



## Power Outages and Trees—A Growing Threat

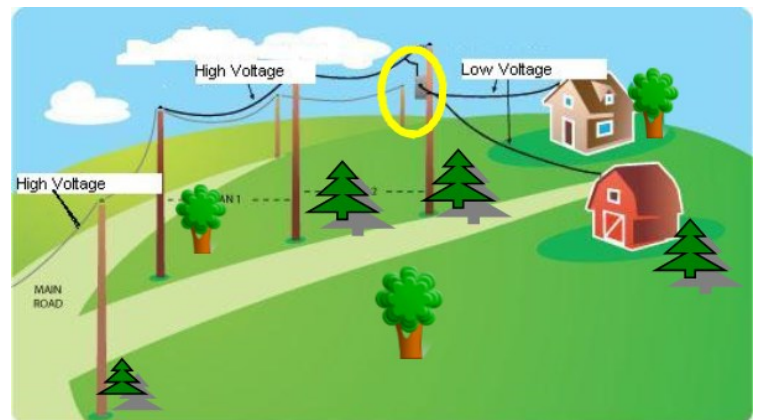
Do trees cause power outages? A large number of power outages are caused by trees falling on or growing into power lines. Not only do these events cause our members to be without power, they also cause a loss of water supply, potential loss of food requiring refrigeration, increased medical risks, risks to livestock and all of which are intensified in cold weather. There is also a very real threat of personal injury or death from electrocution once a tree has made contact with a high voltage line. And finally, the cost of removing trees from lines and re-establishing power to the members is very dangerous and expensive work.

Beyond the problems caused by power outages there are additional threats caused by trees falling on or growing into power lines. Should a wildfire caused by tree contact get out of control, the resulting damage could be catastrophic. In addition to the high cost of replacing a large portion of the distribution system other liabilities could result, all of which could significantly increase distribution fees.

**So, what can be done to prevent the above problems?** In a perfect world, the elimination of trees under or near power lines eliminates the threats. The Rocky REA administers a vegetation management plan with the goal of removing all trees under or near power lines. Prior to and conditional upon receiving electric power services, all members sign an Electric Service Contract which addresses vegetation management as follows:

(1) **Vegetation Management:** The UTILITY RIGHT-OF-WAY gives the Association the right to carry out vegetation management programs, including the removal of trees and brush. The Association is responsible for all vegetation management on all the **high voltage lines** up to and including the transformer pole. The Consumer is responsible for all vegetation management on **secondary lines that are low voltage**. The Consumer also agrees not to plant any trees or shrubs which may encroach on the right-of-way granted by this UTILITY RIGHT-OF-WAY. If such trees are planted the Association shall have the right to remove them at the Consumer's expense.

In the above clause, the general membership of the REA has clearly mandated the REA to remove all trees from under the high voltage power lines in order to reduce the risks outlined above. The individual member's are responsible to control vegetation growth on the secondary lines that are low voltage. The dividing line between high and low voltage is the transformer drum. The transformer drum is on the pole next to the house in the illustration below.



Wherever possible, in order to maximize safety and minimize costs it is in the best interests of the REA to remove trees. In special circumstances, trees that provide certain advantages to the individual member, such as dust/noise/wind/privacy control, **may** be trimmed rather than removed, at the request of that member.

It is important to recognize that the cost incurred for trimming high voltage lines from the mainline to the transformer pole, requested by a member, be borne by that member only and not by the general membership. In all cases, the desirable option for the general membership is to remove the trees, thereby greatly reducing future vegetation management costs and eliminating safety hazards.

The Board and Management of your REA requests that our members assist in reducing both vegetation management costs and the threat to health and property by cooperating in the removal of as many trees under or near power lines as possible.

# Rocky REA Scholarship Program

The Rocky REA Scholarship Program is once again available!

\$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to the top two applicants.

Applicants must provide the following:

- An essay describing their study plans and future career goals. The essay should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 1,000 words
- A copy of their post-secondary institution acceptance letter
- Official Government of Alberta transcripts (once available)
- Two letters of reference either from teachers, employers, coaches, or religious representatives. The letter should describe the qualities the applicant displays which make them an appropriate candidate for this award. For example the letter may include information regarding the applicant's academic standing, achievement in extracurricular activities, and/or community involvement.

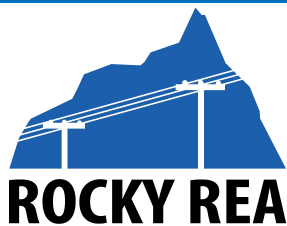
To learn more about the Scholarship Program, the application process, or to get an application, please visit our website or contact the office. The deadline for Applications is August 1, 2016.

## Rocky REA in the Community

Rocky REA staff braved the rain to take part in the Caroline Bighorn Rodeo Parade May 21. Our truck received an Honourable Mention for decorations! Thanks to everyone who joined us!



The Rocky REA office will be closed July 1, 2016 for Canada Day



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