



Tomahawk
Rural Electrification Association

**July 2020
Newsletter**



NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Based on member feedback from last year's questionnaire and what had become smoother working relations, the TREA Board negotiated and signed a two-year Distribution System Operator (DSO) agreement with EQUS. This DSO agreement was signed and became effective on May 1, 2020. At this time, we became aware that the Regulated Rate Option Provider Agreement (RRO) was also up for renewal, however a variety of things prevented negotiating both agreements at the same time. Negotiations for the RRO were postponed and occurred in May and June.

Over the course of negotiations for the second agreement (the RRO), TREA Board of Directors determined that negotiations with EQUS could not proceed. On advice of legal counsel, the TREA Board of Directors determined that certain risks posed to the Association could not be resolved and was advised to seek a new RRO provider. Unfortunately, an arrangement could not be reached between EQUS as TREA's DSO and a new RRO provider without significantly altering the DSO agreement reached on May 1, 2020. As a result, the Board of Directors has given notice to EQUS that it will no longer provide services to TREA effective January 3, 2021.

This notice period will enable the Board to complete the projected quoted work that is to be completed by EQUS upon our facilities – vegetation management, pole changes, etc. The current RRO will remain in default agreement until January 3, 2021. All Members that are currently on the Cooperative Rate Plan with EQUS have an expiry date of December 31, 2020. If you are currently on the RRO rate, you will be automatically switched over to the new RRO provider on January 3, 2021. To see your choice of retailers and their rates please go to www.ucahelps.alberta.ca or call 310-4822 (toll-free in Alberta).

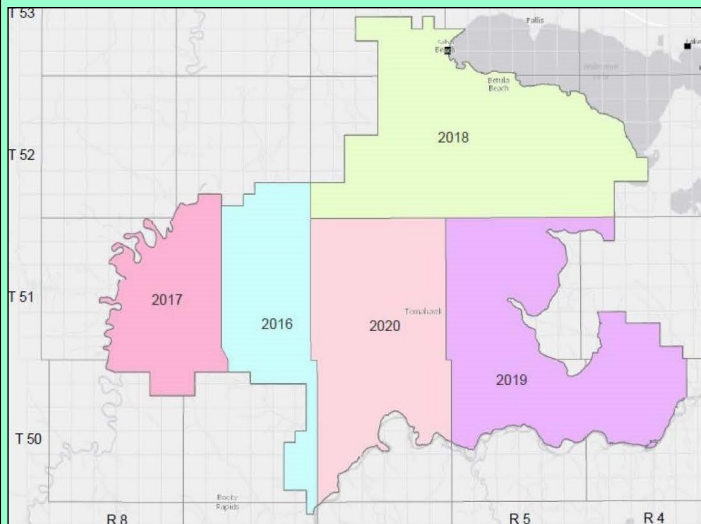
At this time the Tomahawk Board has NOT chosen a new DSO – we are currently in negotiations with two different potential DSO providers. We are weighing the advantages, disadvantages, costs and overall service to our members in our decision. Your electricity services should remain unaffected by these changes.

Due to the TREA / EQUS Confidentiality Agreement, the Board of Directors is limited to release details that it can give you about what has led to these changes. We wish EQUS well in their new building and with their new CEO following the retirement of Patricia Bourne. The Board of Directors hopes to be able to provide more information to members at the AGM when we receive confirmation from the Director of Rural Utilities that we can reschedule a date to meet with you.

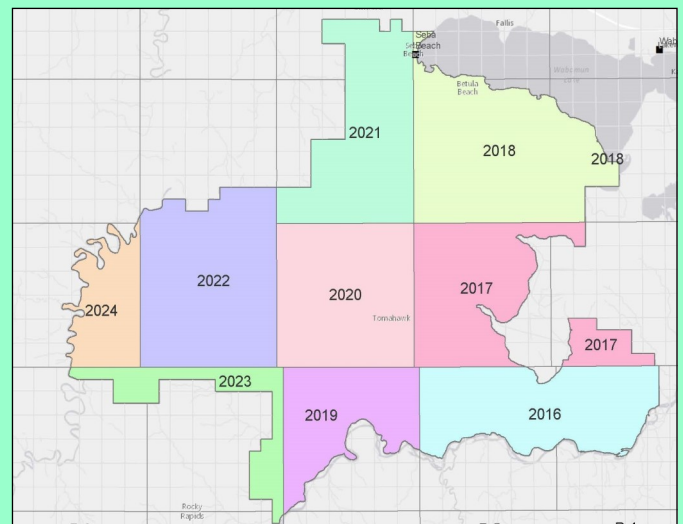
2020 Vegetation Management and Pole Change

EQUS' planned programs for TREA operate on a 5-year cycle, if this is to be effective the vegetation activity in our service area needs to achieve enough clearance to maintain the line for five years. The goal of these programs is to provide safe transmission and distribution services and to minimize disruptions caused by trees and other vegetation. The leading cause of electric power outages is tree contact with transmission lines. To maintain a safe electrical system, vegetation near power lines must be managed. If you live in the light pink area of the maps below you can expect vegetation management, pole changes and pole testing this year. Only certified utility tree trimmers are allowed to work on or around energized power lines, please do not attempt to do this on your own! If you are not located in the pink area but notice areas of concern, please call the office at 780-514-8732. Vegetation consents were completed in the fall of 2019 and vegetation management will begin mid-July and is expected to take up to two months to complete. There will be a total of 81 poles replaced this year, at the end of May 13 had been completed.

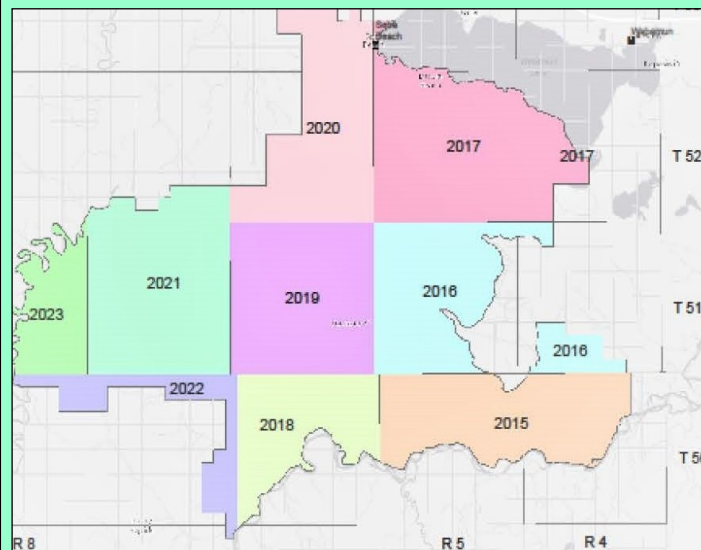
Vegetation Management 2020



Pole Change 2020



Pole Test 2020



TREA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We are working hard on alternative ways to hold our AGM while still adhering to the AHS Chief Medical Officer of Health's guidelines and restrictions for social distancing and ensuring compliance with the Rural Utilities Legislation. We will notify members as soon as details are confirmed and we are able to proceed with our AGM. The 2019 financials have been added to the website for your review at www.tomahawkrea.com. If you have any questions please contact Melanie at the office at 780-514-8732.

90-DAY UTILITY DEFERRAL INFORMATION

The following information is taken from the Utility Consumer Advocate webpage located at <https://www.ucahelps.alberta.ca/utility-payment-deferral.aspx>.

The Utility Payment Deferral Program ended on June 18, 2020. It provided temporary financial relief to Albertans who were experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19.

Repayment of the Deferred Utility Bills

Customers have until June 18, 2021, to repay the entirety of their deferred payments. Service providers have been instructed to discuss repayment plans with participating customers. If you participated in the program and have not heard from your utility provider, contact them to discuss repayment requirements and options.

The default repayment plan is 12 equal monthly installments. You may see the first installment on your next bill.

If you are concerned about this repayment schedule, contact your utility provider to discuss alternate arrangements. Contact our Mediation Officers for support in negotiating a repayment plan or in resolving any service or billing issue.

Can my utilities get disconnected for non-payment?

As long as you maintain your repayment plan, your utilities will not be disconnected. If you are unable to make your payment and do not notify your service provider, you may be at risk for disconnection. Contact your service provider to discuss options if you cannot manage your established payment plan.

Will I have to pay late payment fees?

Late fees may apply to any outstanding balance on your account if payment is not received in accordance with the repayment plan that is established between you and your provider. Complete repayment of all deferred natural gas or electricity charges incurred during the program must be made by June 18, **2021** unless you have made alternate arrangements with your utility provider.

Is there financial assistance if I can't make my payments?

If you are experiencing financial difficulties and find it hard to make payments on your deferred bills, a list of agencies who can help is available on our Financial Assistance page.

What telephone number do I call to make a payment arrangement?

Contact your utility provider directly to discuss payment arrangements. You can find their contact information on your utility bill or you can visit our Retailers & Distributors page.

STORM SEASON

Summer means warmer weather, but it can also bring a variety of harsh weather conditions, sometimes leading to severe storms. Taking just a few preventative measures now can save you from dealing with substantial damage later.

Here are a few tips to prepare for the stormy season ahead:

CLEAR FALLEN BRANCHES AND LIMBS

Flying branches are some of the most common and expensive causes of damage during storm season. During a storm, tree limbs can break from the tree and can cause damage to a home's exterior and puncture windows. Heavy rain can also cause trees with shallow root systems to pull out of the ground.

SECURE FENCES

Ensure that your fences are properly secured so as to help prevent them from being lifted up and thrown against the house by heavy winds.

CHECK THE ROOF

Inspect your roof and make sure none of the shingles or tiles are damaged or missing. Check for leaks so wind-driven rain won't enter your house. Inspect your roof for missing shingles and possible leaks and do any repair work if necessary. It's also a good idea to inspect and reinforce any loose siding, which can quickly rip off during high winds.

CONSIDER A GENERATOR

Keeping the electricity running during a power outage can also help protect your home -- by powering your alarm system, sump pump and air conditioning.

SECURE FURNITURE

Heavy winds can cause items like patio furniture and other large and/or heavy items to damage the exterior of your home. It's a good idea to anchor outdoor furniture or bring it indoors before a storm hits.

CHECK GUTTERS

Clear your gutters of debris and make sure they are tightly attached to your house. Help prevent damage inside your house by having downspouts drain away from your home to prevent basement flooding.

PREPARE A DISASTER KIT

Put together an emergency kit that can help if you lose electricity during a storm. It should consist of a battery-operated radio and extra batteries, flashlights, some extra cash in case ATMs stop working temporarily, a phone charger, a three-day supply of food and water for everyone in your house, a first-aid kit and a seven-day supply of medications.

Note to All Members

All members are free to purchase electricity services through TREA's regulated rate tariff or from a retailer of their choice. The delivery of electricity to you is not affected by your choice. If you change who you purchase electricity services from, you will continue receiving electricity from TREA. For a current list of retailers you may choose from, visit <http://>