

Heat wave raises questions about power reliability

Monday's power outage and a voluntary thermostat program implementation combine to create questions about the power grid.

Kansas City, MO, – June 14, 2022 – Late Monday, the excessive summer heat contributed to a blown transformer in Kansas City that left about 10,000 of Evergy's customers without power. At about the same time and not related to the power outage, the company initiated an energy savings event for customers who had enrolled in the voluntary thermostat program that helps Evergy manage high demand periods. While the program is completely voluntary, and those who participate can opt out at any time, the two events occurring at the same time resulted in rumors of rolling blackouts (rather than a power outage) and raised questions from customers about power reliability. On Tuesday, Evergy had some small outages in the Kansas City area. Most were a result of tree debris that likely was loosened in recent storms and today's wind has blown them into power lines causing outages.

Here's what customers should know about the various steps Evergy takes to maintain reliable power to meet its customers' needs, even during excessive heat.

Customer Demand Response Programs

Like many utilities, Evergy offers customers a voluntary program where customers receive a programmable thermostat from Evergy and agree to allow the company to temporarily adjust the thermostat settings to help manage periods of high demand. Customers are notified in advance when the company needs to use the program to manage available energy. Customers who voluntarily agree to participate are always in control of their thermostat and can opt out at any time. Customers who participate in the program report high satisfaction scores and increased energy efficiency. **Evergy doesn't make adjustments to thermostats of customers who haven't signed up for the voluntary program.**

Power Outages

The power grid has thousands of mechanical parts that can be affected by extreme weather, wildlife and normal wear and tear on the equipment. Excessive heat puts additional stress on these parts causing occasional equipment failures that cause power outages for customers. Frequently, Evergy reroutes power through other lines to restore service quickly while crews make repairs to the damaged equipment. However, during times of extremely high use, this option may not be available because the lines are already carrying as much power as they can. Monday's power outage in Kansas City, which impacted 10,000 customers, was caused by the failure of a transformer. The power remained off for an extended time for some customers because of the complexity of rerouting power due to already high demand. We were able to restore power to all customers last night.

Evergy has the needed electrical capacity to meet customers' needs this summer, even with heat forecasted to be above normal. While power outages may occur, the overall grid is healthy and able to meet customers' needs.

Evergy's Preparedness

Evergy's power plant fleet is ready to meet customers' needs as forecasters predict a hotter than normal summer. A diverse power supply including wind, nuclear, fossil fuels and solar, helps provide a reliable supply of electricity during times of high demand. Evergy performs seasonal maintenance work on its power plants during the mild weather of spring and fall to help ready them to meet customer needs during the hot summer months, when air conditioning creates high demand for electricity. In addition, forward-looking preparation and established contracts help provide for fuel availability at competitive prices. These preparedness steps give Evergy confidence that we can meet customer needs during the summer without taking emergency measures like controlled interruptions.

"Evergy is committed to maintaining reliable, affordable electricity. From the power plants that generate electricity to the lines and transformers that are key parts of the system, our teams are working to make sure electricity is available when our customers need it," said Chuck Caisley, senior vice president and chief customer officer.

By investing in power grid modernization and predictive maintenance programs, Evergy has been able to reduce the frequency and length of customer outages. Predictive maintenance can signal a piece of equipment needs to be replaced before it causes an outage. Sensors and special closures help pinpoint outage locations and isolate the area impacted allowing power to be restored faster.

Evergy is a member of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), which helps coordinate power generation and transmission access over parts of the Midwest. If high temperatures or other conditions are expected to drive energy demand higher than normal, the SPP sends members alerts so they can work together to meet increased needs. This may include a wide range of preparation from increasing staff to preparing plants designed for peak use to generate.

About Evergy, Inc.

Evergy, Inc. (NYSE: EVRG), serves 1.6 million customers in Kansas and Missouri. Evergy's mission is to empower a better future. Our focus remains on producing, transmitting and delivering reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy for the benefit of our stakeholders. Today, about half of Evergy's power comes from carbon-free sources, creating more reliable energy with less impact to the environment. We value innovation and adaptability to give our customers better ways to manage their energy use, to create a safe, diverse and inclusive workplace for our employees, and to add value for our investors. Headquartered in Kansas City, our employees are active members of the communities we serve.

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