

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

NOVEMBER 2022

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# STAYING SAFE DURING WINTER STORMS

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Winter can bring thoughts of gently falling snow or sparkling ice, but it can also bring unpredictable weather with high winds, whiteouts and sub-zero temperatures. This can cause hazardous road conditions and power outages. Make sure to be prepared this winter season.

Heavy snow and accumulating ice can easily bring tree limbs down onto power lines, cutting off power to homes and businesses. Making plans now for a potential power outage can make riding out a prolonged power outage safer and more comfortable.

You can take steps to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a winter storm long before one is forecast. One necessary way to prepare is to put an emergency kit together. Safe Electricity, an internationally recognized organization that provides safety information, recommends you include the following in your kit:

- Water – stock up on bottled water for consumption.
- Food – have enough non-perishable food items per person to last at least three to seven days.
- Utensils – include a non-electric can opener, cooking tools, paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Blankets, pillows and warm clothing items.
- First aid kit, medicine and prescription drugs.
- Flashlight and batteries – be sure to include extra batteries.
- Radio and clock – use battery-operated radios and clocks; also consider purchasing a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio.
- Telephone – keep cell phone chargers (wall, car and/or solar) on hand

and, if you have a landline, a traditional (not cordless) telephone set.

- Supplies for alternate heating methods, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove.

Other tasks to complete in advance of a storm include insulating your home by installing storm windows, caulking cracks in your home and making sure your heating system is in proper working order. EEA conducts vegetation management, or tree trimming, around our service area continuously with the goal to keep trees out of power lines to reduce outages. You may want to consider consulting a tree-trimming expert to evaluate vegetation around your home that may be a threat to buildings or other property during heavy snow or high wind events.

If the electricity goes out due to a winter storm, you might be in for a prolonged power outage as crews work through the harsh weather to get the power back on. If you find yourself in this situation, make sure to contact EEA as soon as you can so they know you have lost power. Other actions you can take to stay safe and comfortable are:

- Stay inside and dress warmly.
- Close off unneeded rooms.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Place draft blocks or rolled up towels at the bottom of doors to minimize cold drafts from entering the house.
- Cover windows at night.
- Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home. Infants and people older than 65 are often more

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you cannot keep your home warm.

Winter can bring a variety of weather patterns ranging from mild snows to severe blizzards. To prepare yourself for winter storms, make sure to pay attention to weather forecasts and understand the difference between the warnings provided by the National Weather Service:

- Winter Storm Warning – issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, freezing rain or sleet is coming or occurring. The warnings are issued 12 to 24 hours prior to the storm.
- Winter Storm Watch – alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, freezing rain or sleet. Watches are issued 12 to 48 hours before the storm.
- Winter Storm Outlook – given when winter storm conditions are possible and are issued three to five days in advance of a winter storm.
- Blizzard Warning – issued for gusty

winds of 35 mph or more and falling or blowing snow that creates visibilities of a fourth of a mile or less. These conditions usually last at least three hours.

Another great way to stay informed with what is happening during winter storms and other emergencies is to subscribe to the emergency alert system used by the county you live in. Montezuma and Dolores counties, Colorado, use the Nixle system and you can sign up for alerts by going to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) and entering your ZIP code. You can also text your ZIP code to 888777 and the mobile device you text from will be enrolled in alerts for that ZIP code.

For San Miguel County, Colorado, go to [www.sanmiguelcountyco.org](http://www.sanmiguelcountyco.org) and click the “Sign Up For Alerts” icon on its home page. For San Juan County, Utah, go to [www.sanjuancounty.org/emergency-management/](http://www.sanjuancounty.org/emergency-management/) and click on the “Sign Up for Emergency Alerts” link on the left side of the page.

For more information on how to prepare for a winter storm and how to keep your family safe during and after a winter storm, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



### GFCIs and AFCIs in a Nutshell

GFCIs prevent shocks and AFCIs prevent fires. Both should be installed by a qualified electrician to make your home safer.

Small countertop appliances like slow cookers and Instant Pots® are convenient and typically use less energy than an oven.



## Restoring Power After a Storm

How long it takes for your power to be restored depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages in your area and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the affected areas. Rest assured, EEA is prepared for these disruptions and is standing by to get the power back quickly.



▲ EEA Lineman R.L. Wilcox removes a damaged pole section during an outage.



▲ An EEA line crew works an outage using a snow cat during a winter storm.



We are  
**THANKFUL**  
for you!

*Happy Thanksgiving. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve you. Have a safe and blessed holiday.*



**EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## MY CO-OP EMPLOYEES

## Farewell to Steve Gritz

After more than 32 years of dedicated service, Steve Gritz retires from EEA at the end of November. Steve began working for EEA as a lineman in 1990 and recalled “I moved to Monticello in a blizzard, unloaded my things with the help of my friends Scott and Wendy Benson, and started a new career. From the beginning I could tell it was a good decision to relocate to a small town and a permanent position. I was never closer to any other line workers than the men I had the privilege to work beside for those first 17 years.”

Steve also worked as a meterman and system operator and is known for his desire to serve our members. He described working at EEA as being part of a family and said, “I want to thank Empire Electric for 32 great years of employment.” He will surely be missed. EEA’s board of directors and employees are grateful for his service and wish Steve all the best in retirement.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days.

If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to boost efficiency.

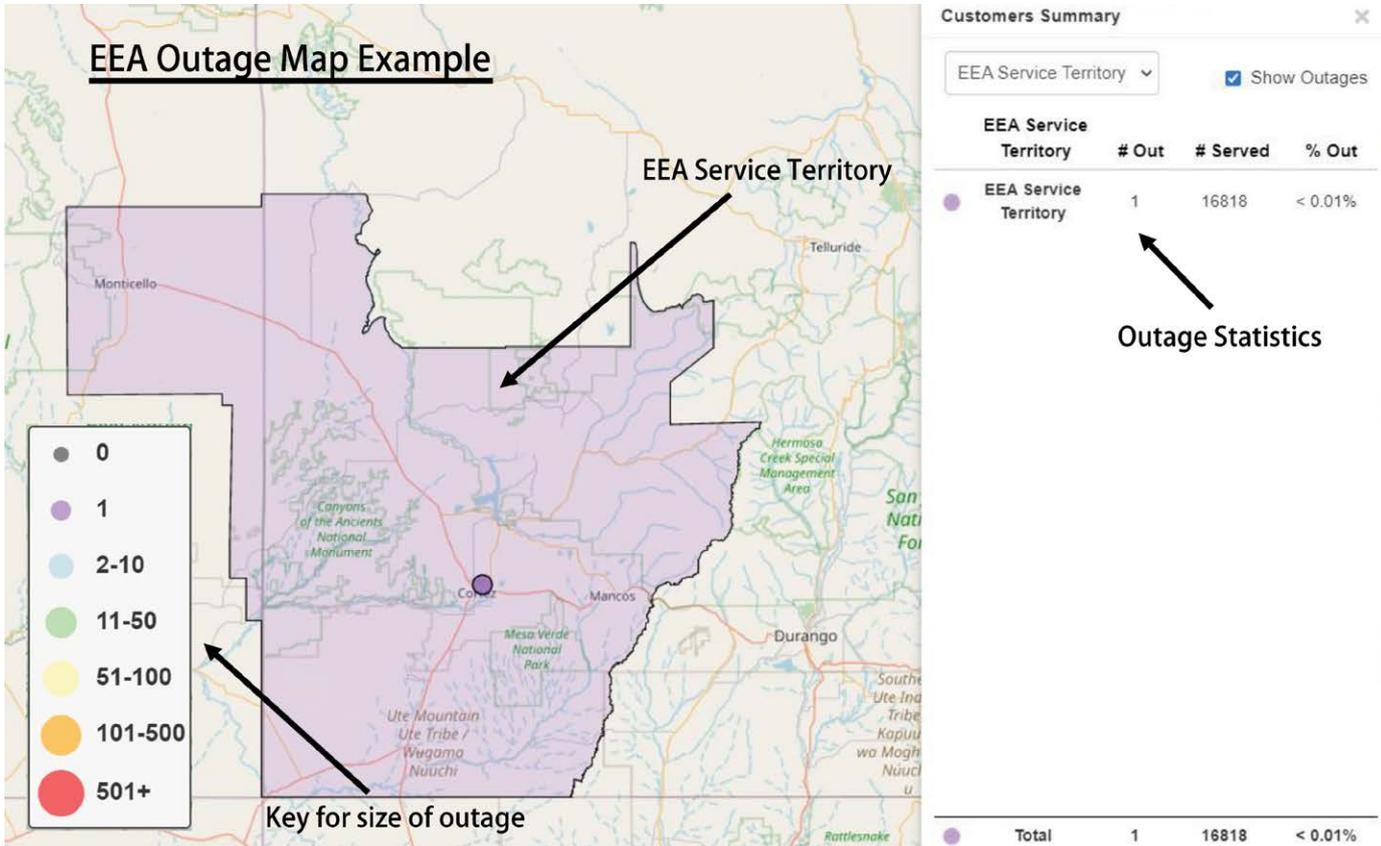
Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



# Online EEA Outage Map Available

Empire Electric Association has an online outage map available at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop). You can access the map by clicking on the “Outage Map” button at the upper right side of the home page. The outage map can help members see the general location of confirmed outages and the approximate number of meters without power. This map is a product of the outage management system that EEA system operators use and will not display outages or power restoration in real time. The map displays what system operators have confirmed from several

sources including our metering system, line crews in the field and calls from our members. Gathering information to confirm an outage or power restoration takes time and may cause a lag in what the map displays. Its purpose is to help members understand where and when outages occur, the magnitude of the outage, and when power has been restored. If your power goes out, we recommend that you call EEA at (970) 565-4444 or (800) 709-3726 to let us know.



**▲ This graphic is an example of the new EEA Outage map that will show consumer-members the size and location of confirmed power outages. The map can be found by going to [eea.coop](http://eea.coop) and clicking the Outage Map button in the upper right corner.**



**▲ Co-op Photo Contest Winner November 2022 – “Old Homestead in McElmo Canyon” by Denise Moore**



## Monthly Calendar

**November 11** – Veterans Day, plus EEA’s board meeting beginning at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop). Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included in the agenda.

**November 24** – Thanksgiving Day. EEA Office closed November 24 & 25 in observance of Thanksgiving holiday