

Rutherford EMC Completes Restoration Efforts

Rutherford EMC

FOREST CITY, N.C. – Rutherford EMC crews have worked around-the-clock in challenging conditions for more than two weeks to repair and rebuild electrical infrastructure and restore power to more than 68,500 members after Tropical Storm Helene brought widespread, catastrophic damage to the co-op's service territory.

As of Monday, Oct. 14, Rutherford EMC has completed the restoration process for all members that are able to have their service restored at this time. Many members that are still without power will need an electrician to make repairs to their service, followed by a required county inspection before the co-op can restore their power. Rutherford EMC crews stand ready to reconnect those members as soon as county inspections are finished.

"We are proud to announce that our outage restoration efforts from Tropical Storm Helene are now complete and want to thank our members for their support and patience during this difficult time," said Dirk Burleson, general manager of Rutherford EMC. "We also want to thank our peer cooperatives from North Carolina and across the country who came to our aid and the many community members who assisted with housing these crews and supporting our restoration efforts. We could not have done this without you."

Beyond downed trees and limbs, Tropical Storm Helene brought extreme flooding that caused landslides and washed-out roads, making many areas difficult to access to assess damage and begin restoration efforts for many days. Local Rutherford EMC crews, alongside more than 300 reinforcements from peer electric cooperatives both in-state and out-of-state, worked tirelessly to repair and rebuild 6,800 miles of line, approximately 88% of the co-op's entire system. Crews also replaced thousands of poles that were damaged in the effort to restore power to more than 90% of the co-op's entire membership.

“It has taken 87 years for Rutherford EMC to build this electric system from the ground up and Tropical Storm Helene destroyed much of the system within hours,” Burleson said. “As our restoration efforts have come to a close, our focus now lies with helping our communities get back on their feet. We are in this together and brighter days are coming.”

Rutherford EMC is an electric cooperative serving approximately 75,000 members in 10 western North Carolina counties.