Press Release

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Julie Estey, Director of External Affairs
Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.
julie.estey@mea.coop
(907) 355.4447

MEA ready to assist members impacted by McKinley Wildfire

Palmer, AK – Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) is working with members impacted by the McKinley wildfire to help them restore power to their property. Many of MEA’s primary and secondary lines servicing individual homes were damaged or destroyed in the blaze. MEA crews have been working with fire officials in their restoration efforts, including clearing hazardous trees and repairing damaged lines and equipment. According to the borough, at least 51 homes, 3 commercial buildings, and 84 outbuilding structures were lost in the fire. Those numbers may increase as property assessments are completed by borough officials in the area in the coming weeks.

MEA will prioritize members impacted by the fire in our construction work order process. Members that will need repair work or reconstruction of their service will need to go through MEA’s standard engineering inspection process and will be assigned to line crews for installation before power can be restored. Once a work order has been submitted, members needing full reconstruction services should expect up to a 3-5 week wait time before their power is restored and up to two weeks for temporary service requests.

“As members return to their property and assess the damage, they will rely on MEA to help restore power as quickly as possible,” said Julie Estey, Director of External Affairs. “Our team is ready to help members. We urge those impacted by the McKinley fire to contact us as soon as possible to begin the process.”

MEA will cover all costs of infrastructure replacement up to the member’s meter base and typical temporary service and reconnection fees will not be charged. Members who would like to relocate their service to a different location on their property will be subject to standard relocation charges. Members will have until August 26, 2020, one year from the date members were cleared to return to their homes by fire officials, to open a McKinley Fire-related work order for reconnection. Those that are ready to begin a work order to restore service can call an MEA Member Service Representative at 907-761-9300. For additional questions about this process, members can contact Member Relations Specialist Michelle Bos at 907-761-9243.

MEA line and clearing crews have been working around the clock to complete repairs to the system and clear any possible danger trees from the fire area. There are still approximately 15 to 20 meters without power as crews assess and repair each individual line prior to
power restoration. Of the 186 power poles located within the fire area, 22 have required replacement, along with all associated wire and devices.

Members and the general public are welcome to visit www.mea.coop/mckinleyfire for daily updates and power restoration information.

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Matanuska Electric Association, Inc., Alaska’s oldest existing and second-largest electric cooperative, is owned and operated by its over 51,000 members. MEA’s service area covers nearly 4,500 miles of power lines in Southcentral Alaska.