

OPD5 WATTS UP

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021



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Visit us online at
www.opd5.com

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

August 18, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Overton Office
Board Room

September 15, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Mesquite Office
Engineering Building
Board Room

October 20, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Overton Office
Board Room

Board meetings are subject to change. Please check our website, Facebook page or twitter feed a day prior to the meeting for a copy of the agenda.

What It Takes To Keep The Lights On!

By Vernon Robison

The place is known by Overton Power District #5 (OPD5) crews as Rattlesnake, and it is just as foreboding as its name. In short, it is a maintenance nightmare!

A large wooden power pole structure is perched atop a craggy hill to the north of Logandale. There is nothing but sheer cliffs below the structure. That makes it impossible for a road to be built up to the site. So the only approach for work crews is a rugged half-mile hike on foot around the back side of the mountain. Any tools, equipment or parts needed in maintaining or repairing the structure have to be packed in on foot. And with no bucket truck or other vehicles able to reach the site, maintenance crews have to do it the old-fashioned way: by climbing the 65-foot-high poles.

That was the challenge faced by OPD5 line crews recently when it was discovered that extensive repair work was needed to support the Rattlesnake structure.

About a year ago, a routine OPD5 drone inspection at Rattlesnake revealed that the wooden support arms on the structure were beginning to split. Without reinforcement, it was only a matter of time before they failed. And no one could predict when that might happen.

Unfortunately, Rattlesnake is a very crucial spot in the OPD5 transmission system. It has

long been part of the only main artery delivering power from the district's hub at Tortoise substation in Moapa to the Sandhill substation on the bench east of Logandale. From there a transmission line carries power across the Mormon Mesa east to connect all of Mesquite.

Currently, there is very little redundancy to that line. If it goes down, there is an old power line that might carry enough to energize Moapa Valley. But it doesn't have near enough capacity to feed Mesquite. "If we were to unexpectedly lose that structure, I'd bet that we would, at the very least, be seven days getting it back online," said OPD5 Line Operations Manager Corey Dalley.



"Because you don't know what kind of damage is going to go downline or upline from there since it is way up on that point. We really didn't want to leave something like that to chance."

The problem is that the line can't be de-energized to do repairs without blacking out all of Mesquite for an indeterminate amount of time. Thus, the only option for OPD5 crews was to perform the repairs while the line was

still energized, Dalley said.

That would be a unique challenge. That line carries 138,000 volts. A person coming within 10-15 feet of the line itself would start to feel some mild effects of stray voltage. And the closest a worker could safely get to it while energized would be four feet. "So our crews would have to climb up those power poles," Dalley said. "And everything they do, all of the intricate work in pulling cotter pins and loosening and tightening things down – all of that would have to be done at the end of a fiberglass pole rated to handle the voltage. It is a tall order."

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Safety Tips

Look out for scams

By Meghaan Evans



Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric utility. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding you to pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang-up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit

or debit card (such as a Green Dot card). OPD5 will never ask you to offer up personal or finance information over the phone.

- If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact your local OPD5 office either in person, or over the phone at (702) 346-5710 or (702) 397-2512.
- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of OPD5 that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail.

- If someone calls claiming to be

the IRS, hang-up immediately.

- If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email, or send it to your spam folder.
- If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang-up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

OPD5 wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy.

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Virginia-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Our offices will be closed on:
July 5th In observance of Independence Day
September 6th In observance of Labor Day
Regular office hours will resume the next business day
after the Holiday is observed.

Energy Conservation



15 Tips to Help You Make Your Home More Energy Efficient!

By Keith Buchhalter

Just like you, I have to pay for electricity every month, and I am always looking for tips that will help me save on my next electric bill. Interestingly, there are a lot of small changes that can help you use less electricity without spending a penny, especially during the summer months when electric bills tend to be higher due to the extreme temperatures in our region. My wife always says that sharing is caring, so here are my favorite 15 energy-saving tips for the Summer of 2021:

1. Wash your clothes in cold water if possible.
2. Air dry your clothes and take advantage of the warm weather, believe it or not, this time of the year clothes dries faster outside.
3. Clean or replace all filters in your home regularly. Dirty filters make your system work harder and run longer than necessary.
4. Defrost your refrigerator and freezer before ice buildup becomes 1/4-inch thick to ensure your appliances are running efficiently.
5. During warmer months, close blinds, shades, and drapes on the sunny side of your home to help keep your home's temperature cooler and reduce the work for you AC. Open shades during cooler months to let the sun warm your home.
6. Do not peek in the oven while baking! Every time you peek, the temperature can drop 25F, making your oven use more energy to bring the temperature back up.
7. Use natural light when possible.
8. Do not leave your electronics on all day long. Only turn on your computer, monitor, printer, and televisions when you need them.
9. Set your thermostat to 78F in the summer and 68F in the winter - every degree of extra heating or cooling will increase energy usage from 6% to 8%. Setting your thermostat to a lower temperature than normal will not cool your home faster.
10. Using your ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting to about 4°F with no reduction in comfort.
11. Refrigerators and freezers operate most efficiently when full, so keep your refrigerator and freezer as full as possible (using water bottles if nothing else). Be careful about overfilling them as this will reduce airflow and cause the appliance to work harder.
12. Using dishwashers and clothes washers/dryers at night will keep the house cooler, reduce strain on the power grid during the peak usage hours of 4 PM and 6 PM and reduce the chance of an emergency!
13. Turn off heated dry on your dishwasher and air dry instead.
14. Do not leave bathroom or kitchen ventilation fans running longer than necessary. They replace inside air with outside.
15. Turn off the lights when they are not in use. Lighting accounts for about 12% of a typical residential utility bill.

We share energy-saving tips on social media year-round, so make sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @OPD5.

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Dalley said that this kind of work on a live line is not routine for OPD5 crews. "Our linemen have the basic training to do that kind of work, but they don't get much experience with it day to day," Dalley said.

Instead, the district usually calls in a contractor for that kind of job. Dalley said that he called a couple of contractors last year. "They took one look at the location and wouldn't even consider trying to do it," Dalley said. "So it became an in-house job by necessity."

Last Fall, OPD5 Overton Area Foreman Kyle Leavitt took the project on as a challenge. He and his crew began studying the Rattlesnake structure, taking detailed measurements and doing careful calculations of line tensions and weights. They used these to build a practice structure in the OPD5 equipment yard in Overton that precisely replicated the one at Rattlesnake.

Then they went to work rehearsing exactly how to reinforce the splitting arms on the structure. Over a series of about four months, the team spent more than 40 man hours just practicing that procedure and working out every possible detail. "They tried all different scenarios and different types of techniques, just trying to anticipate every contingency," Dalley said. "Because once you're up there working on a live line, there is no turning back. You have to keep going until it is done."

In the end, Leavitt and his team presented a detailed plan to OPD5 General Manager Mendis Cooper and other district managers to seek the final go-ahead and move forward. "Obviously Mendis was concerned about this being our main artery," Dalley said. "If we have a problem up there, it is going to shut everybody out of power. But Kyle just said, 'I wouldn't be doing it if I wasn't 100 percent confident that we could get it done.' So he was given the green light to move forward with it."

A crew of nine workers assembled at the foot of Rattlesnake on March 23 at about 7 am. They included linemen Steve Barlow, Chad Dalton, Cody Hardy, Ben Jantz, Luis Gonza-

lez, Omar Vallejo, Tanner Kilmer and Zach Barnum; with groundman Michael Abbott assisting.

The crew hiked all of their gear up to the hill and got started working on the project by around 9 AM. They took turns with four of them working up on the pole for half of the day while the others supported from the ground. Then the other four spent the latter half of the day on the pole. "Everything went pretty much exactly as they had practiced it," Dalley said. "There was very little variation from that. It was very well done."

By the time the crew was finished at about 3:30 pm, the structures were reinforced and the problem was solved for the time being.

Actually, the district has been planning for some time now to avoid situations like this in the future. The plans would add redundancy to the system to make maintenance on transmission lines easier.

First of all, there are plans in the works to eventually reroute this vital 138 kV line around Rattlesnake so that every structure on the line is accessible by road.

Even sooner than that, though, a second 138 kV line has been planned to be constructed across the mesa directly to Mesquite. That line is expected to be completed as soon as late 2022 or early 2023.

"At that point there will be redundancy going into Mesquite," Dalley said. "And we will have even better redundancy for Moapa Valley because we can use that line to feed back to Logandale and Overton if the other line goes down."

Dalley praised the work of the crews who saw the difficult project to completion. "There is a lot of gratitude for these guys and the things that they were able to accomplish," Dalley said. "They could have just said 'No it can't be done.' They could have insisted that we find a contractor to do it. But they spent the time and worked out the problems and got them solved one by one. It was a remarkable job that they did."

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ON TWITTER AND
INSTAGRAM @OPD5

Our Facebook page and twitter feed are valuable resources to provide our customers with news and updates whenever an unplanned power outage occurs.

You can access both thru our website, they are setup in a way that does not require you to have a Facebook or twitter account to view the information.

We also post great tips on energy conservation, safety and emergency preparedness on Instagram.

Please remember, in the event of a power outage, do not report it via Facebook or twitter, we can't guarantee the delivery of messages received via social media to the right personnel in a timely manner.

In case of an unexpected power outage, please call us at (702) 397-2512 or (702) 346-5710. OPD5 has personnel on standby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays to respond as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency.

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