Outage Texting Now Available

As a service to our members, we are pleased to offer a text service for reporting outages and receiving a notice of restoration. This will complement our e-mail blast, our Twitter tweets, our website updates and our online Outage Viewer. Offering this variety of communications methods allows you to pick the one that best suits your needs.

To take advantage of our texting option, your first step is to make sure your cell phone number is in our customer information system so it can be properly linked to your account. If you have never given us your cell phone number or have changed it, please call our office and provide the information.

With your cell phone number happily ensconced in our database, you can start the registration process.

Here are the rest of the steps.

1. There is a link on our Outages page or, if you prefer, click on it from this document. That will take you to a web page to create your account. Set up your user name and password.

2. Agree to the Terms of Service. ***Please note*** *that when you send a text, a person will not read it, it is an automated system. If you have a life or property threatening situation, call 911.*

3. Enter your cell phone number so you can receive an activation code. Keep your browser open – your account set up is not yet complete.

4. The code will be sent via a text message to your phone. Enter the code in the verification field online. You'll receive a welcome text. Keep your browser open so you can add some details.

5. At this point one of two things will happen. If we have your cell phone in our system, you will see a screen like the following where you link your cell number with your accounts.

If your number is not in our system, call to have our CSRs will have to enter it. You can navigate back to the site to complete your set up.

A nice feature of the system is that it allows you to enter multiple accounts and tie them to a single cell phone. Just give each a simple name like house, barn, workshop, etc.

Now comes the payoff. If you lose power, check your breakers to be sure it isn't an internal fault then simply text "outage house" to the service (or whatever name you have selected) and your outage has been reported. You'll receive an acknowledgement of the report. <u>We have to reemphasize that you should not report an emergency via this text service as no human will read it. Call 911.</u>

Once the circuit is restored, you will receive a text telling you power is back on.

That sounds nice but you need to be careful here. The text system only looks at the circuit level. Each of these will have many homes on it. When the circuit comes back on, the text system will think all homes did too. If the service to your home was damaged, your power might still be off.

So, let's say it is another Sandy-type storm and you left home for a motel room some distance away. You get the text that power is back on. Before giving up your motel and driving back, check with someone nearby to confirm that your house has power. It is best to be sure before you trek back home.

We are excited about adding this feature to our slate of notification options. As technology improves, our offerings will follow suit.