

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT:

Why it matters to you

Trimming trees is one of the most expensive things we do at Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative. This may leave you wondering: If trimming trees is so expensive, then why do it?

There are three reasons we trim trees: safety, reliability and to save our members money.

The first two reasons seem simple enough. Trees near power lines can pose a safety threat to people and pets on the ground. When trees get too close to power lines, outages are sure to come.

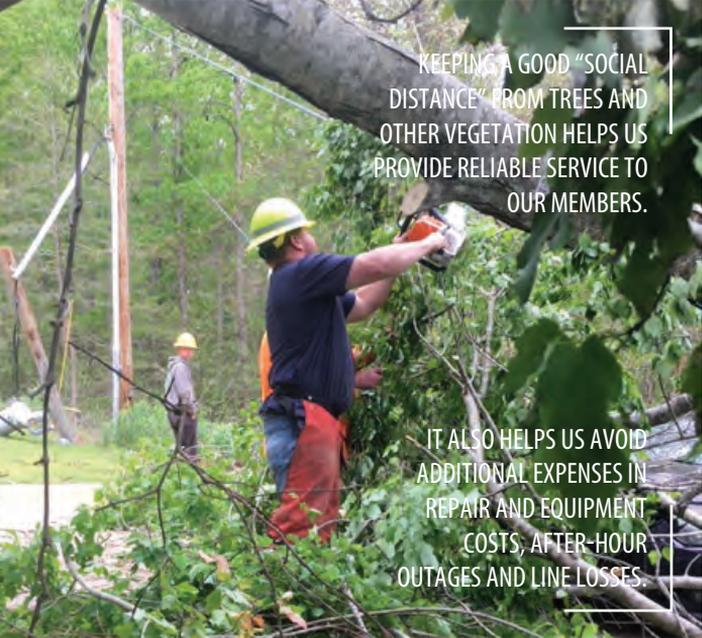
But the third reason — saving money — is a little more complicated. Even though it is one of our bigger expenses, it is actually cheaper to trim trees than not. Here's why.

Trees and other vegetation growing near power lines can create serious damage to the distribution system. A tree falling into a power line can not only break the wire, but it also frequently breaks the pole as well. Replacing a pole can cost thousands of dollars. If the pole has a transformer, security light or expensive monitoring equipment on it, the cost could be even higher.

Another factor to consider is the efficient use of our crews. MLEC's line crews work very hard for about eight to 10 hours each weekday. Statistically, tree damage

is far more likely to occur when MLEC crews are not "on the clock," making planned tree trimming far less expensive than making emergency, after-hour repairs.

The final reason that trimming trees saves money is something called line-loss. If you have ever driven along the road where there is poorly maintained right of way (hopefully not on our system), you probably saw the tips of trees burned by power lines. Not only is this a serious



KEEPING A GOOD "SOCIAL DISTANCE" FROM TREES AND OTHER VEGETATION HELPS US PROVIDE RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

IT ALSO HELPS US AVOID ADDITIONAL EXPENSES IN REPAIR AND EQUIPMENT COSTS, AFTER-HOUR OUTAGES AND LINE LOSSES.

safety hazard, it is also an indication of power flowing out of the lines and into the surrounding trees. This "leakage" is called line-loss, and it can add up to serious money for the cooperative. We buy energy from the Tennessee Valley Authority to sell to our members, and losing power during distribution is a very inefficient way to operate the electric system.

To learn more about MLEC's vegetation management program, visit www.mlec.com or email us at power@mlec.com.