

Evergy crews restore power in mountainous rural areas after Hurricane Helene hits Kentucky

Crews are repelling down steep hills to make repairs

Kansas City, MO – September 30, 2024 – Evergy crews are on their second day of working to restore power in southeast Kentucky, where Hurricane Helene knocked down power lines, toppled trees, and resulted in power outages to most of the area.

Crews have been on the ground in Kentucky since late afternoon Saturday, assisting host utility American Electric Power (AEP) Kentucky as they restore power to more than 40,000 customers. Evergy crews are split into two groups – one is two hours south of Lexington in Hazard, and the other is two hours east of Lexington in Ashland.

Corey Miller, Evergy’s director of regional operations, said that while the crews have worked hurricane restoration before, the mountainous terrain in Kentucky is creating new challenges. “In the Midwest, everything is relatively flat. We don’t have this kind of terrain,” he said. “We have guys who have had to repel using ropes to get down to the bottom of ravine to reach a downed conductor. Then they have to use the ropes to get themselves back out of there and pull themselves back up. They also have to climb the mountains to get to some of these points, have to drag poles with ropes and whatever they can to get the equipment up there, setting poles by hand.”

Evergy crews will work 16-hour days, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., then rest for eight hours before heading back out to continue restoration. “It’s important our crews get their rest and eat good healthy meals,” said Miller. “Working a 16-hour day is very long and demanding of them, and they’re certainly putting forth a great effort.”

Since Saturday, September 28, Evergy has released more than 300 linemen and support staff to assist with the hurricane restoration effort. That includes 120 employees and an additional 200 contractors who work exclusively with Evergy.

Evergy is a member of the Midwest Mutual Assistance Group, which enables utilities to call on fellow utility members to help with power restoration after a significant event such as a severe storm. As the host utility, AEP pays for assistance from other utilities and contractors who help restore power. AEP crews helped Evergy with restoration during previous storms this year.

Despite the busy storm season in Evergy’s service territory, Miller said Evergy crews are proud to help. “Our guys have put a lot of miles on their trucks. They were excited to get here, their spirits are up, and things are going very well. They’re working their tails off and customers in this rural area are extremely happy to see us.”

Once work is complete in Kentucky, Evergy crews will then likely head to Virginia where they will continue restoration to the more than two million customers still without power because of Helene.

Additional assets available online:  Photos (6)

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