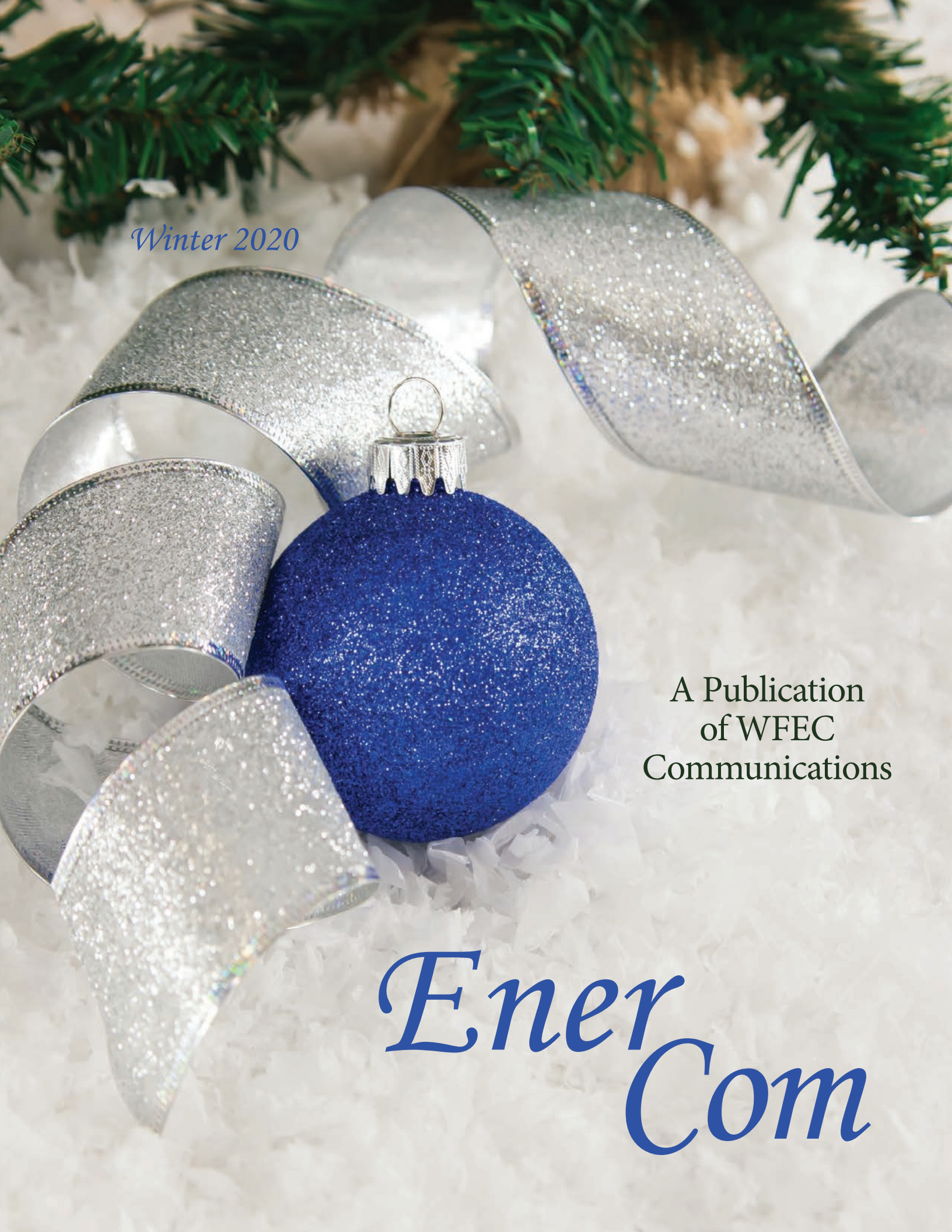

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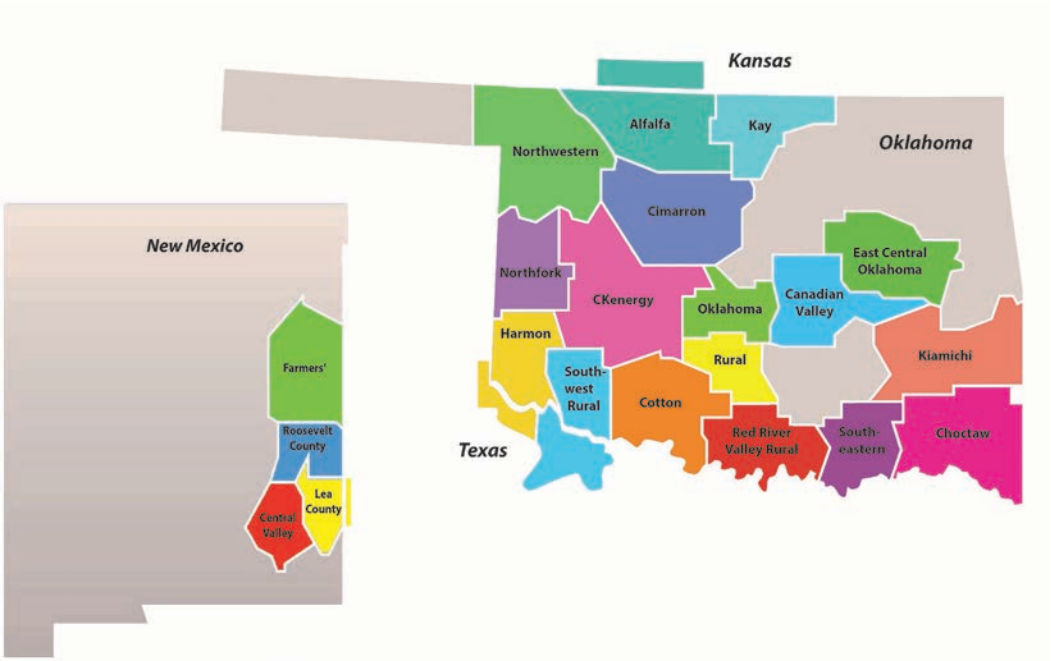
wfec
western farmers
electric cooperative

WFEC Headquarters
P. O. Box 429
Anadarko, OK 73005
(405) 247-3351
www.wfec.com

WFEC Service Territory



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250 MW Skeleton Creek Wind Project now in operation; first of three-phases

Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), together with a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, is pleased to announce the completion of the first phase of the largest project in the country to combine wind* energy, solar* energy and battery storage in the same location.

Skeleton Creek Wind began generating 250 megawatts (MW) of wind energy for customers on Dec. 16, 2020.

"Oklahoma is a leader in renewable energy, and at Western Farmers, we are excited to add an additional 250 MW of clean, reliable and environmentally friendly wind energy from Skeleton Creek," said Gary Roulet, chief executive officer for WFEC. "This is another milestone on our evolution towards increasing zero-carbon energy. And, when we add the solar energy and battery storage components of this project, we'll be able to make more affordable, renewable energy available to customers for more hours of the day – even when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining."

The Skeleton Creek Wind Project began commercial operation on Dec. 16, near Enid. This 250 MW project is the first of three phases to be built at this location, with completion set for 2023. (Photos courtesy of NextEra Energy)

The Skeleton Creek Project – combined of wind, solar and energy storage – is the first of its kind announced in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), the electric grid region that includes Oklahoma and 13 other states in the central U.S. covering 546,000 square miles. When it comes online, it is also expected to be the largest co-located wind*, solar* and energy storage project in the U.S.

Following this initial part, the next two phases of the project are expected to come online by the end of 2023 and will include:

- Skeleton Creek Solar – 250 MW of solar energy.
- Skeleton Creek Storage – 200 MW, 4-hour battery energy storage project.

"We are pleased to partner with WFEC to help bring low-cost, renewable energy to their customers and look forward to the next phase of this project – adding solar and energy storage," said John Ketchum, president and chief executive officer of NextEra Energy Resources, the world's largest generator of renewable energy from

(Continued on Page 4)

Skeleton Creek

the wind and the sun. "The Skeleton Creek project will provide millions of dollars in additional revenue for landowners and local communities while generating clean, homegrown energy for years to come."

The 250 MWs of new wind energy generated by Skeleton Creek, and the solar and energy storage components once commercial, will help further diversify WFEC's generation portfolio. After completion of the solar and energy storage phase of the project is completed, WFEC's planned generation portfolio will consist of 623 MW of solar generation, 957 MW of wind generation and 268 MW of hydroelectric generation.

The wind, solar and battery storage project will be located in Garfield, Alfalfa and Major counties in Oklahoma. In addition to the clean energy it generates, the project is expected to stimulate the local economy through the creation of hundreds of construction jobs, and through millions of dollars in lease payments to landowners and tax payments to the local communities.

The wind project created approximately 200 jobs during the construction phase and will add an additional 150 during the construction of the solar and energy storage site. The entire project will provide approximately $105 million in payments to the county governments over its projected 30-year operational life, and approximately $90 million in payments to local landowners.

**WFEC purchases or produces energy from various wind & solar resources. However, WFEC has not historically, nor may not in the future, retain or retire all of the renewable energy certificates associated with the energy production from these facilities.*

wfec

The Skeleton Creek Wind Project is located across Garfield, Alfalfa and Major counties in Oklahoma. The 250 MWs of new wind energy generated by Skeleton Creek, and the solar and energy storage components once commercial, will help further diversify WFEC's generation portfolio. (Photos courtesy of NextEra Energy)

WFEC's efforts to diversify its fuel portfolio successful over past years

By Sondra Boykin

Renewable energy sources, such as wind* and solar*, have grown significantly in the past decade, with Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), in addition to numerous other electric cooperatives across the country, actively expanding and diversifying their fuel portfolios. For almost 20 years, WFEC has played a key role in the overall advancement of renewable energy.

"WFEC has always worked at having a diverse blend of cost-effective energy in its wholesale power mix," explained WFEC Chief Executive Officer Gary Roulet.

"In upholding this goal, WFEC has further strengthened its focus throughout the past several years to include more advancements towards renewable energy or zero-carbon energy," he noted.

"The advancement of renewable energy technology, within the industry, has played an essential role in helping WFEC to provide a diversified portfolio."

By the end of 2020, hydro, wind* and solar* generation resources will total 1,278 megawatts (MW). Of this total, 957 MW is wind energy, which includes the recently competed Skeleton Creek Wind Project. Also, by year's end, solar energy should total 53 MW (once the Norman Solar Park is commercial), while hydroelectric power will provide some 268 MW.

These renewable energy or zero-carbon energy sources have helped WFEC gain a well-balanced and diversified portfolio of generation resources, allowing for reduced exposure to changing market conditions, which helps to keep rates competitive. This blend reflects a mix of technologies and fuel types, including owned facilities and capacity, in addition to energy provided through contracts and power purchase agreements (PPAs).

Looking ahead:

WFEC's zero-emission generation portfolio of assets planned to be operational in 2023 will consist of 957 MW of wind* generating capacity, 623 MW of solar* generating capacity, and 268 MW of hydroelectric generating capacity. In addition, the 800 megawatt-hours (MWh) of battery storage, which is a part of the overall Skeleton Creek Project, will provide the ability to shift solar energy output to a time when demand requires the energy and to store solar energy that otherwise would be lost due to clipping.

WFEC's renewable story:

Hydro power was the first zero-carbon energy source to be included in WFEC's portfolio. This hydro power generation generally came from the Southwest Power Administration (SWPA) and Corps of Engineer resources in eastern Oklahoma, northeast Arkansas and southwest Missouri. In 2000, outside of these hydro resources, the remainder of the energy provided to WFEC members was from fossil fuel generation, which was a mix of coal and natural gas.

WFEC's Board of Trustees began to consider the possibilities of wind* energy as a new power source just after the beginning of the new millennium, with expectations that adding these resources would lower the wholesale power cost to its members over time.

> *"The advancement of renewable energy technology, within the industry, has played an essential role in helping WFEC to provide a diversified portfolio.*
>
> *---WFEC CEO Gary Roulet*

Wind industry growth:

In 2003, WFEC became the first utility in the state of Oklahoma to sign a long-term PPA with a wind farm developer for the development of Phase 1 of the Blue Canyon Wind Farm, to be located north of Lawton. Through this venture, WFEC added the energy produced by the 74 megawatt (MW) facility to its generation mix.

Since that time, WFEC has signed additional PPAs with 14 wind farm developers to add 883 MW of wind energy, to reach its 2020 total of 957 MW, including 865 MW in Oklahoma and 92 MW in New Mexico.

Several years after the Blue Canyon project, between 2008 and 2009, WFEC signed on for an

(Continued on Page 6)

Renewable Portfolio

additional 142 MW of wind energy to be produced at two facilities in Oklahoma, at sites near Fort Supply and Hammon.

In 2012, WFEC signed two PPAs with wind farm developers for a total of 176 MW, including a 149 MW project, near Rocky, Okla., and a 27 MW near Lovington, N.M.

New Mexico became a target area in 2014, as WFEC signed PPAs for four wind farm projects to be located at two sites, totaling 35 MW. Two 10 MW wind farms were located at Grady, N.M., plus a 5 MW and a 10 MW site began commercial operation in Chaves County.

WFEC added an additional 150 MW of wind energy in 2015 and 2016 at two Oklahoma locations, including a site near Balko and another near Renfrow.

A 30 MW wind farm facility, located near Tatum, N.M., was added in 2017 to WFEC's wind purchases.

Then, between 2018 and 2020, WFEC added its largest increase to its wind portfolio, with a 100 MW site going online in 2018, near Minco, followed by the recent addition of the 250 MW Skeleton Creek Wind Project, near Enid.

Solar shines through:

Solar* energy was added to WFEC's generation portfolio, beginning in 2016. In early December 2020, WFEC has a total of 51 MW of solar generation operational. An additional 2 MW facility is planned to be online by the end of 2020 in Norman, Okla.

By 2023, WFEC could have a total of 623 MW of solar generation, with the completion of three large proposed projects.

In 2016, through a long-term PPA, WFEC added a 25 MW, single-axis tracker, solar* project to its generation mix. This project, Caprock Solar, is located south of Tucumcari, N.M. Since then, WFEC has added 26 MW of additional solar energy in New Mexico and Oklahoma on behalf of its member-owners. This increase included six utility-scale solar sites, plus 13 community solar sites.

Five utility-scale sites are in Oklahoma, including (location and size): Cyril (5 MW); Tuttle (4 MW); and Pine Ridge, Hinton and Marietta (3 MW each).

There is also another utility-scale 5 MW solar* facility, Middle Daisy, located in Lovington, N.M.

The 13 community solar* sites, ranging in size from 0.125 MW to 0.250 MW, are located in the service territories of 11 member distribution cooperatives, including: Cimarron Electric Cooperative; Cotton Electric Cooperative; Canadian Valley Electric Cooperative (2); East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative; Harmon Electric Association; Kiamichi Electric Cooperative; Northwestern Electric Cooperative; Oklahoma Electric Cooperative; Red River Valley Rural Electric Association; Southeastern Electric Cooperative; and Southwest Rural Electric Association (2).

WFEC, under a lease agreement, maintains the utility-scale and the community solar* sites in Oklahoma, and purchases all output from the New Mexico sites under long-term Renewable Energy Purchase Agreements (REPA).

Several future solar projects are also being planned, with contracts signed, including:

- Norman Solar Park, 2 MW, (Norman, Okla.), commercial operation planned by end of 2020.
- Tip Top Solar, 220 MW (New Mexico), commercial operation planned by end of 2023.
- Skeleton Creek Solar, 250 MW w/ 800 MWh battery storage, (near Enid, Okla.), commercial operation planned by end of 2023.
- Solar Project (New Mexico), 100 MW, commercial operation planned by end of 2023.

Bright future:

Once these new resources have achieved commercial operation, by the end of 2023, roughly half of the energy sales to WFEC members will be offset by zero carbon generating resource energy sales to the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) market.

However, the development of carbon-free resources is not a quick process, and it probably does not lend itself to a total use of renewable sources. Fossil fuel sources remain necessary for periods of changing wind, water and solar conditions. The sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow.

But, rest assured, WFEC will continue to be among the leading cooperatives that are a part of the promising new opportunities that lie ahead for its electric cooperative members of tomorrow.

**WFEC purchases or produces energy from various wind & solar resources. However, WFEC has not historically, nor may not in the future, retain or retire all of the renewable energy certificates associated with the energy production from these facilities.*

wfec

WFEC Wind Farm PPAs ---

WFEC has Power Purchase Agreements with the following wind farms (listed by name, size, location and commercial date):

Blue Canyon Wind Farm - 74 MW	Near Lawton, Okla.	December 2003
Buffalo Bear Wind Farm - 19 MW	Near Fort Supply, Okla.	December 2008
Red Hills Wind Farm - 123 MW	Near Hammon, Okla.	June 2009
Rocky Ridge Wind Project - 149 MW	Near Rocky, Okla.	June 2012
Wildcat Wind Farm - 27 MW	Near Lovington, N.M.	July 2012
Brahms BEP Wind I & II - 10 MW ea	Near Grady, N.M.	February 2014
Anderson Wind Farm I & II - 5 & 10 MW	Chaves County, N.M.	December 2014
Balko Wind Project - 100 MW	Near Balko, Okla.	August 2015
Grant Wind Project - 50 MW	Near Renfrow, Okla.	April 2016
Sterling Wind Farm - 30 MW	Near Tatum, N.M.	July 2017
Minco Wind IV Wind Farm - 100 MW	Near Minco, Okla.	November 2018
Skeleton Creek Wind Farm – 250 MW	Near Enid, Okla.	December 2020

ICE wreaks havoc

A disruptive and dangerous ice storm that hit Oklahoma in late October, leaving more than 300,000 people without power across the state, has a preliminary damage estimate totaling almost $8.3 million for Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC).

Article by Sondra Boykin
Photos by Ryan West, Oklahoma Living

Heavy freezing rain left well over an inch of ice to coat the power lines in portions of WFEC's service territory during an early season ice storm. In some areas, close to four inches was reported on lines. Transmission power lines were soon sagging due to excessive ice, and galloping from the winds, causing massive and costly destruction.

A state of emergency was declared for 47 counties, as the National Weather Service offices in Norman and Tulsa issued their first-ever ice storm warnings in October. Reportedly, it was also the worst ice storm to strike at any time of year in at least five years.

Overall, across seven counties of WFEC's service territory, there were some 173 structures, including both single poles, as well as H-structures, downed in the ice storm. Several of WFEC's member distribution cooperatives also suffered significant damage.

Grady County reportedly had the most downed transmission structures for WFEC, with some 144 being reported. This total includes a 19-mile stretch of downed 138-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, along the Anadarko SW to Sunshine Canyon SW line that serves Oklahoma Electric Cooperative. This stretch alone consisted of 139 structures to be replaced.

Photos (above and right page):
Newly constructed transmission lines are shown as conductor is restrung between the structures. Crews from three contract companies were hired to assist WFEC crews with restoration efforts along a 19-mile stretch of downed 138-kV transmission line, near the Tuttle, Okla. area. Between the more than 50 contractors and WFEC line and station crews, repairs were made in just over a month following a devastating ice storm that hit portions of the state.

Other county totals for structure damage include: Caddo, 14; Kiowa, 1; Canadian, 10; Blaine, 3; and Comanche, 1. Some 20 crossarms were also destroyed, with numerous static and phase damages also being reported across the same counties. Damage also resulted to three switches.

Also, in several areas, 345-kV lines were downed on top of WFEC's lines, causing minimal damage.

Total preliminary damage by county: $8,277,674.00

Grady	$7,369,891.00
Canadian	$543,683.00
Caddo	$231,100.00
Kiowa	$19,000.00
Blaine	$75,000.00
Comanche	$21,000.00
Pontotoc	$18,000.00

Storm evaluation:

"We have experienced more damage in some past ice storms, but this one was particularly challenging due to losing 19 miles on one line and having the Tuttle Substation isolated," explained Ricky Allen, Transmission Services superintendent, who has been with WFEC for 23 years.

A large steel switch pole was also downed at the Tuttle Junction. From this switch pole, transmission line and structures were down for 11 miles in one direction and eight miles in the other. With this amount of damage, no service at all was even available for the Tuttle Substation.

Also, this line served more than just rural areas, which was also a hindrance in some ways. The 138-kV transmission line went down across several heavily traveled roads, including two highways and two railroads, Allen pointed out.

"All of these factors combined increased the time and effort it would take to restore a line of this size (138-kV compared to 69-kV) back to normal," Allen pointed out. Plus, line and substation crews from WFEC were also making repairs and reconstructing over 30 additional downed or damaged structures across seven counties, also resulting from the ice storm.

To say the least, this stretch of damage created some unique challenges for line, substation and maintenance crews, as a project of this size would normally take 60 to 90 days. Contract crews were soon mobilized in order to speed up repair efforts. While repairs were being made, several large distributed generation (DG) units were put in place at the Tuttle Substation to energize that site while work continued.

Repairs completed:

WFEC and contract crews faced the challenging task head on, completing the project in about four weeks, with the line energized on Dec. 1, just over a month after this devastating ice storm left its mark.

"WFEC employees and contractors represented WFEC well in rebuilding this line and restoring service quickly during difficult times," commented WFEC Chief Executive Officer Gary Roulet.

Size of project:

Sammy Stubbs, a transmission services supervisor (northern division), said this rare 19-mile stretch of damage was the longest he has seen in his 26-year career at WFEC. He recalled a 10-mile stretch from a late 90s' ice storm, but explained that typically there

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may be multiple structures downed along a line, or maybe even a stretch of a mile or two.

However, along the 19-mile stretch of damaged line, a "domino effect" resulted. The overall weight of the ice-covered transmission lines rose with each additional falling structure, continuing until reaching a structure that was strong enough to withstand the impact, thus ending the downward trend.

To help emphasize the magnitude of this project, each H-frame consists of two 60 to 80-foot wooden poles (average), each weighing about 3,500 pounds. Crossarms are also added to these poles. The aluminum conductor, with a steel core, that travels along these structures is just over an inch in diameter, and weighs roughly one pound, per one foot of line. Between each structure is a span of 600 to 800 feet, which can add up to some 800 pounds for each line within the span.

On an average day, a six-man crew (average WFEC crew size) can set two 138-kV H-structures, with an estimated three hours to prepare and frame each structure. It then takes time to set each pole in the ground, with trips back and forth between structures to complete various tasks.

Depending on the circumstances of each outage, crews may go ahead and pull conductor line through each structure or wait until several consecutive structures are in the ground. In some cases, such as road or railroad crossings, or if lines are down on top of the cooperative's distribution lines, conductor may need to be in the air quicker to allow access.

WFEC crews face challenges:

WFEC line crews face challenges and adversity in all outage situations, which at times, can be overwhelming, particularly during an extended or large outage, Stubbs pointed out.

"These guys do an amazing job in handling outages and are constantly figuring out ways to make repairs even quicker in order to restore service to our customers," he added. "They all work hard and take their jobs seriously and personally, as they continually gain new experience with each storm-related outage that will help with future situations."

This project included lots of man hours, with crews typically working 14 to 16 hour days. Some 55 contractors completed most of the project, but were joined by 23 WFEC linemen in the final two weeks, after they finished repairs in other portions of the service territory.

One optimistic aspect was the weather and road conditions that followed the most devastating days of the ice storm. This allowed crews the ability to get around and troubleshoot problems a little easier, thus helping the recovery process.

Storm coordination efforts:

Following a storm of this magnitude, coordination among various WFEC departments

(left photo) WFEC crews are shown rebuilding a three-pole structure, located along the 19-mile stretch of downed transmission structures, near the Tuttle Junction.

(right page photo) A large steel switch pole, located at the Tuttle Junction, where the tap line takes off and goes to the Tuttle Substation, was also a victim of the heavy ice. WFEC crews are shown rebuilding this switch pole, which took several days to complete due to its large size. With this pole down, the Tuttle Substation was isolated, with no service available from either direction, due to the stretch of downed transmission lines.

is crucial to repair efforts. Normally, during events such as this, department supervisors congregate in the Transmission & Distribution (T&D) Operations office as a central hub for new and updated information, with everyone staying informed.

However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the operators and support staff could not all be together in a central location. Plus, personnel from other departments were also not allowed to congregate in any one particular office or area.

So, speaker phones were utilized between Stockton Canyon (backup facility) and the offices at the Anadarko Headquarters. "By doing this, everyone could hear what was going on," explained Chance Myers, manager, Transmission & Distribution Operations. "The open phone line between Stockton and the Anadarko office was a life saver," he said, noting that staff at both locations were providing information that needed to be shared.

To add to these challenges, the Anadarko Control Room was in the middle of a remodeling project, with the operators' desks having all been removed from the main area, Myers pointed out. However, there was a full operating setup in a side office that was available.

"But, despite the challenges, everything worked out very well and everyone did a great job," Myers commented. "With having a great staff and dedicated personnel, those challenges were overcome and system reliability was maintained," he added.

Departments come together:

Overall, it took many WFEC employees, in several departments, to overcome the devastating effects of the ice storm. From those keeping up with and ordering supplies, equipment, poles and conductor necessary to complete repairs, to those making deliveries and overseeing projects, a lot of employees made a big difference.

"All WFEC employees who were involved with various tasks associated with a project of this size, are to be commended," Roulet noted.

wfec

Jeramy Hollowell, a relief system operator (top), and Matt Sanders, assistant system operator, are shown looking over portions of WFEC's service territory to check for lines and substations that may be disrupted. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and a remodeling project, operators, support staff and other department supervisors could not be together in one central location. During the main part of the outage, T&D Operations staff worked out of Stockton Canyon, the backup facility for WFEC operations. Speaker phones were utilized to stay in contact with Transmission Services staff at the Anadarko offices. (staff photos)

Ice Storm Reflections

Top photo by:
Kenny Flood, journeyman
station technician - WFEC

Bottom photo by:
Ryan West - Oklahoma Living

Reflect on the possibilities of 2021

As we reach the end of 2020, we are also amidst the Christmas season. When this year began, none of us would ever have guessed it would turn out like it has. A shut down of the economy, followed by a restart of the economy, with the relentless impacts of COVID-19 all along the way. There was also disagreement and bickering beyond measure.

For some, this Christmas season will be celebrated with family gatherings, similar to those of past years. For others, it may be significantly changed, with smaller celebrations and an awareness of what steps are necessary to keep your family safe, but still be able to enjoy the season. Some may have very little celebration at all.

This would seem to be the impact of a COVID Christmas, but in reality, those same situations have existed almost every Christmas season, since the beginning of time, just in different ways. Work or financial situations, health concerns, and an entire host of other conditions, have always had impacts on how each of us celebrate the season.

One thing remains the same. During the holiday season, or, I guess anytime, we should be thoughtful of other's opinions, even though they may not match our own. While we may disagree with others, we should remember we may not always be right.

We should be generous in our help and assistance to those who have much less than us. Every year, Christmas, as the season of giving, understanding and brotherhood, hopefully causes us to stop and reflect on the possibilities for the next year. It may put each of us in the frame of mind to make the upcoming new year even better. I have always believed each year could be better than the last.

I hope each of you has a wonderful Christmas season. Enjoy this special time for all it has to offer. For everyone, I hope 2021 brings a new start and beginning for all.

Gary Roulet

WFEC continuing to face COVID-19 with new ways of handling business

By Sondra Boykin

As 2020 is drawing to a close, thinking back, who would have ever thought that just 12 months ago, the country would be facing a pandemic of epic proportions that would have such an impact on so many. So many families have been affected in one way or another by COVID-19.

Many companies today are still navigating unchartered waters in dealing with the insecurity of the future. Amidst this uncertainly, companies must now consider how the pandemic's progress, strength and even its recurrence are impacting their recovery strategies.

"Normal" isn't even available anymore, as the new reality taking shape is complex and uncertain. However, there are opportunities for the future.

Since March of this year, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) has been proactive in handling various facets of the overall pandemic. A Pandemic Team was activated at the onset, with a company-wide Pandemic Plan adopted rather quickly. This team still conducts weekly Zoom meetings to review activities of the week, plus address any issues that may be facing WFEC and its employees.

COVID-19 basically brought about numerous operational changes, particularly in work schedules and locations, many of which are still effective today. These changes have effectively been combined with the creation of a safe working environment that works for most employees, while continuing to provide reliable energy services for WFEC members.

While there were some initial challenges, as occur with any changes, the majority have been overcome, without a negative impact on productivity. Some of the changes initially made, particularly those in regards to the accounting functions of the company, as well as the growth of virtual meetings, may be continuing well into the future.

Changes to Pandemic Plan:

Due to increasing cases across the state and among WFEC's employees, changes were implemented on Nov. 30 to the existing Pandemic Plan.

Two areas within WFEC continue to impact the employees' ability to do their jobs normally. The first is direct exposure to COVID-19 and the resulting quarantine that follows. The second is a positive COVID-19 case requiring a quarantine.

"On any given week, some 20 or more employees are under some type of quarantine experience. As the holiday approaches, most medical professionals believe the period from Thanksgiving through Christmas, and into January 2021, may be worse than it is today (Nov. 30)," commented WFEC CEO Gary Roulet.

With that concern in mind, the Pandemic Team reviewed the current plan and made a few changes with the goal of making the workplace safer, with hopefully fewer quarantined employees.

Among the changes included the requirement, rather than a recommendation, to wear a mask at work. Also, employees are encouraged to maintain at least six feet of separation with other employees unless necessary to perform their job. If contact with other employees is necessary to perform a job, and social distancing is not an option, a mask should be worn and contact limited to less than 15 minutes.

"By doing these few things, we can be respectful of individual employee health and maintain a safe work environment," Roulet noted. "Additionally, exposures

away from work are most likely the largest culprit in requiring employees to quarantine and be away from work, thus having to use their paid leave balances. Awareness and efforts to minimize close contact exposures (at work and away from work) will help keep employees working and preserving their leave balances," he added.

"With vaccine availability, better times should be on the horizon. But now is the time to increase our awareness in order to maintain a safe work environment for all employees," Roulet said.

Human Resources' tracking:

While all WFEC departments have been affected in different ways by COVID-19, the Human Resources (HR) group has been impacted by the amount of work required for tracking all exposures and illnesses among WFEC's employees. WFEC has been following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines that have included 14 days of quarantining following a potential exposure.

"Each reported potential, known exposure, and confirmed positive requires a discussion with the affected employee to determine dates, locations, and close contact interactions within the applicable time period, based on the individual circumstances," commented Rodney Palesano, senior manager, Human Resources.

And, the work doesn't stop there. Following a discussion with an affected employee, information is then passed on to all WFEC employees. There are several methods of contacting employees based on the circumstances of each situation.

Each "confirmed positive" employee prompts a phone call (through a call multiplier program), an email and a text message, all alerting employees of the area of the company that is affected by a positive test result. Other potential exposures are handled through emails to all WFEC employees. This typically involves an initial email indicating that a potential exposure or an exposure has occurred, and within what department. The email is followed up within a few days, with another email indicating a positive or negative test result.

As of Dec. 22, WFEC has had 46 employees confirmed positive since March 2020. As of the end of November, over 1,140 evaluations have been completed. Exposure evaluations include employees and their households, in order to determine who is impacted; what facilities are impacted; and when those who have been impacted, can return to work.

With each evaluation, other factors, such as working remotely, plus shift changes and crew assignments, are considered to minimize exposure and cross contamination. Time reporting and coding for tracking also take a lot of time, in addition to evaluating new regulations and determining any applicability to WFEC. The HR group is also responsible for developing, communicating and implementing processes to support CDC guidelines that are frequently updated.

The majority of exposures requiring isolation are due to interactions away from the office. As far as positive results go, WFEC tries to identify who they were in contact with during a specific time period to help minimize future contamination events. It is not to attempt to determine where someone may have contracted the virus.

"We don't know - how to know - for certain - when, where or from whom, someone actually contracted the virus," Palesano noted.

As for the timing of WFEC exposures, employees have followed the same trends as the general public, with increases in cases often occurring after holidays.

Future with pandemic:

Regarding the COVD-19 vaccine, there are currently no plans to require a vaccine for WFEC employees. Current plans are to make them available, when possible, and assist, if needed in facilitating access to employees. As far as any fewer restrictions on social distancing, isolation, and quarantining requirements for the future, for someone who has had the vaccine, it is too early to tell. It is not yet known how effective and for how long the vaccine will be effective.

Since March, a number of employees have been working remotely from home, if their job allowed for

(Continued on Page 20)

this option. While a future plan is likely for continuing remote working, nothing is certain at this time. However, if a plan is finalized, it will not be the same as it has been during the pandemic, but, possibilities continue to be evaluated.

Also, work schedules, including days of the week or hours per shift, will be reviewed frequently based on the type of work going on within a certain workgroup. This may include such factors as plant outages, ice storms, pandemic versus non-pandemic times, and high intensity versus normal operations.

Financial Services functions:

When the pandemic hit in late March, and many employees began working remotely, changes were required in dealing with the accounting functions of the company. Some of the changes created new challenges, however, most have since been worked out, with processes improving.

Mark Conway, manager, Financial Services, explained that one of the biggest changes for employees involved expense reporting that was moved to being processed electronically. This included two primary changes, including shifting to a single signoff that previously occurred in PeopleSoft, to a requirement for attaching the receipts in the PeopleSoft program. Previously, employees were required to print an expense report, sign, attach the receipts to it, and submit a hard copy to their supervisor for approval, in addition to the approval in PeopleSoft.

One particular benefit of this new method is that all documentation is in PeopleSoft, which allows compliance auditing to be performed without requesting hard copy documents or receipts, Conway pointed out.

WFEC has also moved to electronic approval of check registers, which previously required physical routing to multiple employees for approval.

Initially, accounting moved to doing check runs every other week to limit potential exposures among staff members. However, staff soon learned that it was more efficient to continue to do a check run weekly. Additionally, exposure was only minimal due to fewer than expected employees being on site for this process to occur.

"Changing to electronic submission and approval of expense reports and check registers has proven to be more timely and efficient. Employees have done an outstanding job adapting to the new procedures during the pandemic period, with consideration being given to making them permanent," Conway explained.

"While the pandemic has provided many challenges, it has also made us question the way we go about our normal operations, and in many instances, such as expense reporting, we have found a more efficient way," he noted.

Several WFEC departments are utilizing Zoom more often for all types of meetings, whether internal, external, with vendors or for departmental staff meetings. Other meeting formats are also being utilized, but all are virtual.

Zoom and Microsoft Teams, plus the sharing of information on Jabber for internal and external communication, has flourished within many departments, Conway pointed out.

As far as Financial Services' documentation, Conway said, "Our lenders are accepting PDF and electronically signed documents in many circumstances." And, he added, "Even the financial statement audit is substantially performed virtually with electronic exchange of necessary documents."

Although many employees are teleworking, the internal and external mail delivery has never stopped at WFEC. Extra safety precautions are being taken with external mail, which is picked up Monday, Wednesday and Friday, in order to reduce employee exposure. This mail is sprayed with disinfectant and sorted by department, with designated staff picking up any external mail in the mail room.

And, instead of physical delivery to various departments or employees, interoffice mail is now emailed after scanning.

Warehouse staff members have created "cubby hole" type offices within the warehouse to provide safe distancing, and have also divided work tasks to remain distanced for stocking, deliveries and pick-ups, Conway explained.

Virtual meetings becoming popular:

Dawne Massey, manager, IT Operations, believes that virtual meetings are here to stay. "Pre-pandemic, many companies, including WFEC, had been a little hesitant at adopting and getting comfortable with the virtual meeting platform. The pandemic forced the world into seeking a solution for continuing business-as-usual," Massey commented. "Virtual meeting apps met the need and their associated vendors have been adding functionality quickly, which has been very impressive," she added.

Massey pointed out that several WFEC departments are utilizing Zoom for all types of meetings, whether internal, with vendors, departmental or board meetings. "Since we have several paid Zoom licenses, it is definitely the solution of choice for many WFEC employees," she noted.

Massey said that vendors contacting WFEC for meetings are using a combination of mostly Zoom, WebEx and Microsoft Teams, with the Google Meet format also increasingly being utilized.

Several WFEC departments are starting to use Microsoft Teams, which is convenient since it does not have to be shared and scheduled in the same manner the Zoom licenses are managed, Massey pointed out. None of the meeting apps require VPN access, which has definitely been a plus.

"Virtual meeting apps are going to continue to reduce the need for travel among WFEC locations," Massey predicts, as the ability to physically meet in one location on a frequent basis may be limited in the future.

She noted that the possibilities of having a combination of employees either in Anadarko, Moore, or working from home on any given day, was discussed recently among IT Operations staff. "This realization didn't faze the team, because at this point, they feel as if we are having a conversation across a desk when using virtual meetings."

wfec

Endurance introduced to legislators, state & government organizations

Article & Photos by Sondra Boykin

The Lordstown Endurance was introduced to several state and government organizations, legislators and others on Monday, Dec. 21, when company representatives made a stop at the Oklahoma State Capitol in Oklahoma City. Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) sponsored this stopover along the company's cross-country road trip to introduce the first all-electric pickup truck that is being specifically designed for use in commercial fleet operations.

This event included the revealing of a prototype of the Endurance, along with a presentation highlighting the features of this all-new electric pickup (comparable to Ford F-150 size). The day-long visit included several 30 to 40 minute sessions with Lordstown Motors' staff and invited guests, with each session limited to 10 people due to social distancing requirements. Even though the event was hosted outdoors, masks were still required for each attendee.

Lordstown Motors, an American automobile manufacturer of electric vehicles, is located in Lordstown, Ohio, and is based in the former Lordstown Assembly Plant, which previously belonged to General Motors.

Michael Stafford, sales director (western region), Lordstown Motors (right), visits with Oklahoma Secretary of Energy & Environment Kenneth Wagner at an event to introduce the Lordstown Endurance. WFEC hosted this event at the Oklahoma State Capitol during a stopover of Lordstown Motors' staff.

A prototype of the new all-electric Lordstown Endurance was introduced at an event at the Oklahoma State Capitol on Monday, Dec. 21. This new pickup, comparable in size to the Ford F-150, is being engineered for use in commercial fleet operation.

The pickup on display at the Oklahoma event was a prototype of the Endurance. Some modifications and additions are expected once production begins in late 2021. The price is expected to be around $52,500.

On the day of the Oklahoma visit, Lordstown Motors announced that they hit 80,000 pre-orders for the all-electric Endurance pickup truck, which is tailored for commercial buyers rather than individual owners.

Michael Stafford, sales director (western region), Lordstown Motors, explained that the company was basically looking for an area in which they felt they could "take off," with their focus soon turning to fleet vehicles.

"There are a lot of companies building electric vehicles," he pointed out, but "most of them are targeting lifestyle vehicles." So, Lordstown Motors decided to focus on a cost-efficient pickup truck.

The Endurance pickup is designed with a 250-mile range, which Stafford said is a good distance for commercial fleets, as average trips are typically 60 to 80 miles per trip, and the distance is enough to alleviate "range anxiety".

The truck's major components and batteries are contained in a "skateboard" frame and under carriage, which is ideal for a variety of truck bodies to be attached. Stafford explained that the skateboard design offers the advantage of having a low center of gravity, as half of the vehicle weight is on the platform, which offers more stability and a high roll over rating.

Unique to the Endurance is the use of hub motor system (one in each wheel), which simplifies the drive train and allows individual wheel control. Stafford noted that the energy basically goes from the motor to the wheels, with very little power loss, which helps control turning and also significantly improves vehicle control.

Several sessions to introduce the features of the Lordstown Endurance were hosted throughout the day on Monday, Dec. 21, during an event at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Groups consisted of legislators, state and government organizations and several utility companies.

LORDSTOWN

The Endurance has a 2,000 pound payload, with 7,500 pounds of towing capacity and a 0 to 60 acceleration of 5.5 seconds.

Oklahoma Secretary of Energy & Environment Kenneth Wagner, who was among those attending Monday's event, was pleased to learn more about the Lordstown Endurance. He noted that there are two things that need to happen for Oklahomans to adopt electric vehicles.

First, he said, a charging network across the state is needed – one that can relieve range anxiety. He noted that this has happened and Oklahoma is developing a "supercharger" type of network.

Secondly, he pointed out, electric vehicles that Oklahomans want to drive, are needed. "We love our pickups in Oklahoma," he commented, adding that the Endurance appears to be a functional option.

Michael Stafford, sales director (western region), Lordstown Motors, visits with Representative Daniel Pae (inside pickup) during an event hosted to introduce the all-electric Endurance pickup. Pae was one of the legislators who attended the event, along with representatives from several state and government organizations.

Western Farmers Electric Cooperative
P. O. Box 429
Anadarko, OK 73005-0429

www.wfec.com

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