

WHY SYSTEM RELIABILITY MATTERS



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BY STEVE JOHNSON PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER

Part of what we discussed in our rate increase series dealt with system improvements as one of the three factors driving a price increase. One of the main system improvements we have been focusing on and speaking to is system reliability. So what is system reliability, and why does it matter? We'll do a deep dive into why Yampa Valley Electric Association places such importance on hardening and investing in our system.

Annually, we look at our service and member disruptions, and how we measure up against previous years. For example, suppose we see a service area with increased outages. In that case, we put this on our list of capital improvements for the next year and commit to improving our members' service experience. YVEA has implemented several reporting tools over the past few years, allowing us to understand the causes of outages and learn ways to reduce the duration of outages. In addition, we pinpoint where trees and vegetation are causing outages, giving us an opportunity to harden our system through vegetation management. We put these vegetation management plans into our yearly construction schedule, reducing the number of outages caused by trees coming down due to wind or winter storms.

With improvements to our system and the ability to identify areas in our territory that require more immediate upgrades, we have drastically cut our outage times year-over-year. For example, in 2019, our total outage hours for members were 182,071, compared to 47,392 hours in 2021. This decrease in outage hours also translates to a reduction in outage duration. In 2019, our average outage time was 400 minutes, compared to 2021, where we reduced the time to 128. Such a significant reduction in outage hours helps move us toward our goal of providing our members with safe, reliable, and affordable power.

It has taken many years of hard work and a tremendous amount of cooperation among departments and employees of YVEA and Luminata. We had to change our mindset at YVEA to become proactive regarding our system instead of reactive. New technologies needed to be adopted and implemented, which took a significant amount of trust and engagement from all employees. Still, when we all saw the improvements this could create for our membership, it was worth taking the leap and trying new things.

For many reasons, these system improvements are a reason for YVEA and Luminata to celebrate. We all saw that with great teamwork, we have the ability to make improvements to our members' lives with increased reliability and a more proactive approach to system improvements. We hope that as each year comes, we will continue to invest in technology that improves our systems, which will enhance service for all of our members.

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Yampa Valley Electric Association

is a cooperative that provides value to its member-owners through technology that delivers safe and reliable electrical service in an environmentally and financially responsible manner.