

Outages at cooperatives at 70,254; Downed poles jumps to 25,760

Little Rock, Ark. – Feb. 2, 2009 – 10:30 a.m. – As of 10:30 a.m. today, about 70,254 members remain without power, down from approximately 200,000 at the peak of the outages. As the hardest hit cooperatives complete work, the number of downed poles has rocketed to an estimated 25,760.

“In some cases, the ice storm rendered many distribution systems inoperable,” said Doug White, vice president of systems services for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. “This storm is many times worse than the crippling ice storm of 2000 that hit southwest Arkansas. The devastation is very widespread across multiple states.”

In addition to damage to the cooperatives’ distribution systems, there are transmission lines out of service that must be restored by other companies. Once those are restored, the cooperatives expect the restoration process to accelerate.

More than 2,750 linemen from electric cooperatives in Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas are working to restore power at the seven cooperatives with the largest number of outages. Cooperatives from Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Vermont may be called on for assistance.

“Four-wheel drive and tracked vehicles are needed for restoration efforts in the rough terrain in the northern section of the state,” White said. “We continue to add to the number of workers and equipment to restore power.”

The hardest hit systems are in northern Arkansas. The cooperatives with outages include: Carroll Electric Cooperative, Berryville; Clay County Electric Cooperative, Corning; Craighead Electric Cooperative, Jonesboro; Farmers Electric Cooperative, Newport; First Electric Cooperative, Jacksonville; Mississippi County Electric Cooperative, Blytheville; North Arkansas Electric Cooperative, Salem; Ozarks Electric Cooperative, Fayetteville; and Petit Jean Electric Cooperative, Clinton. ***(A chart is attached for outages by cooperative; cooperative service territory map is also attached)***

The public is cautioned to avoid any downed power lines and to report them immediately to local authorities.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides various services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 490,000 members, or customers, in Arkansas and surrounding states.

January 2009 Ice Storm Outage Report

<i>Updated 10:00 a.m. February 2, 2009</i>		
Electric Cooperative	Current Member Outages (est.)	Storm Total Broken Poles (est.)
Arkansas Valley	0	100
Carroll	14,200	1,660
Clay	7,500	15,000
Craighead	8,500	4,000
Farmers	900	500
First	354	500
Mississippi County	800	1000
North Arkansas	18,000	1,500
Ozarks	16,000	500
Petit Jean	4,000	1000
Rich Mountain	0	0
Woodruff	0	0
Totals	70,254	25,760