PPL Electric Utilities' smart grid tops 1 million avoided customer outages since 2015

Automated power restoration is key to keeping the lights on

ALLENTOWN, Pa., Sept. 2, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- The best power outage is one that never happens.

Since 2015, that's been the case more than a million times for PPL Electric Utilities customers, thanks to smart grid technology that instantaneously reroutes power in the event of a problem, keeping the outage area contained to the smallest possible footprint.

In the past five-plus years, PPL estimates its smart grid automated power restoration network has helped customers avoid 100 million minutes in the dark in preventing those 1 million outages. Those minutes translate into a lot of time – more than 190 years.

"This is a milestone born of innovation and imagination, one we believe has no equal in the U.S. utility industry," said PPL Electric Utilities President Greg Dudkin. "It represents our commitment to using technology to benefit our customers and to providing superior reliability."

The smart grid network – a combination of state-of-the-art sensors and switches, coupled with advanced software systems - is part of a significant investment made by PPL in the power grid overall over the past decade.

During that time, the company also has rebuilt aging power lines and added more storm-resistant wires and poles, instituted innovative data-driven equipment maintenance and replacement programs, and more. Other initiatives, like a comprehensive tree trimming and removal program, also play a key role in reliability improvements over time.

PPL's collective reliability efforts, bolstered by its smart grid gains, have reduced the average frequency of outages across its grid by nearly a third since 2011.

The company continues to seek out new ways to improve reliability, like a battery in service near Harrisburg to provide power to customers in the event of an outage on the line serving their rural area. The customer experience would be essentially the same as smart grid automated power restoration, except instead of reconnecting to the grid, homes would be temporarily powered by the battery. The technology is being considered for other areas in the PPL footprint.

"Hitting a million avoided outages is a great achievement, but just as significant is our commitment to deliver for our customers every day, around the clock," Dudkin said. "We don't advance without that purpose as our foundation."

For more on PPL's smart grid, visit pplelectric.com/smartgrid and to learn more about what we do to keep the lights on, visit pplelectric.com/reliability.

PPL Electric Utilities provides electric delivery service to more than 1.4 million homes and businesses in Pennsylvania and ranks among the best utility companies in the country for customer service and reliability. PPL Electric Utilities is a major employer in the communities it serves. It is a subsidiary of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL). For more information visit www.pplelectric.com.

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