



IPEEC



## INSIDE PASSAGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

June 20, 2023

Chilkat Valley and Klukwan Members  
Inside Passage Electric Cooperative

Re: Outage May 16 - 17, 2023

Dear Members:

Many of you have called or written to us regarding the extended unplanned outage that occurred May 16 - 17. This letter is to explain what happened, and what we did to restore power as quickly as possible.

On the afternoon of May 16, a local man was digging in a ditch near IPEEC's primary power line. He did not call IPEEC for a line locate, and as a result he hit and severely damaged the power line, knocking out power to everyone on the grid. It is a requirement that anyone digging near underground electric lines ask for a line locate, and IPEEC is equipped to help with this. Fortunately, nobody was hurt.

IPEEC staff immediately investigated the cause of the outage, and contacted our contractor line crew to assist with the repair. However, it was difficult to locate a journeyman to help. It is construction season in Alaska, and all journeymen are deployed on jobs all over the state. We finally found one out of Fairbanks, but he wasn't able to get to the Chilkat Valley until the next day. The repair was made the next day, and power was restored as quickly as possible by the evening of May 17.

Some have asked, why didn't IPEEC simply start up the generators at the power plant? That would have worked if this was a power *supply* issue, but in fact it was a power *distribution* issue. Power could not flow because of the broken power line. We were able to section off the Klukwan distribution system fairly quickly and restore power there the same day, but that wasn't possible for the rest of the grid.

Please know that IPEEC acted as quickly as possible to restore power after the event (this is often complicated by poor cell service). We take our job very seriously in providing safe, reliable power to our member-consumers. However, IPEEC cannot afford its own line crew. Even if we had a line crew, we would not have enough work to keep them busy year-round, and the cost of a line crew would increase member electric rates. So, we hire contractor linemen, and deploy them as needed for work IPEEC staff is not licensed or trained to do. Safety of our members and employees is of paramount importance to us.

IPEEC has two sources of power for the Chilkat Valley and Klukwan. IPEEC owns and operates the 10 Mile Hydro Project, which provides about 60% of the power requirements for the grid. The remaining 40% is provided by Alaska Power & Telephone (AP&T) through a power sales agreement. Unfortunately, the power from AP&T sometimes fails, resulting in short unavoidable outages.

When IPEC built the power line in the Chilkat Valley back in the mid-1990's, it was a required that we build it entirely underground in order to protect the bald eagle reserve. Underground cable has its good qualities, but has its drawbacks in that when a line failure occurs it is much more difficult to locate than with overhead distribution lines (this often requires going from box to box to test, isolate, then repair the fault). There was another lengthy outage in April, and it took a while for IPEC to find and repair it. This failure was due to shifting of the ground under which the power cable was buried. The cable failed when the driveway it was buried in shifted downhill, pulling the cable tight and causing it to break. This is an uncommon failure, and there is nothing IPEC could've done to foresee or prevent it.

We sincerely hope this doesn't happen again. ***Please call for a line locate if you are digging near a power line.*** If you do not, and you dig up and damage the power line, you will be responsible for the cost to repair the damages. Also, during outages please leave your refrigerator and freezer doors closed to better preserve your food stocks.

Although this outage wasn't something IPEC could've avoided, we sincerely apologize to all members who were affected by it. It was a difficult situation for all involved.

Sincerely,

INSIDE PASSAGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Jodi Mitchell

Chief Executive Officer/General Manager