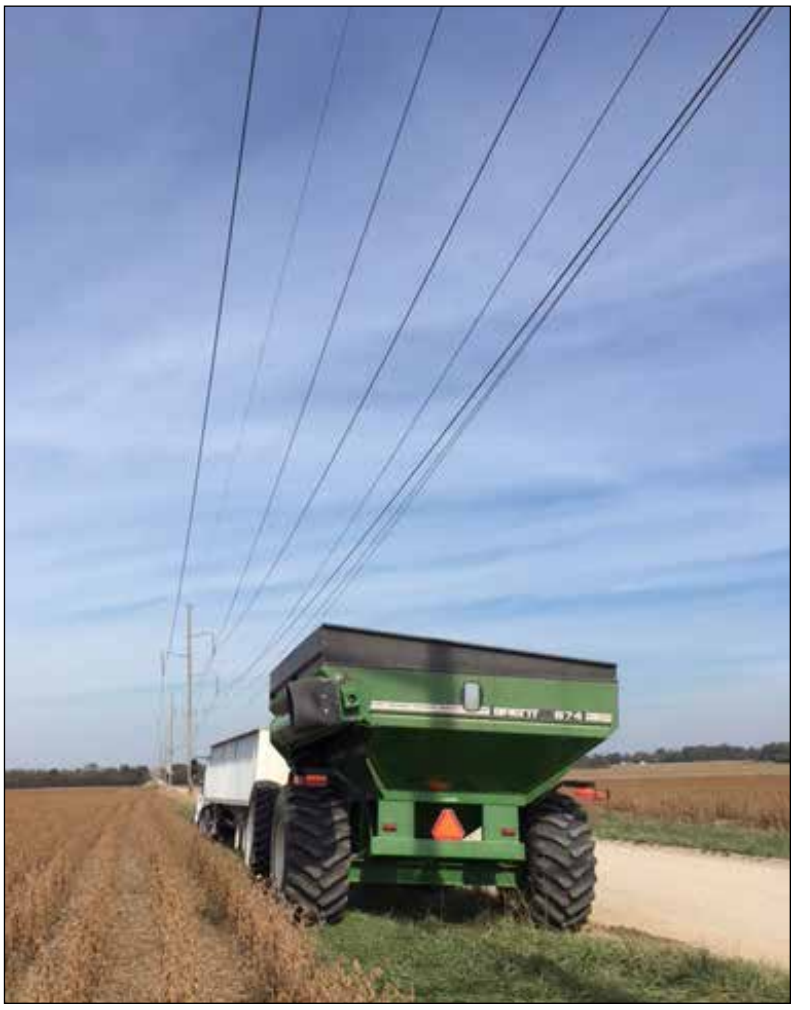
In all these situations, an energized wire can be left dangerously close to the ground where someone can accidently come in contact and be electrocuted.

When accidents happen, the first priority is to get help. Calling 911 is best if the situation is life-threatening. Calling Heartland will get utility crews out to help disconnect power and make sure the situation is safe.

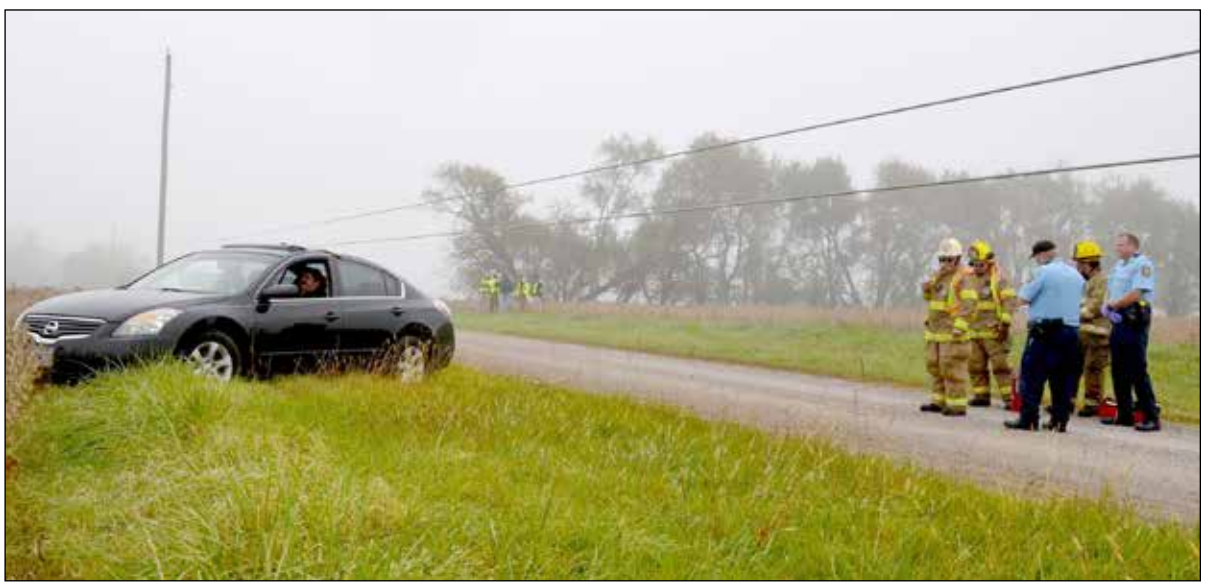
And of course there are a couple other good reasons to use caution around power lines.

Reliability is one. A single down pole and power line can leave a lot of people without power.

The second is cost. A farmer who snags a power line or starts a fire that results in a burned pole is liable for the damages. Repairs needed to replace a single damaged pole can run up to $2,500.



When harvest season arrives, equipment is sometimes parked underneath power lines. This can easily lead to contact, and a very dangerous situation.



LEFT: When a burning field gets out of control, utility poles can burn, bringing down power lines. Heartland will bill those responsible for this type of damage for the repair costs, which can be up to $2,500 per pole. ABOVE: A recent training exercise helped first responders deal with power lines in contact with a crashed car.

Haiti disaster hits home

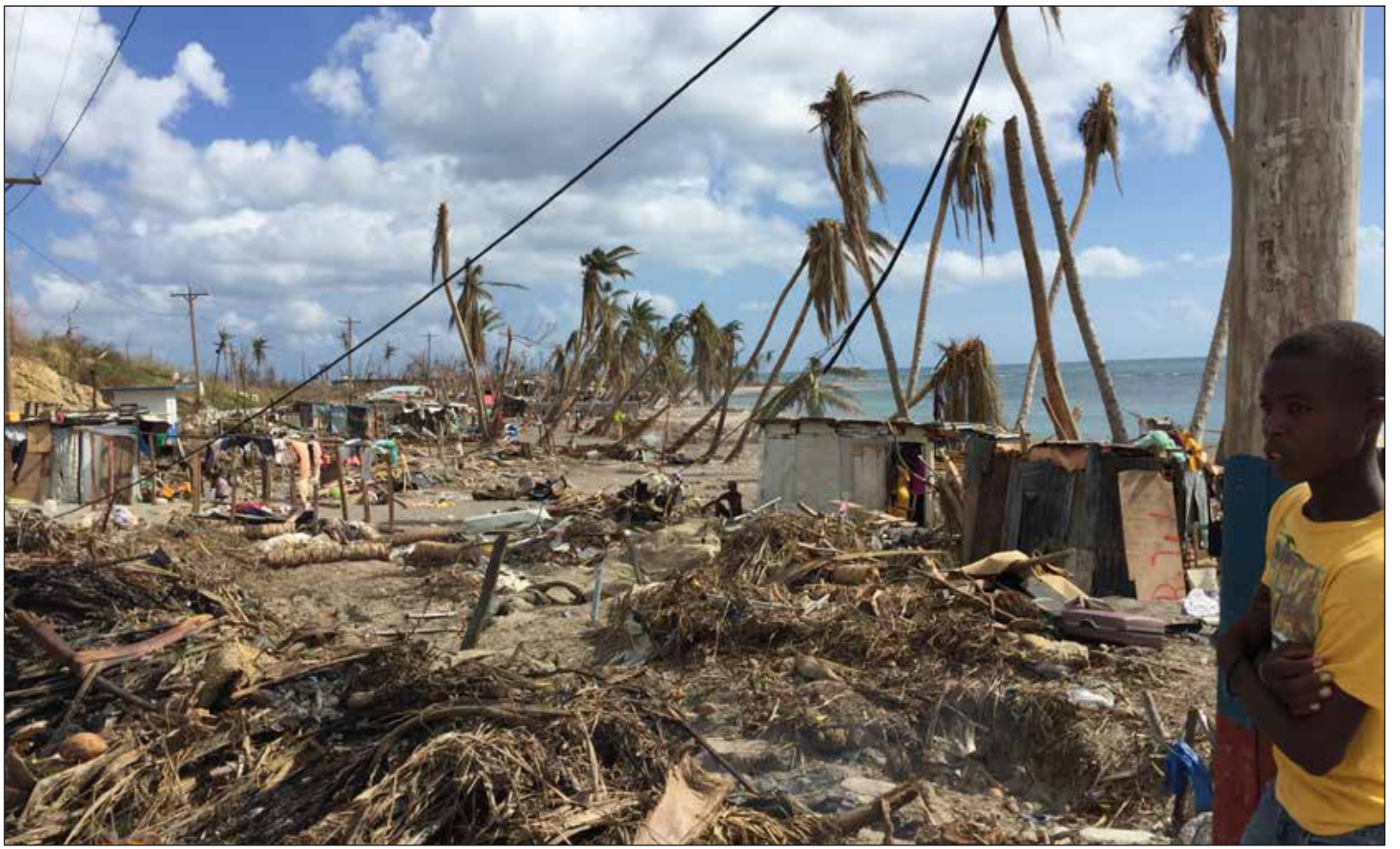
Local co-ops involved in providing power around the globe

Here in Southeast Kansas, electricity is a staple of modern life. The only time we ponder life without utility power is when bad weather forces us to make due without light bulbs, televisions, and convenient heating and air conditioning. But around the globe, more than 1.6 billion people live without electricity. That's one in five people.

One program supported by Heartland is the NRECA International Foundation, which helps provide power to people in developing countries.

As Hurricane Matthew barreled through Haiti in October with maximum sustained winds of 145 mph winds, many of NRECA International's lineworkers from America's electric cooperatives paid extra attention to the news reports. Making landfall in the southwest tip of the island, news is not coming in fast enough for many of them who are eager to know the status of Cooperative Electrique de l'Arrondisement des Côteaux (CEAC), an electric co-op they helped build from the ground up.

Established in 2013, CEAC first turned the lights on in September 2015. For 14 months, 38 lineworkers from 20 U.S.-based electric co-ops traveled to Haiti to help build this co-op's infrastructure, which, until Hurricane Matthew slammed into its territory, served 1,200 registered members in Côteaux, Port-a-Piment, and Roche-a-Bateaux.



Haitian power lines built with the assistance of workers from the United States were recently destroyed when Hurricane Matthew barreled through Haiti. Co-op staff in the U.S. are planning to help with the rebuilding.

NRECA International has received a multitude of emails from the volunteers who not only worked to bring electricity to these communities, but also made strong connections with the people who live there. They are ready to return to the region and help rebuild and restore power.

As all of Haiti reeled from yet another massive destruction caused by Mother Nature, NRECA International quickly established a relief fund to aid the devastated electric cooperative it helped set up. All funds will be used for power restoration efforts as well as to help rebuild the community.

"Our team has mobilized to support CEAC member-owners to determine the extent of the damage, to restore power and to help rebuild the community in the aftermath of Matthew," said Dan Waddle, NRECA International senior vice president

On the morning after Hurricane Matthew made landfall, the CEAC co-op general manager and NRECA International staff made the journey back to Coteaux after having been evacuated to the Haitian capital of Port-Au-Prince. Crossing over washed out bridges by truck and eventually finishing the journey by motorcycle and on foot, the team arrived in Coteaux at 2 a.m. the morning of October 6, about 48 hours after the storm hit.

As the sun rose that morning, the team reported that all three towns are almost totally destroyed. An initial report from NRECA International also stated that while all CEAC employees are safe, many of their homes are damaged or destroyed. The power system that our

co-ops helped build didn't fare much better, with a majority of the distribution lines and poles damaged or destroyed. The power plant also suffered major damage.

Funded by the United Nations Environmental Program (with financing from the Norwegian government), USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank, NRECA International began the project to establish CEAC in 2013 to provide these three towns with affordable and reliable power. It partnered with Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) to design and construct a solar-diesel hybrid system for the co-op.

One week after Hurricane Matthew made landfall in this region, a detailed damage assessment was conducted. The team found that at the CEAC power plant's solar PV generation system—about half of the solar array panels and mounting racks need to be replaced, and none of the distribution lines are working. However, the power plant's two diesel generators and their diesel fuel tanks were not damaged. And while the damage to the CEAC service area was devastating, none of the CEAC employees, CEAC Board, their families, or any CEAC member consumers suffered any fatalities.

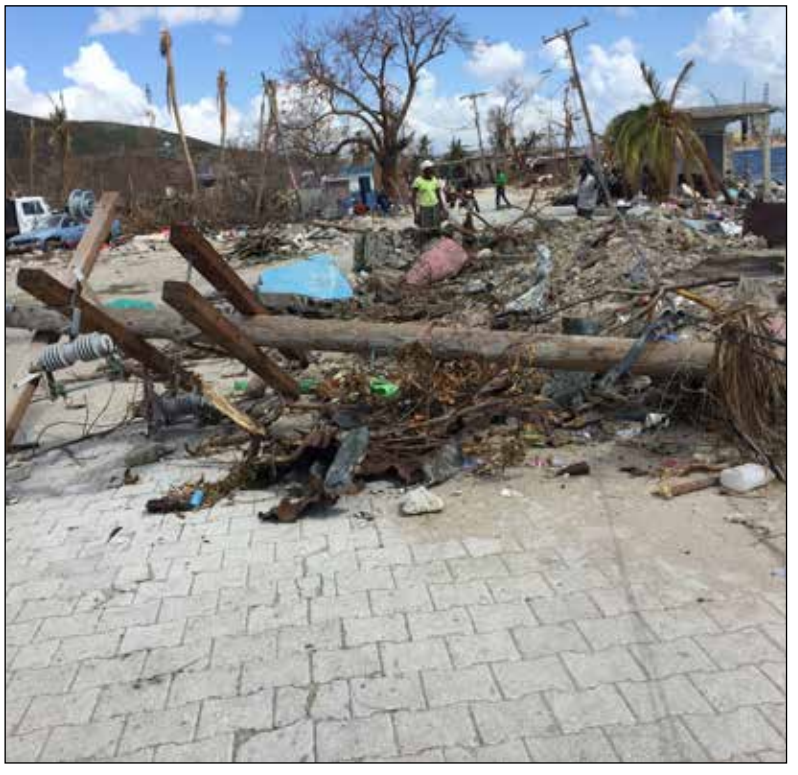
Work has already begun. The CEAC crew is busy clearing roads, downed power lines, poles, and other material that could be a hazard to the community. Any materials and equipment that can be re-used for re-electrification efforts are also being recovered and salvaged.

While American lineworkers and co-op staff are ready to help these Haitian families, it's still too early to determine when they can. NRECA International is working quickly to make a thorough evaluation of what is needed to restore power and help the community. And when they're ready, America's electric cooperatives will be too.

Fund established

To help the communities of Coteaux, Port-a-Piment and Roche-a-Bateaux, you can donate to a relief fund established by NRECA International at www.nrecainternational.coop. All money will be used for power restoration efforts that will rebuild the community.

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, NRECA International has provided electricity access to 120 million people in 43 developing countries.



ABOVE: Hurricane damage in Haiti was extensive, leaving much of the island without power. Crews from American electric cooperatives played an important role in bringing power to the people, and hope to help repair the storm damage. RIGHT: US crews from electric cooperatives help teach workers around the world, including those pictured here in a trip to Guatemala.

Uneven temperatures can be fixed at home

Dear Jim: We have a new heat pump, but have a problem keeping all the rooms comfortable. Someone is always too hot or too cool. What are some simple methods to even out the temperatures throughout the house? - Jason F.

Dear Jason: The problem you are experiencing is not uncommon, particularly in a two-story house, even for the newest heat pump systems. Unless you install an expensive zone control system with multiple thermostats, your heat pump can respond only to the temperature of the room where the wall thermostat is located.

Numerous factors determine how much heating and cooling, and therefore the temperature, various rooms throughout the year. These include the number and orientation of the windows, whether it is on the first or second floor, the activity level in the room, the length of the duct leading to it, etc.

There may also be differences in the energy efficiency of various rooms which causes the temperature difference, particularly leaky windows. When air-conditioning, placing an air deflector over the register helps distribute the cool air throughout the room.

Check the attic insulation, especially if it is the blown-in type. It can blow around during storms. Eventually some rooms have two feet of attic insulation while others have only two inches. This can have a huge effect on the room temperature. Even out the insulation as much as possible.

The standard builder-installed sheet metal ductwork often has many leaky spots so some of the heated or cooled air leaving the heat pump never gets to the rooms. The joints between the duct segments are the most common leaky areas. Use a high-quality duct tape, such as black Gorilla Tape, to wrap all the joints. You may find this takes care of much of the problem.

Each room should have a return air register, particularly bedrooms where the doors may be closed at night. Return ducts usually run down between the wall studs inside interior walls, so adding them in problem rooms is not difficult for a contractor to install.

There are many innovative ways to install an additional return duct. In my parent's older two-story house, the contractor was able to run a return duct down through a never-used laundry chute to the basement.

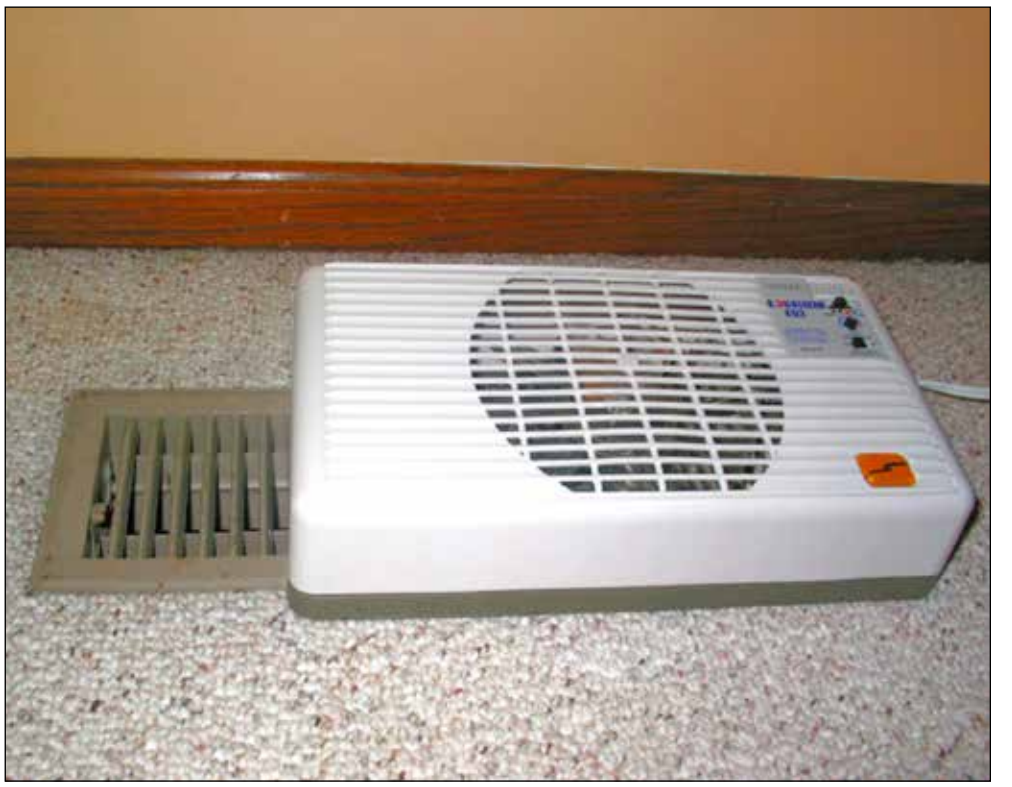
Check the ducts near the heat pump. If you see short handles on each one, they are for control dampers inside the ducts. When the handle is parallel to the duct, the damper is fully open. Partially close the dampers in the duct leading to the rooms which are getting too much heating or cooling to force more to the problem rooms.

Don't try just closing the damper in the floor or wall registers. First, they typically are leaky so the air flow will not be reduced much. Second, because the ducts inside the walls are probably leaky and you have no access to them to seal them, conditioned air is lost inside the exterior walls.

If these methods do not provide adequate temperature balancing, consider installing duct booster fans. These small fans mount in the ducts to the problem rooms and force more conditioned air to them.

These fans are sized to fit standard round and rectangular residential ducts. They can be controlled in different ways. The simplest ones sense when the main blower comes on and they run automatically at the same time. Others have their own thermostat to determine when they run.

Generally, it is best to have an experienced contractor do the installation for you. It can be wired into your blower switch to come on with the heat pump. If you choose to do it yourself, installing 120-volt model is best. A simple sail switch which is tripped by the air flow turns the duct fans on when the heat pump blower starts.



Register booster fans, pictured above, and duct booster fans, pictured below, are great ways to get more warm (or cool) air to individual rooms without adding additional ductwork.

Another simple do-it-yourself option is to install a register booster fan. This small rectangular fan mounts over the register cover in the room and is plugged into a standard electrical wall outlet. The small fan uses only about 30 watts of electricity. Some models are adjustable to come on only when more cooling or heating is needed in that room.

Setting the thermostat to continuous fan may also help, but it will increase your electric bills somewhat. This is most helpful if your new heat pump has a variable-speed blower. This allows the blower to run on a very low speed in continuous mode. These variable-speed blower motors are also more efficient than a standard blower motor.

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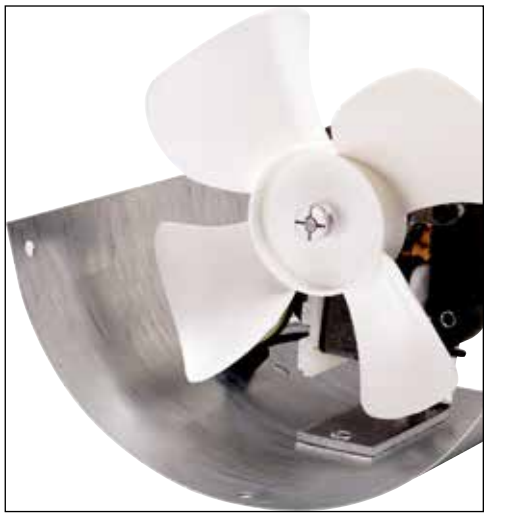
The following companies offer booster fans: Aero-Flo Industries, (219) 393-3555, www.aero-flo.com; Field Controls, (252) 522-3031, www.fieldcontrols.com; and Suncourt Manufacturing, (800) 999-3267, www.suncourt.com; and register deflectors: Ameriflow, (800) 252-8467, www.ameriflowregisters.com; and Deflecto Corporation, (800) 428-4328, www.deflecto.com.



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For more information contact *Heartbeat* Editor Ron Graber at our Girard office or call 1-800-835-9586. He can also be reached at rong@heartland-rec.com

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How much is propane?

We sometimes hear this question so often at Heartland Propane, that we can be heard mumbling the answer in our sleep. However, what most people don't know is that the real answer is a lot more than just a number. There are several variables and factors that go into the process of setting a price and the variables can be based on local usage as well as worldwide. Propane is a commodity that is produced from natural gas in a refining process. Anytime there is a demand for propane, no matter if it is in your area or several states away, it must be refined and therefore, directly affects your price at home.

As a professional service provider in the propane business, there are also many costs and requirements that we must meet to stay in business. These things will also affect the price. Things such as taxes, employee training, licensing, the cost of fuel to deliver, and other things that most people are not even aware that we are required to do, such as obtaining a driver background check performed by the FBI to transport hazardous materials.

Perhaps the most important and costly expense is insurance. Without insurance, we would have to close operations. Insurance companies require us to follow all guidelines pertaining to safety and compliance with OSHA, local fire marshals, National Fire Protection Association, and all federal and state ordinances. As you can easily understand, safety is a very important issue to us. The expense of training our employees, complying with all state and federal offices and obtaining information of new regulations, laws, and insuring our storage locations meet any new requirements as well as keeping our customers updated on safety information is not a cheap undertaking.

So now you are probably asking yourself, "What does all this have to do with me, the customer?" Very simple. By following these guidelines and obtaining information about state laws, we can provide you with the safest possible service. Shopping around for the cheapest price may be on your agenda, but ask yourself if it is the safest thing you could do. Our policies on safety through performing leak tests, pressure tests, and updating regulators are directly derived from laws put in place through state legislature. In fact, it is a law in the state of Kansas that leak checks must be performed on any system due to the following conditions:

- Out of gas calls
- Installation of new appliance or removal of any appliance
- Any interruption of service

Heartland Propane also has a policy that states any new customer must have a leak check done before their first delivery. The safety of you and your family is our highest priority and we encourage you to check our safety records. We just want to remind you that along with taking pride in our service, we put as much emphasis into our safety policies and training. Shopping around for the cheapest price might save a buck or two, but it may not be worth the risk of jeopardizing the safety of your home and family.

The next time you ask the question, "How much is propane?" Ask us about our safety practices too. Ask about our policies and how they protect your home. We will be happy to answer these questions and pass on our knowledge to you.

In fact, we encourage you to educate yourself on the subject of Propane Safety. Basic information for this article can be found at www.propane101.com.

All of us at Heartland Propane would like to thank you, our customer, for choosing us as your service provider and remind you that if you have any questions, comments, or safety concerns, please call us at 1-800-211-9101.