# Be prepared for outages

Although Verendrye Electric Cooperative works hard to limit power outages, they do occur and there are steps you should take to prepare your home or business. Now is a good time to think about preparing for outages because spring storms that produce heavy snow, ice and winds can cause outages.

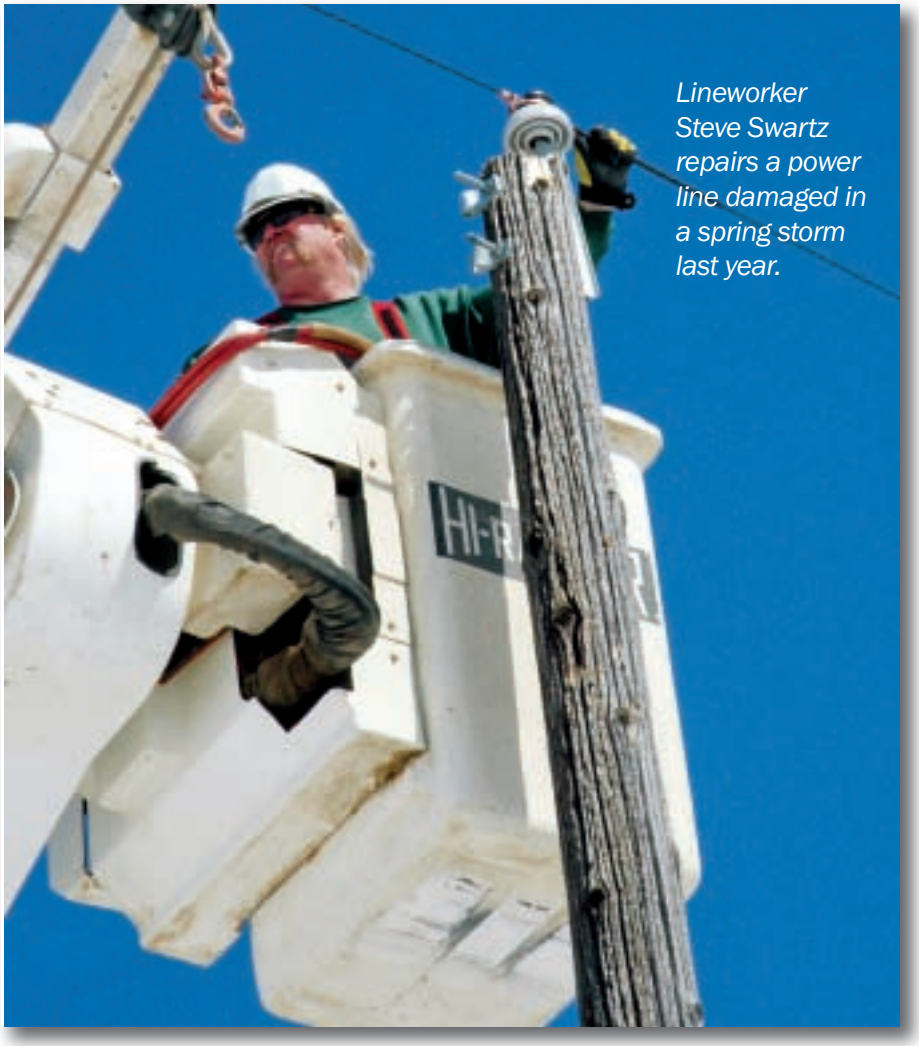
**Be prepared with a generator**

If you are going to use a generator for temporary power, you need to know how to run it safely, and what size will be required for your home or business. If the generator is going to be wired directly into your main panel, you must first have a double-throw switch installed. A double-throw switch prevents the generator from feeding electricity back through the power lines. If power backfeeds through the lines, transformers will step up the power and put high voltage on lines that lineworkers might be repairing. Without a double-throw switch, you could injure or kill a lineworker. Contact Verendrye for more information on installing a double-throw switch.

Before purchasing a generator, you should figure out what appliances you plan on running with it and determine the wattage of the appliances. Overloading a generator can cause damage to it or the appliances.

If you already have a generator, it should be properly maintained and you should start it once in awhile to make sure it will work when you need it during an outage. Other important tips to remember include making sure the generator is properly grounded, keeping the generator dry and never operating a generator in an enclosed space.

The following at right will give you a general idea of what size you will need.

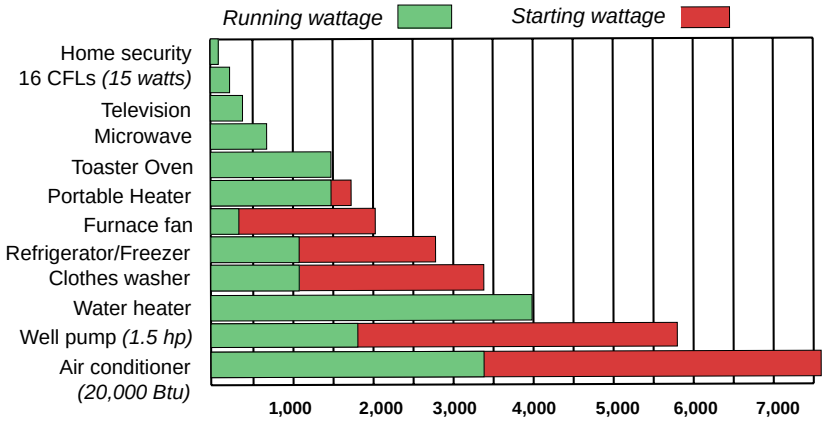


*Lineworker Steve Swartz repairs a power line damaged in a spring storm last year.*

## The Right **Portable Generator** for the Job

Before purchasing or operating a portable generator, make a list of the appliances you will need to run at the same time. Find both starting and running wattage requirements on appliance nameplates or in owner's manuals; add them up to determine the total wattage your generator should handle.

*Sample running wattages, as compared to spiked starting wattages:*




*Sources:*
*North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*