

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



CELEBRATING 80 YEARS



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SECO infrastructure projects

2026 goal: change 1,000 poles; planning transmission line rebuild

By **TYE B WILLIAMS** | *Manager*

THE mild winter has created an anomaly at Southeast Electric Cooperative this year. Usually, there is too much frost in the ground to change poles effectively, so crews spend much of the winter patrolling our 1,700 miles of line. But this year, they have contended with ice in the morning and mud in the afternoon, so the crews have been coming in earlier to avoid muddy conditions. This has allowed them to get a jump start on changing poles. Our goal for 2026 is to change 1,000 poles in conjunction with our contractor crew from Red Rock Power.

We have also already installed four new services through the winter months. This may not seem like much, but most winters we have zero new services, and we only install 16-20 new services a year. Plus, we have numerous other new services in different stages of our process.

The crews were able to upgrade our reclosers on our line toward Boyes. The reclosers act as breakers on our high-voltage lines and are the reason you may have experienced the lights blink three times before a long outage. The



reclosers are also programmed to work in tandem, so our crews can isolate a stretch of line to determine the cause of the outage and restore power more quickly.

Since mid-2025, we have been working with our engineers at ECI and MTDOT staff to plan the rebuild of our transmission and distribution lines between Ekalaka and Baker. MTDOT is planning to cut into areas where our line is scheduled for reconstruction, so Operations Manager Jake Hammel has been reaching out to landowners to discuss moving the entire line east.

The reconstruction of these two lines will combine them into one line. Under this configuration, the transmission circuit lines will be on top, and the distribution circuit will be below them. The poles we will use will be taller and more robust, but we will use considerably fewer poles when combining the lines. Once the new line is rebuilt, it will resemble the line running from our Ekalaka substation, SE, to our Box Elder substation.

The crews will be working hard in the field, but don't forget we will have our 80th Annual Meeting in June at our location in Ekalaka. 2026 is already shaping up to be a very busy year as we continue working to improve the reliability of our electrical service. RM



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Southeast Electric Cooperative's
80th Annual Meeting

JUNE 12 ■ EKALAKA

THANK YOU! LINEMAN APPRECIATION MONTH



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