



Editor, Sarah Fellows

Featured above: Senior Line Technician Ryan Heath,
3 year of service

Comments from the President and CEO

Changing needs in changing times

By now, many of you have probably heard of the large-scale solar energy solution being proposed right here in Hardin County. I have fielded several calls over the last few weeks from landowners across our service territory who are trying to gather more information about the options being offered by multiple companies throughout our communities. As I have tried to clarify for them, I will explain some key points here to help everyone have more understanding about all the factors at play.

In January, LG&E and KU filed an application with the Kentucky Public Service Commission requesting to enter into purchase power agreements that would result in the development of a 100 MW solar generation facility in southwestern Hardin County. Based on solar generation facilities that are already constructed and in production, this proposed site would be 10 times larger than any other in Kentucky. In summation, the filing by LG&E and KU accounts for a purchase power agreement from the company developing the solar generation facility (Rhudes Creek Solar, LLC), as well as for delivery of the produced renewable energy to their large industrial customers, in this case Toyota Motor Manufacturing and Dow Silicones Corporation.

It is my understanding that several solar energy management organizations have contacted landowners across our service area offering leasing solutions

that would permit the potential installation of solar panels and equipment on their premises.

Common questions

The most common question I have received has come in two variations: “I get my power from Nolin, but I’m being approached about installing solar.” (1) “Does Nolin have anything to do with this?” or (2) “Does that company have to sell the energy back to Nolin?” The short answer to both questions is “No.” Let me explain.

To answer the first question, Nolin RECC nor its generation and transmission provider, East Kentucky Power, are presently soliciting for the development of physical solar generation facilities in Nolin RECC service territory. This is not to say that we may not at some point, but as of now, this is not the case.

In response to the second question, an independent power producer, in this case Rhudes Creek Solar, can sell energy to any number of eligible utility buyers, in this case LG&E and KU, provided that the generation facility itself meets certain qualifying criteria. It is circumstantial happenstance that this solar site is being proposed right here in Nolin’s service territory. While this or very similar activity could, and eventually will, take place in other parts of the commonwealth, the fact that it is happening right here right now means nothing other than this particular body of circumstance

presents an economically viable solution for all parties involved in the transaction.

Over time, we are likely to see more and more activity related to renewable energy solutions across our service territory and the entire state. As large companies, state governments, municipalities and utilities place increased emphasis on diversification of energy portfolios and alternative energy plans, the need to secure real-estate to develop these physical assets will multiply. Nolin RECC itself owns and operates a 2 MW solar field located at Fort Knox that has provided over 15,000,000 kWh of energy to support the needs of the Armed Forces and warfighters. That’s enough energy to power 1,000 average homes for an entire year. Additionally, each of our members has the opportunity to participate in Cooperative Solar, a solar installation owned by Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that covers 60 acres in Winchester. Licenses can be purchased on solar panels located at this farm with monthly bill credits being passed on to the member based on the output of the solar field.

While some folks



Greg Lee
President & CEO

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In honor of Lineworker Appreciation Day...

A day in the life of a lineworker

Story and photos by Sarah Fellows

It's a tough job.

Lineworkers, or line technicians as we call them at Nolin RECC, work in conditions that many of us get to watch from the window. Extreme heat, rain, ice and high

wind don't stop the work—in fact, often they cause more of it. Luckily, days don't always bring the worst weather conditions, but even on the best of days, the job of a line technician is full of challenges and hard work. I recently followed a crew on a “typical” day to see what goes

on behind the scenes of keeping our lights on.

The day starts before the sun is up, often with coffee. “At least two cups do the trick,” jokes Senior Line Technician Chad Pence. Crew Leader Kenny Brown arrives at work early and enjoys his coffee in quiet before anyone else arrives. “I go over the work orders and figure out what we need for our jobs so I can make sure that I am mentally prepared for the crew and all tasks at hand,” says Brown.

Preparation for the day is key.

“One of the most important things I do is to check the weather,” says Senior Line Technician Anthony Huff. “The weather doesn't have to be cold to make sure you check. In the summer time when it gets extremely hot, I bring more water than I normally do.”

Once each crew member is prepared, they gather to look over the day ahead. “We all talk about the task at hand in our job briefing, so that we all completely understand what is going on and we recognize the dangers and hazards of the job,” Apprentice Line Technician Ryan Ray says. The trucks and other equipment are inspected, as is their personal protective equipment (PPE). Safety is essential and it begins with these first minutes of the day.



Senior Line Technician Chad Pence, top; Senior Line Technician Anthony Huff, second from top; Apprentice Line Technician Ryan Ray, bottom middle; and Crew Leader Kenny Brown change out a pole in Howe Valley.



Senior Line Technician Chad Pence helps guide a new pole off a truck.

After the crew briefing, they gather needed materials and vehicles, finish equipment checks, and set out for their first assignment.

On a typical day, a crew may be tasked with a new building job, pole change-out, rebuilding infrastructure or any number of specialty jobs. On the day I joined this crew, they were headed to Howe Valley to change out a pole.

“When I first arrive on a scene, I walk around it and figure out how the equipment needs to be placed,” says Brown. As crew leader, Brown is responsible for not only overseeing the work, but for the safety and well-being of his crew. “I do my best to follow all safety rules and keep a close eye on the crew. I try to look ahead to spot any dangers.”

A team career

A sense of responsibility for each other is something each man on this crew shares. “This is a team career,” says Ray, “without each other, things could easily be missed. Four minds involved are better than one. You have to have each other’s back.”

Ray’s fellow crew members agree. “One of the most important ways to stay safe while working is to look out for each other and constantly keep your head moving,” says Huff. Pence adds, “You can’t get distracted because one mistake could be fatal to you or someone else.”

In addition to the danger inherent to line work, every day can present challenges. “The protective equipment we have to wear doesn’t change,” says Huff, “so when it’s hot outside, it is very hot with rubber gloves and long sleeve shirts on. Also, everything is harder in snow, rain or ice.”

When major outages occur or the crew works out-of-town storms, days are anything but typical. This can be exciting, says Huff. “You see things that you don’t normally get to see on a regular work day.”

But that work also comes with a great deal of sacrifice. “The most



Apprentice Line Technician Ryan Ray, right, and Crew Leader Kenny Brown remove an old pole that needs replacing.



Apprentice Line Technician Ryan Ray, left, and Senior Line Technician Anthony Huff prepare a new pole for service.

difficult part of my job is leaving my wife and daughter to go on a storm,” Ray says. “Not knowing how long you’ll be gone and not knowing when I will get to see them again.”

Despite the challenges, this crew loves the work. “Sometimes it’s like a puzzle and you put it all back together,” Pence says.

Ray adds, “I absolutely love when people appreciate getting their

power back on and take the time to say thank you.”

The job of keeping the power on is tough, but rewarding for the line technicians at Nolin. From the time they get up to the time they go home, they are doing their best to serve our members. And while keeping the lights on is a top priority for them all, Brown sums it up best, “Making sure that we all go home at the end of the day is my most important job.”

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are prone to progressive programs like solar technologies, others may be in favor of more traditional large-scale electric generation. I would encourage everyone to keep an open mind, as we find ourselves in a fast-paced and ever-changing energy market. One hundred years ago, our grandparents and great-grandparents watched Henry Ford turn the horse-drawn carriage and team plow into things of the past. Those drastic changes made such tremendous improvement to our way of life that many people reading this article don't even know what a team plow is. The principal behind renewable and carbon-free energy technologies like solar, wind, and hydroelectric is that they help preserve our environment for generations to come. While there are many other factors involved, that sentiment is a good thing.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions about activity going on in your area or if you are interested in learning more about Cooperative Solar. As always, we look forward to the learning opportunities that help us prepare better solutions to meet your needs.



Easy ways to pay

Nolin RECC offers a number of ways to pay your bill without having to come to our office. If you have any questions, please call us at (270) 765-6153.

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3. Call (855) 356-6359

Set up account on bank draft through checking account or with credit card (through our SmartHub app and on website).

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Operation Round-Up applications due

Are you involved with a nonprofit or charitable organization? Applications are being accepted now for community impact grants through Operation Round-Up. Find more details at www.nolinrecc.com or stop by our office for an application.

Applications are due by 5 p.m. EDT, May 8, 2020.

Operation Round-Up board member June Thornberry-Raine helps plant trees at Freeman Lake Park in Elizabethtown. Greenspace, Inc. received funding from Operation Round-Up to add trees and other improvements in 2019. Photo: Sarah Fellows

HOW TO REACH NOLIN RECC

ELIZABETHTOWN OFFICE

411 Ring Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701-6767
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Mon-Fri • (270) 765-6153

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Website: www.nolinrecc.com
email: comments@nolinrecc.com

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