



Tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance help reduce power outages

Trees are a tremendous asset to homeowners and the environment, providing shade, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic value to all of us.

Unfortunately, trees also are a leading cause of power outages, especially when the wind blows. Wake Electric performs routine maintenance of trees and other vegetation on over 1,900 miles of overhead right-of-way.

Why do we have right-of-way and vegetation management programs? These vegetation management activities are essential to maintain reliable electric service to our members and to provide for the safety of your family and the general public. In particular, for 2006, trees caused 17% of our total outages and 29% of our consumer hour outages. They also are one of the leading causes for blinks. Trees are second only to lightning, which causes 30% of consumer hour outages.

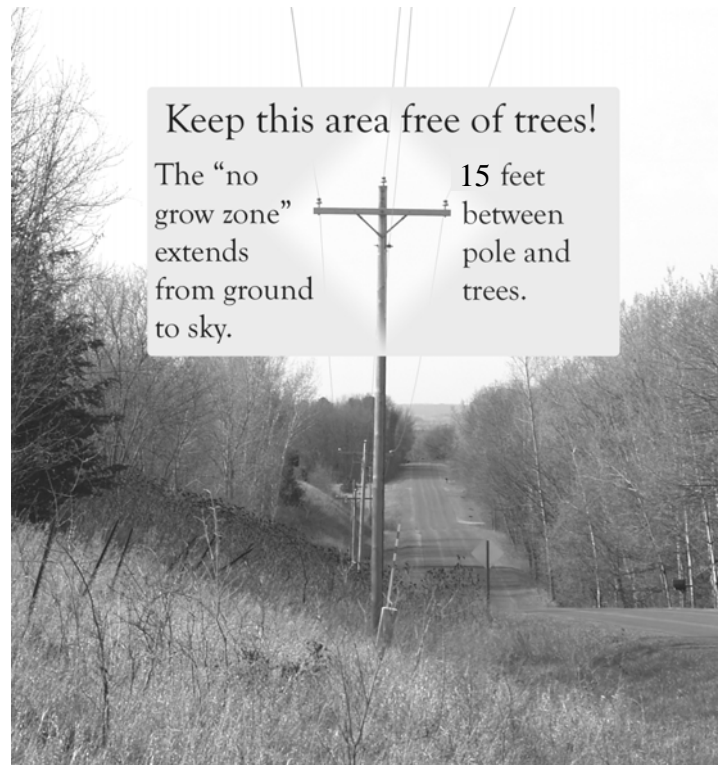
Wake's vegetation management activities include the following four components:

- Tree pruning
- The removal of hazard trees and other trees that require excessive pruning
- The mowing or cutting of brush and small trees on the right-of-way
- Herbicide application to small trees on the right-of-way

Wake employs Ed Wheeler, a licensed pesticide applicator, to oversee its vegetation management program. Wheeler is a board member of the N.C. Vegetative Management Association. Routine vegetation management activities are completed on a regular cycle of approximately every 2 to 4 years. Tree pruning or removal outside of this regularly scheduled maintenance is completed only at the request of the landowner or to correct a hazardous situation.

A clear right-of-way is so important that tree-

trimming and right-of-way maintenance programs are required in order for a cooperative to receive its safety accreditation from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). All North Carolina electric cooperatives have earned their safety accreditation from NRECA.



Wake Electric employs contractors and tree-trimming specialists for right of way maintenance.

The history and purpose

In 1996, based on reports of best practices in the field, the Wake Electric board of directors decided to incorporate the use of herbicide in right of way maintenance. By the summer of the following year, Wake was ready to start spraying. Since then, the program has been developed to spray circuits that have been recleared in the past 12 months. Wake



Crape myrtles are considered “utility-friendly trees” because their mature height and width typically don’t interfere with transmission lines.

goes back about every two years and resprays the circuits.

The purpose is to keep woody-stemmed vegetation from getting waist high so that trucks can access the right-of-way.

When the annual herbicide spray cycle begins, Wheeler determines:

- which circuits have been recleared in the past year,
- sprays those circuits that were recently recleared,
- and then goes to circuits that haven’t been sprayed in 2—3 years

Spraying occurs from the 1st of June to end of September.

So why spray instead of the old way of cutting?

According to Wheeler, over time, spraying is much more cost effective. “Once you spray a tree – it doesn’t come back,” said Wheeler. “When you cut the tree, it ends up putting out three times as many sprouts from the root ball.”

Spraying has other benefits as well. When the trees are removed, more sunlight gets to the right-of-way and promotes the growth of natural grasses. This gives wildlife more habitat and a cover to make their home.

Typically, Wake focuses on spraying woody-stemmed species. In ten years, Wheeler said that his contractors have been able to get around the entire system – that includes all distribution plus transmission lines - at least three times. Questions have been minimal. The contractors used by Wake are licensed by the N.C. Department of Agriculture as

pesticide applicators. Every chemical used is tested and approved by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. If you have any questions or concerns about Wake’s right-of-way maintenance program, contact Ed Wheeler at 919.863.6461 or email at ed.wheeler@wemc.com.

A guide to planting trees near power lines

Your cooperative can minimize expenses and let Mother Nature take her course if you consider power line clearance requirements before planting trees. Consult your nursery salesperson to determine the mature height and width of trees before purchasing them. The following trees are utility friendly when planted outside the right-of-way area:

Utility-friendly trees

Crape myrtle Dogwood Eastern redbud Japanese maple
Purpleleaf plum Star magnolia Yaupon

Measure 15 feet from the power line and then half the distance of the width of the tree’s spread when fully grown. This is as close as you should plant to power lines.

Try not to plant these tall growers within 50 to 75 feet of power lines:

Tall-growing trees

Ash	Beech	Birch	Black gum
Cedar	Chestnut	Chinaberry	Elm
Maple	Oak	Pecan	Pine
Poplar	Southern magnolia		

Apply for a Classroom Technology Award

Classroom Technology awards are given to area teachers and educators to supplement their annual budget. Teachers can purchase cameras, software, computer equipment, printers, scanners, etc. The technology must serve to benefit the students. Interested teachers can apply for a Classroom Technology award at www.wemc.com. Teachers who apply for this award may also still apply for an Operation RoundUp grant. Public school educators in Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Nash, Vance and Wake counties are eligible. The application deadline is September 28, 2007. For additional information, contact Angela Perez at aperez@wemc.com or 919.863.6376.

Members give back to the community

Thanks to members like you who have chosen to round up your power bill each month to the next whole dollar (for example, if your bill is \$89.91 then your bill is rounded up 9 cents to \$90), Wake Electric was able to contribute almost \$15,000 to local non-profit organizations.

The grant recipients for the July 2007, third quarter Operation RoundUp funding are:

1. **Faith to Freedom Project**, Henderson, to fund the creation of a playground for children.
2. **Durham Literacy Center**, Durham, to fund literacy and ESOL programs.
3. **The Boys and Girls Club**, Selma, to fund a tutoring program.
4. **Meals on Wheels**, Durham, to fund a weekend lunch program for seniors.
5. **Bunn Fire Department**, Bunn, to fund the purchase of rescue saw equipment.
6. **The Boys and Girls Club**, Henderson, to fund a tutoring program.
7. **The Boys and Girls Club**, Louisburg, to fund a tutoring program.
8. **Harbor, Inc.**, Smithfield, to fund a domestic violence program.



The 45 volunteers of the Bunn Fire Department respond to automobile accidents, brushfires, and house fires. And yes, they even rescue cats and dogs once in a while. Pictured from left to right are Lt. Matt Strawbridge and Chief Ken Pearce.

Operation RoundUp is a grant program awarding money each quarter of the year (in January, April, July, and October) to non-profit organizations with designated non-profit status in the counties served by Wake Electric. They may apply for up to \$5,000 a year.

Organizations that have been awarded RoundUp grants in the past range from fire departments to literacy centers to recreation departments. *The main thing that all of the organizations have in common is that they are either educational, charitable, or economic development organizations helping to meet the needs of our region and of our members.* Go to www.wemc.com for applications, deadlines, and more information. If you have questions, email Angela Perez at angela.perez@wemc.com or call 919.863.6376. 4th quarter deadline for applications is September 28, 2007. If you choose to apply in the 1st quarter of 2008, grant applications are due December 28.



Children at the Selma Boys and Girls Club will benefit from a tutoring program thanks to an Operation RoundUp grant.

TAILGATING: Chicken & White Bean Chili. YUM.

TAILGATING

Stock the cooler and put on your lucky jersey—it's tailgating season! Whether gathering in a parking lot before kickoff or relaxing in your own living room, tailgating is about having a good time and enjoying your favorite game-time treats. In fact, great company and terrific food sometimes make it difficult to keep your focus on the field. This crowd-pleasing chili works both indoors and out.

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 1/3 cups chopped onion
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 1/4 pounds skinless boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 1/2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 15- to 16-ounce cans white beans, drained, juices reserved
- 2 15-ounce cans diced tomatoes in juice
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro



Photo by Duane Winfield

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, bell pepper, and garlic; sauté until vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add chicken; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté until chicken is no longer pink outside, about 5 minutes. Mix in chili powder, tomato

paste, cumin, and oregano. Add beans, 1 cup reserved bean juices, and canned tomatoes. Simmer until chicken is cooked through and chili is thickened, about 25 minutes. If chili is too thick, add more bean juices by tablespoonfuls to thin. Season chili to taste with salt and pepper. Mix in cilantro and serve. Serves 6.

Wake Electric employee deployed to Iraq

Wake Electric serviceman Shannon Carroll, a reservist in the N.C. National Guard, has been deployed to Iraq for over a year.

This is Carroll's second deployment since joining up three years ago. Carroll and his family reside in Zebulon in southeastern Wake County.

While Carroll is deployed, Wake Electric holds his job for him and pays the difference in what he is paid by the National Guard and his current salary.

Carroll's wife Bridgett and his two daughters look forward to his return home!



Call to report outages:

919.863.6499 or 800.743.3155

Regular Office Hours: M–F, 8 am—5 pm,

Telephone Hours: M–F, 7 am—9 pm,
863.6300 or 800.474.6300

Underground locating service
call N.C. One-Call Center, 811

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