

August 2022

PLUGGED IN WITH . . .

Panhandle Rural Electric Membership Association

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Vole Damage

These small, burrowing animals are best known for the harm they cause to turf and landscaping. Vole tunnels are most visible as snow begins to melt in spring. Over the winter, the pests live underground and create runways on the surface of yards to connect their burrow entrances.



Property owners with this pest issue may find vole holes in the lawn and disorderly pathways of grass grazed down to the ground. The rodents also leave behind droppings, eat garden crops and strip the bark from trees and shrubs.

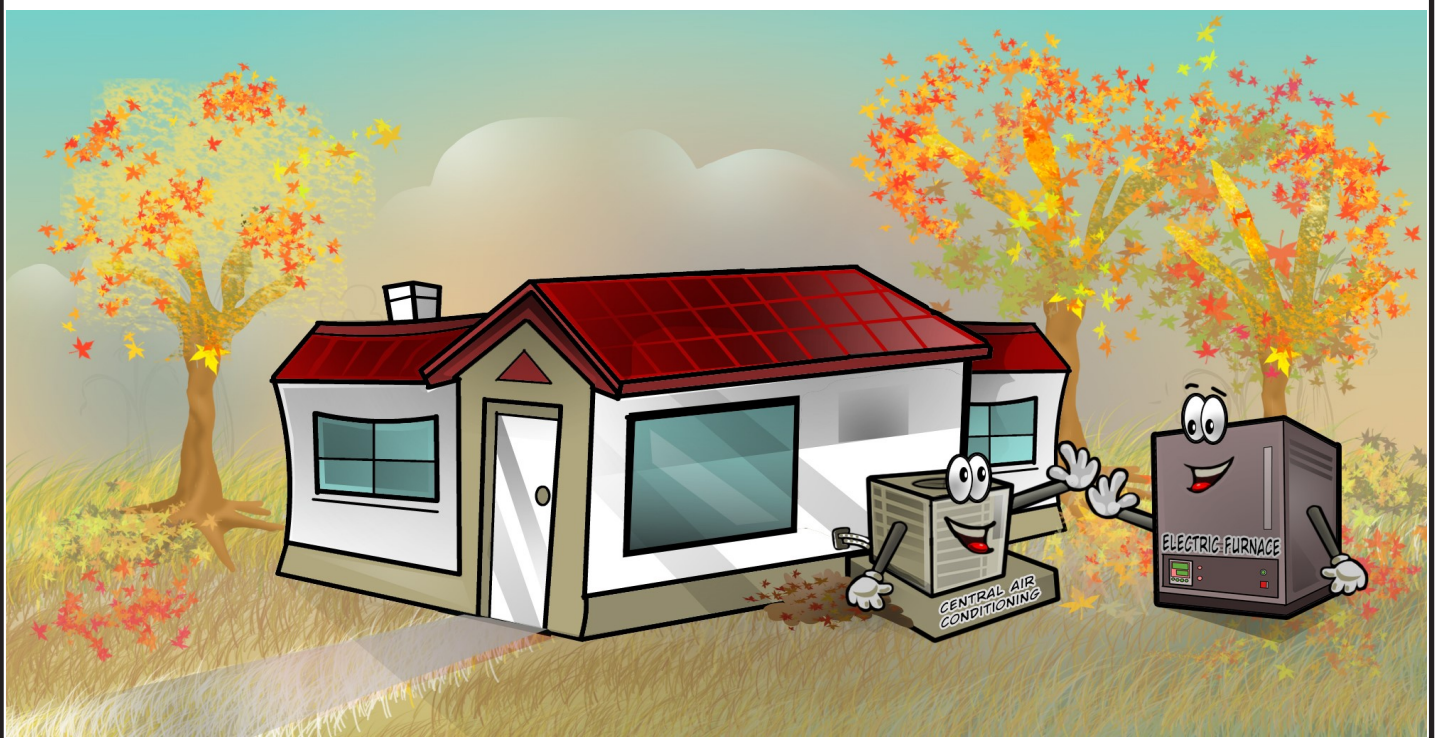
However, it's not just property owners that have to deal with these little varmints, the crews at PREMA do as well. Just recently we received a call from a customer regarding a down pole during a storm. With closer review, one damaged pole led to eleven damaged poles due to these little critters. The voles eat holes in the poles at the groundline then burrow inside while continuing to eat the pole from the inside out. You would never know of the issue because it's at ground level, unless you were to dig around or as mentioned in this case a storm blowing through revealing the damage. Sneaky little devils! (see below at some of the damaged poles)



The Change of Seasons Is Upon Us

Is it OK to switch between a/c, heat during fall? Warm late summer and early fall days can turn chilly once the sun goes down—enough that you might be tempted to run your air conditioning during the day and then turn on the heat at night. If it's hot enough during daylight hours for the a/c and cool enough overnight for the heat, there's really no harm in using both on the same day. It's a good idea to ease one system off before switching on the other, however. Here are a few tips for a good transition:

- Air conditioning systems run in cycles. Once the house reaches the temperature you have set on your thermostat, it will cycle off. You'll hear it when that happens. Before you turn your a/c off, listen for it to complete its cycle. Short-cycling can cause the a/c compressor to lock up.
- Wait five minutes after you turn the a/c off before you switch on the heat. This grace period will give the refrigerant in the a/c a chance to normalize, and that could prevent any circuits from tripping if the transition to the heater is too abrupt.
- Avoid drastic thermostat changes. Once the a/c is off, raise the temperature just a few degrees and then wait for the heat to rise to that temperature before raising it anymore. This prevents your heating system from overworking, which is inefficient.



FARM SAFETY

FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Take these steps to help keep you and everyone on your farm safe during a busy harvest.

Meet Daily

Have morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day ahead and to discuss potential electrical hazards. Review power line locations, clearance requirements and the proper positioning of extensions for transporting.

Train Others

Train anyone working on your farm, including seasonal workers and family members, on potential electrical hazards.

Use a Spotter

Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines or poles. Always keep equipment and extensions at least 10 feet from power lines.

If your equipment makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, **stay in the cab, call 9-1-1 and warn others to stay away.**



Safe
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Notes From Load Management

Since 2001, PREMA has offered some type of Load Management program. The current strategy is to control load based on PREMA's monthly kW peak demand (May – September). By doing so, PREMA saves money on the wholesale power bill and this savings is then passed back to participants in Load Management program.

The peak demand fluctuates each month. We use history to determine when to initiate control. We call this the “*control targets*”. The control target is calculated by using a six-year average of past kW peaks. The target for May occurred on May 11 and we controlled eleven days in May. In June, the peak did not reach control target until June 23, and we only controlled five days in June. The number of control days for May was above the average and the number for June was below average. The Load Management savings for May and June was above budget.

Load Management questions can be answered by calling Tim Sherlock at 308-762-1311. Load Control status can also be checked at www.prema.coop under the *Irrigation* tab.



Underground locate request are placed by calling 811 or 800-331-5666

Dial 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local On Call Center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig, what type of work you will be doing and your affected local utilities companies will be notified about your intent to dig. In a few days, they'll send a locator to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below and be able to dig safely. Remember, always call 811 before you start any digging project! You'll avoid injury, expense, embarrassment and a very inconvenient day in the dark.



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