

UPSTATE STORM DAMAGE

'All over again'

Storms cause damage, power outages around area once more

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative spokesman Terry Ballenger quoted late Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Yogi Berra when talking about a fourth consecutive afternoon of thunderstorms that hit Pickens and Oconee counties Tuesday.


"It's deja vu all over again," Ballenger said. "The repair crews working on the Blue Ridge system in the wake of Monday's storm damage had reduced the number of members without power to just 12, when, sure enough, a line of thunderstorms

swept across the northwestern corner of the state. The thunderstorms have created some additional outages for us."

The good news Ballenger noted is that statistics from the latest outage appeared to be "more manageable than those that preceded this one, although we have received reports of some more broken poles."

But Ballenger said support crews from other cooperatives around South Carolina and Georgia have been helping since Monday's outage.

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On Tuesday, utility crews found themselves again dealing with the effects of storms that have been sweeping through the area over the past several days, toppling trees and causing power outages. REX BROWN | THE JOURNAL

STORMS: Causing problems

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"They are still on site and are now helping with this latest round of service interruptions," he said. "We would hope that will help speed service restoration for all those affected members."

While Ballenger said late Tuesday that another line of storms had formed "a few hours west of here," he added he was hopeful they would weaken before reaching the Upstate.

"Whatever happens, the co-op employee team and these allies who have joined us will work hard to repair the damage as quickly as possible," Ballenger said.

As of early Tuesday afternoon, Ballenger said, a total of 385 members were without service, led by 293 in Pickens County and 83 in Oconee County. By 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Ballenger reported 292 Blue Ridge members without power, including 222 in Pickens County and 62 in Oconee County. The remaining eight were in Spartanburg County.

Pickens County emergency management director Denise Kwiatek said Tuesday the county was still experiencing some outages in the Vineyards area.

"We had a few power lines down, as well as trees, but first responders and the power companies are keeping up," Kwiatek said.

Duke Energy spokesman Ryan Mosier said Monday night's storm impacted its system.

"Fortunately, we had restored service to most customers in Pickens and Oconee from the previous storm and no significant new outages took place," Mosier said Tuesday. "After the storm came through last night, we had about 17,000 customers out. Our crews worked overnight so the number was down to about 6,500 at 6:30 this morning, and most of those were in Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg counties."

Later Tuesday morning, Mosier said some 4,600 Duke Energy customers were without power across the state, mostly in the three aforementioned counties. Some scattered outages had been reported in Pickens County, impacting less than 400 customers.

"There were a few new outages in Pickens this afternoon, but not big numbers," he said.

Scattered thunderstorms are in the forecast again today.

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