



RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BEMC OUTAGES TOTAL NEARLY 83,000 AT SUNDOWN FRIDAY

SUPPLY, N.C. (Sept. 14, 2018, 8:00 p.m.) – A large majority of Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation’s (BEMC) members are without power as of late Friday afternoon. Most of the outages that BEMC members are experiencing are caused by issues with transmission infrastructure that delivers power to local substations.

“Hurricane Florence caused extensive damage both BEMC’s electric distribution system and the infrastructure that delivers power to us,” said Heather Holbrook, BEMC spokesperson. “We are a cooperative with 228 miles of transmission infrastructure and 6,700 miles of distribution line. Repairs to transmission lines must be completed before BEMC can re-energize affected substations in local areas.”

In a major outage event, like what we’re experiencing with Hurricane Florence, damages can occur throughout every part of the electric grid. Crews can work concurrently to repair different parts of the grid, but if damages have not been repaired “upstream,” power cannot be restored to the consumer. Repairs must be made to all parts of the electric system before power can be restored to homes and businesses. Areas that must be in working order for cooperative members to have electric service include:

High voltage transmission lines: These lines deliver energy from power plants across long distances. Damage to these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Distribution substation: This is where electricity is stepped down from high-voltage to levels that can go out on the distribution grid to homes and businesses. Each substation serves hundreds or even thousands of people.

Distribution lines: These are the main lines that BEMC owns and maintains. They carry power from substations to communities.

Tap lines: Secondary distribution lines that deliver power to smaller portions of the community.

Individual lines are the last distribution lines that run from transformers to individual homes, schools and businesses.

Initial restoration efforts will start Saturday morning. More than 80 crews, some from as far away as Alabama, Florida, Indiana and Minnesota, are standing ready to assist in restoring power, and have been forced to wait until winds subside to 30 mph, due to safety concerns. Crews will not be able to deploy bucket trucks and are also at risk from falling trees and windblown debris.

Restoration efforts include assessing storm damage to circuits and distribution lines as well as cleaning up and removing branches from lines. Crews will work at each of BEMC's 46 substations one by one to make repairs, all of which may continue for several days.

"Restoring power to every member is our priority, and step by step we will get this done as safely and as quickly as possible," said Don Hughes, BEMC General Manager and CEO. "We know this is a difficult time for our members and we thank you for your patience and understanding."

Stay tuned to BEMC news at bemc.org for the outage map, all storm press releases, and safety information, and follow Brunswick Electric on Facebook and Twitter.

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BEMC is a locally owned and operated not-for-profit corporation. It is the second largest electric cooperative in North Carolina and serves nearly 97,000 member locations in Brunswick, Columbus, and parts of Bladen and Robeson counties. Founded in 1939, BEMC has a longstanding commitment to the communities it serves, providing support for a wide variety of activities that contribute to the quality of life for all citizens.