



## ROW is key to reliability



From the desk of  
CEO & General Manager  
Eddie Oldham

The spring and summer months are right around the corner, and while maintaining reliable service to our members is a top priority year-round, the warmer months bring more daylight and opportunity to complete important work projects.

This includes our very important right-of-way (ROW) maintenance program. Our members depend on us to deliver reliable power to your home and business and there are many ways the co-op provides its members with safe and reliable service. One of the most important and highly visible ways is ROW clearing. ROW refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that the co-op has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear.

Keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation helps improve our service reliability. While many factors can impact power disruptions, a large percentage of outages can be attributed to fallen trees and branches. This is why you will see our crews or contractors out in the community trimming trees near power lines.

Tree branches are also extremely dangerous when they come in contact with power lines as they can become energized just like the power line. Our ROW program not only helps keep you connected, but it also helps keep you and other members of our community safe by ensuring tree branches do not become energized due to contact with power lines.

In order to maintain an effective ROW clearing program, the co-op invests a portion of its operating budget to cutting back trees and shrubs that grow too close to the power lines. We accomplish this with bucket trucks, chainsaws, chippers and mowers to ensure that trees

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grow at a distance far enough from our lines where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service. Specifications can vary, but the general guideline the co-op follows in maintaining a safe ROW is 20 feet of clearance on either side of primary conductors and 10 feet of clearance below the neutral line. This ensures a safe distance between trees on your property and the dangerous lines carrying electricity to your home.

When it comes to vegetation management, there are ways you can help too. When planting new trees, make sure they're planted a safe distance from overhead power lines. Medium-height trees (40 ft. or smaller) should be planted at least 25 ft. from power lines. Taller trees (over 40 ft.) should be planted at least 50 ft. from power lines. Additionally, if you spot an overgrown tree or branch that's dangerously close to overhead lines, please let us know by contacting us at 919-774-4900.

While we can't prevent every tree or limb from falling on our lines (a storm will always find that 50 foot tree on the other side of the road, well outside the ROW clearance, and blow it down into the line), we can however all work together to do our best to help maintain and keep trees a safe distance from power lines. Thanks for all you do to help us maintain our ROW, we appreciate you!

Until next time,