

## *Ice Storm Update*

At year-end, those who dreamed of a White Christmas got their wish...and much more. The Midwest section of the country was blasted with snow, high winds and an electric utility's biggest nightmare...ice.

From northern Indiana to Ohio and into western Pennsylvania, people felt the impact of winter's fury. Indiana felt the brunt of the storm with 161,000 total customers without electric power. In Illinois, 47,000 customers were left without power and in Ohio, 15,000. In Carroll County, a half-inch to one inch of ice accumulated on power lines and nearby trees causing power outages. The majority of our cooperative's problems were in the northern part of our service territory, north of Delphi. Locally, the storm left approximately 3,200 members without power.

Ice made its way across lines and the impact of the wide storm-front was evident. "In our business, freezing rain can cause more damage than snow because the ice weighs down tree branches snapping then onto power lines, said Randy W. Price, Carroll County CEO. "When lines go down on the ground that is our biggest concern. When you combine ice with wind, you have serious issues."

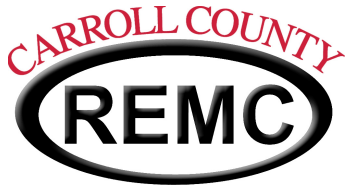
Price, a former lineman, knows full-well the potential danger during an ice storm. "In these situations, our top priority is always safety," said Price. "It's clear that the safety of our linemen and the general public is forefront in our minds, but we are also cognizant that our office staff is part of the team called-in to assist in restoring power."

From 4:30 a.m. on Friday until Sunday at 7:00 p.m., Carroll County REMC employees worked to restore power, answering members' calls and keeping communications updated.

"I was very glad the ice had melted off our lines and trees by late Friday afternoon," said Stan Quinn, Line Superintendent. "When the wind came along Sunday, our system didn't sustain any additional damage. We are very thankful for our hard-working linemen and visiting crews. They were able to repair our system in such a timely manner given the poor weather conditions."

When Carroll County linemen appraised the initial impact of the storm, the widespread outages included 3,200 members. By 4:30 p.m. on Friday, thousands of members' power was restored leaving approximately 1,000 members still without power. Ice was the major contributor to the downed power lines.

To add to the fallout of the ice storm, service to the office phone system was impacted. "Our phone system and the local phone company switch equipment were overwhelmed by the call volume," said Peg Minnicus, Member Services. "During the day on December



19<sup>th</sup>, our customers had difficulty reporting outages. We addressed the problem as quickly as we could.”

“The excellent work of our problem-solving staff addressed the phone issue by having all calls forwarded from MTA, our local provider, to a Verizon switch,” said Randy Price. “This allowed more calls to get to our call center. As a result of this experience, we are permanently adding call forwarding service to our account. In emergency situations, this will serve our members well.”

By 7:00 p.m. on Sunday Randy W. Price reported power was restored to nearly all members. “There were some members who experienced damage to their service entrance or meter base as a result of this storm,” said Randy. “These members contacted electricians to make the necessary repairs. When repairs were completed, they coordinated a time with our office for reconnection.”

“We thank our members for their understanding and cooperation during this last difficult time with the storm,” said Price. “We would also like to thank local businesses who opened their doors for us on short notice and provided food and housing for our crews. While the weather did not cooperate, our employees and the additional crews that arrived for assistance, worked around-the-clock to restore power as quickly as possible. It is in situations like this that we see our community at its best and Carroll County rose to the occasion.”

Sidebar: “During severe weather storms, we experience downed power lines, especially when ice is part of the problem. Carroll County REMC would like to remind REMC members and the general public to always assume a downed power line is energized and to stay away. Call our office immediately for assistance and be safe!” Randy W. Price