

“Why was my power out?” 2024 Outage Cause Review



Dalton Whitley
Operations Manager

We know you depend on reliable electric service. We work hard to continually improve our system’s reliability to provide you the best possible service. One aspect of this is analyzing outage causes. I want to share with you here our breakdown of 2024’s outage causes.

38% Power Supplier (aka Transmission)

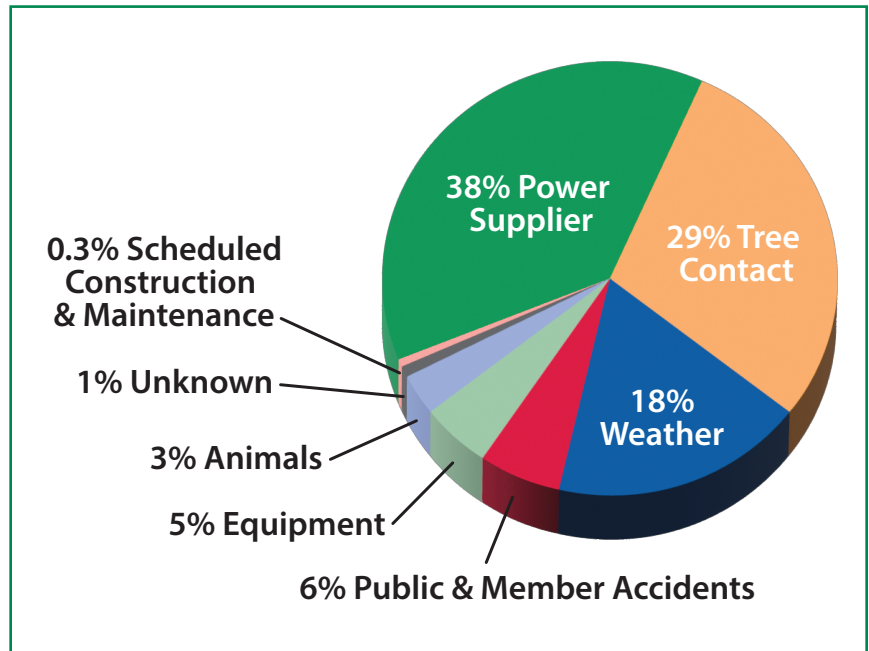
These outages are out of our control. They occur when Prairie Power or Ameren lose transmission service to one of our substations, or equipment within a substation fails. This could be due to the same outage causes we’ll discuss later, such as weather, trees, equipment, etc. During most of these outages, we are able to backfeed power from another substation so that service can be quickly restored to our membership.

29% Tree Contact (aka Vegetation)

Our ongoing vegetation management program of right-of-way clearing is essential to protecting our equipment and reducing these outages. Thank you for your patience and understanding as line clearance personnel work in your neighborhoods.

18% Weather

Mother nature can bring service disruptions for many reasons, including lightning, tornados, winds, ice, heavy rains and other extremes. We are thankful that 2024 did not bring any significant weather events, and we cross our fingers that 2025 is the same.



6% Public & Member Accidents

This category encompasses incidents such as vehicle/farm equipment contact with our lines, contact with underground cables, fires and more. For your safety, always remain alert when moving vehicles or machinery near our equipment, and always call JULIE (dial 811) before you dig.

5% Equipment

Our equipment experiences normal wear and tear that can cause equipment failure. Our electrical system continues to get older, and we perform rebuilds and ongoing maintenance. This percentage is not out of line given the age and size of our system.

3% Animals

Despite our best efforts to deter animals with shields and guards,

mischievous critters (mostly birds and squirrels) will sometimes interfere with our equipment.

1% Unknown

Our linemen can normally provide a quick answer to why an outage has occurred. But, despite their knowledge and experience, a few select cases remain unsolved mysteries.

0.3% Scheduled Construction & Maintenance

Sometimes power must be disconnected for our crews to safely perform construction and maintenance on our lines. We do our best to alert any members affected in advance and to work quickly and efficiently to keep interruptions at a minimum.



Cooking a romantic dinner this Valentine's Day?

Tips to keep the fire in your heart and not your kitchen

Candles

Open flames should be used with caution. Make sure candles are placed away from flammable objects like table centerpieces, shower curtains, window curtains and bedding. Place candles on sturdy structures — not small ledges, staircases or anywhere a curious pet could tip it over. Stay in the room while in use.

Dinner

Preparing a special dinner can be stressful — as we race around trying to make everything perfect, distractions can often take our attention away from the stovetop. Keep the phrase “watch what you heat” in mind and stay near the food.

A common cause of kitchen fires is when grease ignites and someone panics and moves the pan or uses water to put out the flames. If you have a grease fire, don't touch the pan — place the lid slowly on the pan to cover and put

out the fire, turn off the burner and leave it on the stove at least 20 minutes. No lid? Use a cookie sheet or pizza pan. If you have an oven fire, keep the door closed and turn off the oven.

Some other tips include keeping oven mitts, towels, food packages and other flammables away from the stove, not cooking while wearing loose sleeves or clothing, unplugging unused appliances and testing GFCIs monthly.

In case of a fire anywhere in your home, leave the area and call 911.

Notes about fire extinguishers

If you do fight the fire with an extinguisher, make sure your family is leaving, and you have a clear way out. Keep fire extinguishers in plain sight on each floor of your home. Keep one in the kitchen, away from the stove, and one in the garage near the door.

**College scholarships available!
See page 6 for details.**

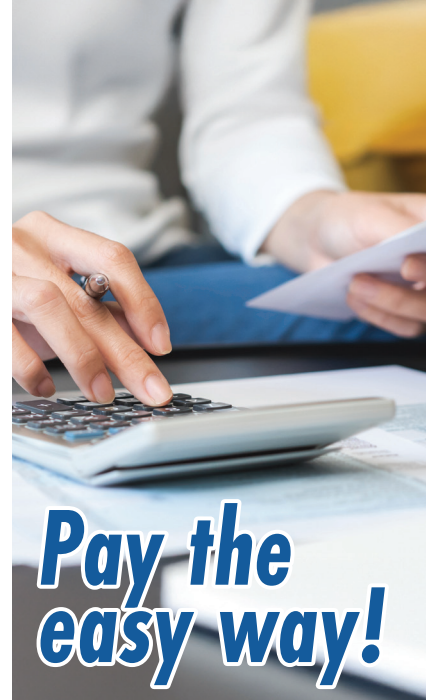


Safety Tip

Did you know that mylar balloons can damage the power grid and cause power outages? Mylar and latex balloons eventually fall back to earth and their remnants can cause harm to animals and marine life. Consider alternatives to balloon releases and enjoy balloons indoors.



Safe Electricity.org®



Pay the easy way!

Pay automatically with a credit/debit card or checking/savings account

Eliminate the worry of mail delays or forgetting to pay online or by phone by paying your bill automatically through your bank account or credit card on the 10th, 17th or 24th of each month.

You will still receive a bill each month telling you the amount to be deducted on your chosen date. To pay a consistent amount each month combine this option with our BudgetWise program. You can also sign up online to receive email notification when your bill is ready and to select paperless billing if desired.

Download the form at:
www.menard.com/waystopay

TIPS TO AVOID

ENERGY SCAMS



Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it's likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



DOWNLOAD OUR MyMEC APP!

Board highlights

Nov. 26, 2024

For full minutes visit menard.com or contact the office.

- All Directors, General Manager Alisha Anker, and Attorney present.
- Adopted revisions to Net Billing Policy.
- Adopted Resolution for NRECA 401k Plan employer match.
- After discussion and review of revenue deferral and anticipated margin changes, approved rate changes effective with February 2025 billing cycle. [Chgs printed in Jan. 2025 issue & available @ www.menard.com.]
- Approved revising 2024 PPI Revenue Deferral Plan to eliminate full waiver and elect 7 mills/kwh. Approved full waiver for 2025 Revenue Deferral Plan.
- Director of Accounting & Finance Julie Atwater discussed 2nd VCAP (Voluntary Contribution Acceleration Program) Agreement w/NRECA as sponsor for retirement security plan; program adopted for 8% reduction factor across 4-year term.
- Anker reviewed October monthly & YTD financial trends. Operating margins \$3,363,617 compared to \$3,667,798 last year; equity at 42.86%; 12-mo TIER 2.48 & DSC 1.96.
- Anker reviewed operation report w/83 incidents, longest duration of an outage 223 min due to transformer fire impacting 1 member; largest # affected by single outage 167 due to critter vs. transformer at Kilbourne substation. She compared ratio of meters per members among co-ops, discussed Rockdale Solar Farm Project & reviewed Hurricane Helene mutual aid support.
- Next mtg 12/20/24.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: energy.gov



Paperless billing

Tackle your clutter this year!

If you do not require a paper bill from us, you may choose Paperless Billing. Sign up through our online bill payment site and view your bill electronically each month.



SCHOLARSHIPS!

Apply now for university, community college and vocational school scholarships!

\$2,000 4-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

\$1,500 2-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

\$1,500 VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PROGRAM

Applicants must be a high school senior or equivalent, graduating during 2025.

Applicant's parent/legal guardian must be a Menard Electric Cooperative member with their primary residence or business served by the cooperative.

See more details and apply at menard.com/scholarships
Deadline is March 1, 2025.



BONUS! TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Applicants may also apply for an all-expense-paid trip on Youth to Washington Tour, where he/she will travel with other Illinois students for a weeklong tour of Washington, D.C., in June 2025!