

Behind the Grid: IMU's Emergency Response



Storm Response for May 16

At approximately 7:00 pm on Saturday May 16th we lost power out of our Downtown Plant Substation switchgear. The initial outage included approximately 1,030 customers. We discovered that we had major damage to our 4 kV switchgear that was not repairable. Our crews began the process of switching these feeders over to tie them into our West Iowa Substation feeders. This took some time to get everything moved around to temporarily restore power. Around midnight, all of our customers' power had been restored. Our crews then began to install temporary infrastructure to be able to split some of our feeder loads up because the West Iowa Substation feeders wouldn't be able to handle all of the additional load from the Downtown Plant Substation. This was due to the temperatures being high which causes extra loading on these feeders. At 1:00 pm on Sunday May 17th, we had to take another outage in order to move some of the load off the West Iowa Substation over to the temporary feed at the Downtown Plant Substation.

IMU's Local Heroes Jump Into Action

We had eight employees respond to the initial outage and later swapped out three linemen due to the length of the outage. The crew's working conditions were difficult due to all the rain and lightning. Our Customer Service Center would post updates to our Facebook page when new information was available. We understand that our customers would like to have specific timelines on when power will be restored during an outage. Unfortunately, there are a lot of variables that go into restoring power like the weather, extent of the damage, getting the materials needed to make the repairs and making sure our employees are able to work safely. IMU wants to restore the power to our customers just as much as our customers want their back power on.

IMU's Long-Term Restoration Strategy

We are continuing to work on temporary solutions due to the material that it will take for a permanent solution has a long lead time. Our engineers have worked with us evaluating our options. The replacement switchgear equipment has been ordered. There is some prep work that will take place before then to try and speed up the process of getting everything back to normal. During these processes we will need to have some scheduled outages. Notices of these planned outages will be relayed through our Facebook account.





Employee Feature

Eric Schreier
IMU Electric Crew Chief



How long have you been with IMU?

December of 2015

Can you walk us through what happens when a major storm warning or outage happens? What is your immediate role?

When a lineman sees a storm warning in their area, they get antsy. Our job is to keep the lights on, so when the power goes out, we respond. The first thing we do is assess the situation to determine damage location and severity. Safety and efficiency are always top priority.

What is the most memorable or challenging storm response you've been a part of?

One of the most memorable was losing the switchgear room at the downtown plant facility. This is worst case scenario. The equipment is old and cannot find replacements. We have been working tirelessly to find solutions to remedy this current situation.

What is something about storm restoration work that the public might find surprising?

Something the public may not know, in some instances, we work hours after the power is back on to insure reliability.

What is the number one thing customers can do during a severe weather event to help keep themselves and your field crews safe?

Keep your distance from an event, most of the time a line is down, doesn't mean that it's dead, also, communicate to the utility if you see something noteworthy.

Sewer Reduction Meters

Save money on your sewer bill with a temporary or permanent meter!

Temporary meters: These are available upon request from IMU and hook up directly to your outdoor water line. They track how much water you use for large events, like filling a pool, and that amount is then deducted from your sewage bill since it doesn't enter the sewer system.

Permanent irrigation meters: Thinking about regularly watering a big garden? Consider installing one of these inside your home. They measure all your outdoor water use so you only pay for what goes down the drain.

Ready to save? Call the IMU CSR office at 515-961-9444 Option 2 to check on meter availability.

Cost of Sewer
Reduction Meter: **\$40**
for 2 weeks

Cost of
Water Only
Meter: **\$650**
+ \$50 Installation Fee
Cost could vary per size of water meter



CONTACT IMU

210 West 2nd Ave.
Indianola, IA 50125
(515) 961-9444
Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

IMU RESOURCES

Online bill pay: my.imufiber.com/ebill/login
Report outage: indianola.com/outages
IMU board meetings: youtube.com/@indianolamunicipalutilities
Work for IMU: indianola.com/careers