

PPL Electric Utilities Recognized for Technology that Benefits Customers

Company wins Industry Excellence Awards for automated power restoration, use of data to improve efficiency and reduce costs

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PPL Electric Utilities has made its smart grid smarter and is using technology and data to enhance operations — improvements that have been lauded by an electric utility trade association.

The Southeastern Electric Exchange has recognized PPL with two Industry Excellence Awards. PPL's automated power restoration system uses pole-top sensors to detect outages, a central computer to quickly analyze the problem, and remote-control switches to reroute power and restore many customers to service — even before a work crew has made repairs.

"This technology means customers affected by power outages get their lights back on faster, in many cases in less than two or three minutes," said Dave Bonenberger, vice president-Distribution Operations. "It's been a major improvement in our system's reliability and in our service to customers."

Thanks to a wide range of reliability improvements, PPL customers are experiencing 30 percent fewer outages today than they were in 2007. With additional investments being made every year, reliability is expected to increase by another 15 percent over the next five years.

PPL's second industry award came for its use of technology to help maintain its power line rights of way.

The company uses geospatial technology to give it accurate three-dimensional views of power-line corridors, and it also has switched to a paperless work management system. PPL uses light detection and ranging (LiDAR) data to provide information on obstructions in the right of way — such as trees — that may pose a threat to reliability.

"We're using technology and data like never before to deliver a more reliable system for our customers, and lower costs at the same time," Bonenberger said.

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