

# SIERRA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

MEMBER NEWSLETTER    May, 2010

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*“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” – William Arthur Ward*



The blowing wind is certainly no stranger to all of us here in New Mexico. It varies from gentle breezes that cool us from the summer heat to almost hurricane force winds that redistributes our real estate to our neighbors in adjoining counties! Such was the case on Thursday, April 29, 2010 when Sierra County experienced winds clocked up to 68 mph. Sandia Peak in Albuquerque even clocked wind speeds of 99 mph – hurricane force winds start at 74 mph. Unfortunately, the winds didn't spare our electric plant and many of you experienced some outages during the afternoon and evening hours on this day.

Many times, winds such as these will identify any weaknesses in our system and April 29 was no exception. Sierra experienced broken tie-wires that hold the wires to the insulators, loosened connectors on transformers, and even broken poles and crossarms. Sierra conducts constant maintenance on our system but with almost 900 miles of service lines spread around 4,236 square miles we don't find everything before it breaks so the wind helps us out! The good of these storms is the problems we fix today shouldn't persist, the bad is you may have blinks or be out of power for a short period of time.

This is probably a good time to let our members know about our ongoing pole maintenance program whereby we contract with a company to inspect, test, and treat (if necessary) the poles on our system on a regular basis. We have about 12,000 poles on our system and we inspect about 1,100 poles a year (roughly 9-10%). As the average life of a pole is 35 years, you can see that we should get around to each one at least a couple of times during its useful life. In the past 8 years, we have spent over \$100,000 for this service and have inspected about 84% of our entire system. While this may seem high, this is a necessary expense that helps us to keep the poles and wires in the air and your electricity flowing smoothly.

Sierra received an influx of questions regarding these many outages so we thought we would include a map (see the reverse side) so you might see how widespread our crews (4- 2 man) were in restoring the power to your home or business. These men, and the ladies in the office taking the numerous trouble calls, did a great job in getting your lights back on quickly, safely, and professionally. I appreciate each one of them and their dedication to Sierra Electric and its member/owners!