

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Outage overview: 2023 statistics for Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative

“The only things certain in life are death and taxes,” the old saying goes. Well, we can add another to the list: power outages. In fact, Hancock-Wood Electric line crews responded to and restored 918 outages in 2023, or an average of 2.5 per day. How HWE handles these outages has changed drastically over my 26-year career at the co-op.

This month, I’ll review outages that impacted our co-op in 2023 and explore how technology aids the co-op in responding to outages and helps to improve reliability of your electric service.

HWE’s primary goal is to deliver the highest possible quality of electric service safely at a fair price. Perhaps the key measure of quality for members is the number of times their lights go out. In 2023, the average member experienced 0.85 outages, which lasted for a total of 70 minutes. These numbers are averages, so, unfortunately, some members may have experienced more outages for a longer total time, while other members may not have experienced even one outage. (Blinks are not included in the number, as federal agencies define an electrical outage as anything lasting more than five minutes.)

The causes of outages can vary throughout the year and change with the seasons. Surprisingly, most outages — 55% in fact — are related to maintenance and planned work. Every time a meter is pulled to replace equipment, or an outage is scheduled to safely perform work, our operations department tracks the outage in our computer system. The next leading outage cause is probably what you would expect — animals such as birds and squirrels. In 2023, crews responded to 118 outages caused by small animals. Have you seen the tin on our power poles? That is one way our crews combat squirrels and raccoons from climbing poles. Electrical hardware and equipment failure was the third leading cause of outages in 2023. HWE attempts to reduce equipment-related outages through an aggressive line rebuild program; typically, a minimum of 15 miles per year of overhead lines are replaced.

So far, we have just talked about the number of outages and not which outages affect the most members for the longest period. In a change from earlier years, for 2023, the longest outages for the most members were not related to transmission outages. HWE takes electric

service from the transmission grid at 21 substations. The transmission grid in our area is operated by AEP and First Energy. Traditionally, the leading cause of member outage time could be attributed to transmission outages. Investments in the transmission system, evidenced by all the steel poles in the area, and the quick response to transmission outages, afforded by the HWE SCADA system, have minimized and reduced these types of outages to third place.

The leading cause of member outage time in 2023 was falling or overhanging trees — specifically, trees falling from outside the right-of-way and striking the overhead lines. More than 1,600 members were affected for over 3½ hours due to trees. This is why the operations department places an emphasis on tree trimming and tree removals. HWE is budgeted to spend approximately \$700,000 on clearing rights-of-way in 2024.

Have you ever wondered what day of the week or time most outages occur? In 2023, most outages occurred on a Tuesday, 9 a.m. was the most likely time for an outage, and the month of June saw the most outages. For some odd reason, the most likely day each month to experience an outage was the 19th.

Hopefully, this outage review provides a little insight into the challenges faced daily by our highly trained and skilled workforce. Every HWE employee, from our member service group, who answers your phone calls, to our line crews, who brave the elements to restore your electric service, provide their best efforts to put our members first. Even though our electrical system totals almost 1,587 miles in length and covers 10 counties, the average length of an outage was only 82 minutes.

Please feel free to reach out to your cooperative if you have any questions about how HWE handles outages or if you wonder what the outage history is at your own service location. Ultimately, the cooperative cannot prevent all outages, and at times Mother Nature throws us challenges that exceed the limits of our distribution system. I have faith our dedicated HWE team will be there to turn the lights back on.



Bill Barnhart
PRESIDENT & CEO

Solar Eclipse 2024: How should you prepare?

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada. On this date, people within a 124-mile-wide band in Ohio will experience a total solar eclipse. On average, one happens somewhere on the Earth only once every 1.5 years. Only 21 total solar eclipses have crossed the lower 48 states in the entire existence of the United States. The last total solar eclipse visible in Ohio was in 1806. The next total solar eclipse in Ohio will be in 2099.

According to Wood County EMA Director Jeff Klein, Wood and Hancock counties will both see an increase in travelers visiting to view the eclipse. Klein wants to help residents in Ohio to be prepared for cell service to be down and very heavy traffic delays in our area. Hancock-Wood Electric is taking every precaution to make sure we are prepared for a power outage during the eclipse event. Depending on the location of an outage or the actual issue, members could expect longer outage times on this day. Our office building will be closed on April 8, but employees will be working and available at 800-445-4840 if you need assistance with bill payments, to report an outage, or any other questions.

Safety tips to keep in mind include:

- Cell reception may be down; make sure you have another way to contact family and friends.
- Expect heavy traffic delays, especially on highways.
- Try to delay leaving your home on April 8 for appointments or errands.
- Have proper food supplies to avoid the need to travel that day; expect restaurants to have long waits.
- Have gas in your car prior to April 8 to avoid needing to stop at fueling stations, which could be busy.
- If you have a well, be sure to stock up on water in case of extended power outages.

For more information about the solar eclipse and additional safety precautions visit <https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/ohio-total-solar-eclipse>



Free
eclipse glasses
(while supplies last)

Members can stop by our office and receive a limit of two pairs of solar eclipse glasses while supplies last.

Interested in running for
our board? Download a
petition today at
www.hwe.coop.



HANCOCK-WOOD
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Districts 1, 4, and 5 are seeking
eligible members to run for our
board of trustees. The deadline for
petitions is March 15.

Rebate programs

Hancock-Wood offers residential rebate programs to our members. Members can save up to \$900 by applying for the following rebates. Visit our website at www.hwe.coop for more information.

- Mini-split ductless heat pump
- Air conditioning
- Clothes washer
- Electric vehicle charger
- Freezer
- Geothermal system
- Heat pump electric water heater
- HVAC maintenance
- LED lighting
- Refrigerator
- Water heater
- Weatherization for DIY or professional installation

Apply for the Operation Round Up grant program today!



Across the nation,
electric cooperatives
have created nonprofit
foundations to grant
funds from members'
spare change back to

the community. These nonprofits are branded nationally as Operation Round Up. As a participating co-op, Hancock-Wood automatically adjusts members' bills to the nearest dollar and then combines each amount for grants to local organizations and individuals in need.

Hancock-Wood's Operation Round Up fund is managed by the HWE Community Trust Fund Board of Trustees. On average, a member contributes \$6 annually to the fund. These pennies, nickels, and dimes have helped to raise more than \$900,000 to benefit area charities since Operation Round Up's inception in 2008.

We are accepting applications for the next quarter's grant cycle, due on April 15. For an application and instructions, visit our website at www.hwe.coop.

Unclaimed capital credits



Each year, Hancock-Wood returns patronage capital to members as tangible evidence of one of the benefits of being a cooperative member. Last December, the board of trustees retired more than \$2.5 million to HWE members.

We have on our website a list of names of past members who are nearly out of time to claim their patronage capital checks. According to our code of regulations, if a past member fails to claim patronage capital within four years of its issuance, the money is allocated to current members' patronage accounts. Visit <https://hwe.coop/capital-credits-or-patronage-capital> to see the current list.

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PAYMENT OPTIONS

online, dropbox, office, by phone, or
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HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

Email your ideas to:
leslie.guisinger@hwe.coop

Members First! 
HANCOCK-WOOD
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative