

## \$5.6 million in system reliability improvements coming to Whitley and Allen Counties

To us, reliability isn't just another buzzword in the power industry; reliability is at the core of everything we do. Each year, we plan improvements to increase our electric system's reliability to power homes like yours across our area. This year, we are making more than \$5.6 million in system improvements in **Whitley and Allen Counties** so we can continue to deliver all the power you need, exactly when you need it.

### Tree trimming

Last year, trees were the second-leading cause of power outages. Heavy snow and wind can take a toll on trees, causing their limbs to fall onto power lines. Trimming the trees close to lines and poles is a staple in our annual work plan. This year is no exception, with more than a million dollars being spent to keep the lines clear and the lights on.

### Substation improvements

Upgrades to the Lincolnway substation will bring improved outage detection capabilities for members on the **east side of Whitley County**. Similar upgrades will occur at the Aboite substation in southwest Allen County when adding a circuit switcher and updating relaying software.

Members in the Tri-Lakes area in Whitley County, served by our Ummel station, will see construction crews this spring as we completely rebuild the longest-serving substation in our area. Ummel has served our members in **northern Whitley County** for close to 50 years and will continue to do so well into the future.

The remaining 14 substations will benefit from a critical IT infrastructure upgrade that controls remote access and operation of equipment. As a result, we can pinpoint the location of faults in the system with much greater accuracy, which means shorter outage times for members when we can route to alternative power sources without sending technicians on-site.

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### Projects coming soon include:

- A larger three-phase overhead line will be added around Larwill in Whitley County to reduce exposure to trees and potential vehicle accidents.
- New three-phase conductors will be installed on Kell, Pion, Pulver, Auburn, and Gump roads to help handle the extensive member growth in northwest Allen County.
- A half-mile of new overhead lines on State Road 205 over U.S. Highway 30 in Columbia City will be added to better serve the apartments and homes near Eagle Glen.
- Allen County members in Pine Valley will have new primary underground wires installed to replace aging wires.
- More than a mile of new spacer cable will be added in southwest Allen County near Amber and Redding roads. These cables will be more durable against weather-related damage from tree limbs.
- To reduce damage exposure and enhance our crews' safety, we'll be adding underground cables crossing U.S. Highway 30 near Coesse.



# POWERING UP

The average pole replacement takes 3 - 4 hours under favorable conditions.

## "What is taking so long to get my power back on?"

Have you ever wondered what factors go into restoring your power? Or maybe you've asked the age-old question of, "what is taking so long to get my power back?"

A pole may need to be replaced for various reasons, including vehicle accidents, storms, or failure to pass inspection. There are more than 30,000 poles throughout our system, and each pole replacement is different. It's much more than just digging a hole and sliding a new pole in the ground.

Here's what typically goes into an emergency after-hours pole replacement caused by a vehicle accident:

First, we'll be notified of a power outage by our monitoring system. Then, we'll dispatch lineworkers to visit the pole and assess the damage. Depending on the location or weather conditions, this part may take 30 minutes to an hour.

The first person on the scene will immediately ensure the location is safe for emergency personnel to approach the vehicle and the people in it. Next, they'll wait for a tow truck to arrive to remove the automobile.

Then, if the pole needs replaced, they'll de-energize the line following established safety procedures. Next, they will call for a crew of three or four others to come with a bucket truck and a new pole.

When the entire crew arrives with the needed equipment, they will begin setting a new pole, removing equipment from the broken pole, and attaching it to the new pole.

Poles are buried around six feet in the ground. The buried part of the broken pole will be pulled out with the hydraulic lift on

a truck. Sometimes it's necessary to dig a new hole. Once all equipment is back in place, the protective gear is removed, and an all-clear is given, the power will be restored.

The average pole replacement could take up to 3 - 4 hours under favorable conditions but could take longer depending on the weather or unforeseen circumstances. Our crews work as quickly and safely as possible to get your power restored.

### Cooperation among cooperatives

When a large storm devastates an entire region, co-ops are called in from all over the country to help with the restoration process.

A couple of months ago, NREMC sent a crew to Virginia to help with their weeklong restoration efforts after Winter Storm Frida caused

95,000 people to lose power. Assisting other co-ops is one of our founding principles. If a storm caused severe damage to our area, we know we'd have hundreds of lineworkers headed our way too.



*Above: A NREMC crew helps bring back the power in Virginia*

**DID YOU KNOW?** **FOR JUST PENNIES A MONTH YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**HOW IT WORKS**



**SIGN UP**

You can choose to round up your monthly NREMC bill to the nearest dollar every month.



**ROUND UP**

Donations from you and other members are collected and placed in a trust. Then, a group of members, like you, that make up the Operation Round Up Board decide which organizations receive funding quarterly.



**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

Because of these generous donations, organizations throughout northern Indiana can operate programs to benefit our communities.

Local nonprofit organizations can apply for funding at [nremc.com/funding](http://nremc.com/funding).

**OPERATION ROUND UP**  
small change that changes lives

Learn more at [nremc.com/roundup](http://nremc.com/roundup).



OR SCAN ME

## System reliability improvements (Continued from cover)

### Animal guards

Believe it or not, some of the most significant outages in 2021 were due to the smallest culprits, mice. Unknowingly, mice will encounter energized parts of the equipment as they're scurrying through the smallest spaces in our switchgear boxes.



This unfortunate end to their lives can cause power outages for our members. As a result, we've been installing new animal guards on all high-risk underground facilities to reduce the potential of outages.

### Pole inspections

On top of these improvements, we've started inspecting the first of 2,000 utility poles and 200 backyard transformers across the six counties we serve to ensure our members do not have interruptions in their service due to aging poles.

These investments into equipment and technology are just some of the ways we can continue to deliver unmatched reliability to our members. The future is bright for the members of NREMC.



Help us send our crews home safely to their families each day.

## National Work Zone Awareness Week is April 11 - 15

The safety of our crews is one of our top priorities, and you can help. Give our crews lots of room. If you see emergency vehicles, tow trucks, line trucks, construction workers, or even someone on the side of the road working on their broken-down car, slow down and move over. It's the law. Thank you for doing your part to help send our crews home safely to their families each day.

NEW



# amazon smart thermostat

"Alexa, turn down my thermostat."

Amazon partnered with Honeywell to make a new smart thermostat, but how does it compare?

There are reportedly 40 million Alexa users in the United States. So if it's already helping you with other everyday tasks, why not have it help control the heating and cooling of your home? Last fall, Amazon launched a smart thermostat for a fraction of the cost of most smart thermostats on the market. We've looked into this new thermostat and wanted to share the latest way to help you save money.

### COMPARE & SAVE

Amazon Smart Thermostat - \$59.99

Google Nest Learning Thermostat 3rd Gen - \$227

Honeywell T10 Pro Smart Thermostat - \$179

Google Nest Thermostat E - \$128



Control your thermostat from anywhere right from your phone in the Alexa app.



Track and analyze your energy usage to save even more on your monthly electric bill.



This thermostat was designed for DIY. Alexa will walk you through the easy steps for installation, and you'll be ready to go!

## Enroll your thermostat in our Peak Thermostat Program and get a \$100 bill credit plus \$50 annually



PEAK THERMOSTAT PROGRAM



Get started at [nremc.com/peak](https://nremc.com/peak).

Last spring, we launched a new rewards program to lower energy use during peak times to reduce demand and stress on the electric grid. When we heard that Amazon was releasing their smart thermostat, we knew we had to add this as an option for our members immediately in addition to the Google and Honeywell thermostats currently offered.

Members can save up to 15% on their energy bill each month by installing a smart thermostat and enrolling in our program. Plus, you'll get a \$100 bill credit the first year and \$50 every additional year you stay in the program. For full details and to enroll, scan the QR code above or visit [nremc.com/peak](https://nremc.com/peak).

# How often should you *really* change your filter?

Put simply, it depends. Here are a few factors to consider:

- A large house is circulating more air, which means the filter should be changed more often than in a smaller house.
- Pet fur and dander will clog up the filter quickly if you have pets. You will need to change the filter more often than someone without fluffy friends.
- You may need to change your filter more often if someone in your household has allergies.
- If you can't remember the last time you changed your furnace filter, that's a good indication that it's time.



For more energy savings tips, go to [nremc.com/blog](https://nremc.com/blog).

## Make a difference by serving on the board of directors



Northeastern's service area is divided into nine districts. Members are given the opportunity to select a representative from their area to serve on the board of directors. Every year, three board positions are up for grabs.

This year, districts 5, 6, and 7 are open. This includes the Aboite area in southwest Fort Wayne, the Tri-Lakes area and north of Columbia City, and the rural area around Churubusco.

For a complete list of requirements, potential duties, and more about the election process, visit our website.

Applications will be accepted March 24 - May 7.

Learn more at [nremc.com/election](https://nremc.com/election).

### What does a board member do?



The board of directors is the governing body of the organization. The board sets policies and strategic direction.

### Who is the ideal candidate?



We're looking for someone passionate about our mission and the community we serve. This person also has a business background and is interested in learning about the economic operation of the co-op.

### What is the time commitment?



Directors are expected to attend all board meetings, committee meetings, and educational seminars throughout the year.

### The passing of Curt Irven

Curt Irven, who retired from NREMC in 2013, passed away recently. His impact at NREMC will not be forgotten by the many people he worked with and mentored during his 43-year career. We send our condolences to his family.



Curt Irven  
1949 - 2022

### Closed on Good Friday

Please note that our office will be closed on

**Friday, April 15**

Don't forget that you can always access your account online 24/7 at [nremc.com](https://nremc.com).

### Contact Us

[memberservices@nremc.com](mailto:memberservices@nremc.com)

**888-413-6111**  
[nremc.com](https://nremc.com)

Call 811 before you dig!

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**... and more!**

**amazon smart thermostat**

