

Weathering the Storms

PPL Electric Utilities expands efforts to reduce tree-related power outages

PPL Electric Utilities

[PPL Electric Utilities](#) will increase tree trimming and removal along its power lines this year to further reduce tree-related power outages and improve the reliability of electric service for customers.

“Hurricane Sandy and other severe storms in the past two years made it clear that we need to do even more to eliminate potential tree trouble along our power lines,” said Bill Klokis, manager of Vegetation Management for the utility. “This more comprehensive approach will be a real benefit to our customers, who will see fewer power outages as a result.”

Klokis said PPL Electric Utilities will invest about \$40 million in vegetation management activities this year to reduce the number and duration of power outages.

The utility plans to step up efforts along its 69-kilovolt transmission lines, as well as along some local distribution lines that deliver power to homes and businesses.

“We know this work isn’t always popular with some individual property owners whose trees threaten our lines, but we have an obligation to deal with the problem so that all customers can enjoy more reliable electric service,” Klokis said.

Over the past three years, PPL Electric Utilities has completed major tree clearing along all of its 500- and 230-kilovolt transmission lines. The utility also has completed tree removal and trimming along its 138- and 115-kilovolt transmission lines. In addition, vegetation maintenance was completed on about 25 percent of the company’s 69-kilovolt lines during 2012.

During both the fall snowstorm in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy, no tree-related outages were reported on either the 500- or 230-kV systems, where major vegetation work had already been done.

During 2013, the utility expects to complete vegetation management work along about 725 miles of 69-kilovolt transmission lines. The scope of the work will increase compared to the work done on 69-kilovolt lines in the past. It will include:

- Removing trees and non-compatible vegetation from the entire PPL right of way.
- Removing danger trees — those outside the right of way that are in poor condition and could jeopardize service if they fall.

On the distribution lines — those that serve large numbers of customers in neighborhoods — PPL Electric Utilities will:

- Do significantly more tree clearing and trimming. This will include removing trees and tree limbs that hang over power lines, which previously were not removed during routine maintenance.
- Widen the area under these lines in which vegetation management work is performed.

Klokis said the planned work will pay dividends in future storms. “The power lines that crisscross our 10,000-square-mile service area are the highways and streets for electric delivery. Keeping those power pathways clear will benefit everyone,” he said.

PPL Electric Utilities maintains 35,000 miles of aerial transmission and distribution lines and vegetation management is an important part of the company’s comprehensive maintenance program for service reliability. Numerous other programs also support reliability, including line and equipment patrols and inspections and installing guards to help protect against animal contacts.

PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), with annual revenue of more than \$12 billion, is one of the largest companies in the U.S. utility sector. The PPL family of companies delivers electricity and natural gas to about 10 million customers in the United States and the United Kingdom, owns more than 18,000 megawatts of generating

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