



# Okanogan County Electric Co-op Newsletter

August 2018

## Office Info:

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Summer Office Hours:  
Mon - Thurs.  
7 am - 5:30 pm  
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Our customer service  
call center is available  
24/7/365 to handle most  
electric & propane  
concerns.

(509) 996-2228

## OCEC Board:

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## Open House A Success!



*Electric line crew performs arc demonstration*



*Open house attendees watch the arc demonstration*

On June 20th, around 30 community members attended an Open House at 93 West Chewuch RD. The group enjoyed fresh popcorn, hotdogs and cool beverages while taking in demonstrations and winning raffle prizes. An Arc Demo by OCEC Line Crew employees highlighting the dangers of high-voltage power lines was well received by the multi-age audience. The propane company demonstrated a custom outdoor propane fire pit and distributed promotional materials on different products and services available to customers. The event was an opportunity for members, customers, employees and board members to connect with each other in a relaxed atmosphere and learn about what's going on at the Co-op. The propane company contributed the grand finale of the raffle prizes, a propane Weber BBQ, which was won by member, Reva Reed. Thanks to all who attended and helped make the event great!



*Propane employee Byron Odion talks with attendees about propane tankless water heaters*



*Propane employees Joe Cole and Byron Odion present Reva Reed with a BBQ won in a drawing at the open house*



# Why Does the Power Blink?

EDITORIAL NOTE: The following article is reprinted with permission from the National Rural Electric Cooperative.  
By Scott Turner, P.E.

At one time or another, we've all returned home or woken up late for work to see a blinking "12:00" on our digital alarm clock. You then have to reset every digital clock in your household that doesn't have a battery backup, from the microwave oven to the answering machine. Usually, this state of "eternal midnight" was caused by a "blink" in the electrical system.

While blinks can be annoying, they show that an electrical system is working exactly as designed. And while Okanogan County Electric Cooperative (OCEC) has taken steps to reduce the number of blinks across its power system, there are measures you can take as well.

Let's look at blinks. These momentary power interruptions can occur anywhere along a power system from the time electrons are generated at a power plant to being shipped across transmission lines to substations, or during distribution from a substation to your home.

## Why blinks?

Blinks are created when a breaker, or switch, opens along any portion of the power system. The breaker usually opens because of a large, quick rise of electrical current. This large rise, called a fault condition, can occur when a tree branch touches a line, lightning strikes, or a wire breaks.

When this happens, a relay senses the fault and tells the breaker to open, preventing the flow of power to the problem site. After opening, the breaker quickly closes. The brief delay, which allows the fault to clear, usually lasts less than two seconds.

If the fault clears, every home or business that receives electricity off that power line has just experienced a blink. This could include thousands of accounts if the breaker protects a transmission line or a substation.

## Reducing the blink's effects

Your co-op employs methods to reduce blink frequency. Tree trimming is probably the easiest and most common way, and one area where you can help. Make sure OCEC knows of any trees or limbs located close to a power line. Call 509-996-2228 and tell us about potential problems.

Meanwhile, you can reduce the frustration of blinks by purchasing an alarm clock equipped with a battery backup. This type of digital clock offers "ride through" ability for momentary outages. It will also keep the correct time and sound an alarm in case of a long-duration outage, provided a charged battery is in place. As an added benefit, these devices only use the battery in the event of a power interruption.

Blinks affect all electrical equipment, not just digital clocks. If there is a blink while you are operating a computer, your computer may crash and you will have to reboot, hoping all the while that there will be few corrupted files.

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) on your computer can help prevent information loss. The UPS incorporates surge suppression technology with a battery backup and provides you some time to save whatever you were working on and exit your computer properly.

## The future of blinks

OCEC operates an active system maintenance program and works hard to identify and fix sources of service interruptions. Even though blinks will never disappear from our electrical energy delivery system, by working together with we can minimize effects of the interruptions and the frequency with which they occur.

If you have any questions, please call Operations Manager Glen Huber at 509-996-2228.

This article was written by Scott Turner, P.E., a former electric co-op employee, who is an electrical engineering consultant at his firm JD Engineering, PC, in Hamilton, Mont. ([www.jdeng.org](http://www.jdeng.org)).

