



# Colby linemen help out Wichita

Nathan Harter, (above, left) line foreman at Colby, and Ben Jaeger and Mason Newell, journeyman linemen from Colby, were three of the linemen Midwest Energy sent to Wichita to help restore power to 22,000 homes there. Shane Wenter (below), another line foreman from Colby, climbed a pole to reconnect lines.



Wichita was slammed with nearly 90 mph winds June 27, snapping tree limbs and bringing down hundreds of power lines, cutting power to more than 22,000 Westar Energy customers, and causing one of the largest outages in Westar's history.

The next day, when Westar put out a call to Kansas utilities for assistance, Midwest Energy sent 22 linemen and 15 trucks from the Colby, Great Bend, Hays, and Lyons areas, to help get power restored.

"We had 18 of our own poles come down in the same storm in Barton County, but we were happy to be able to help out in Wichita," said Dale Giebler, Operations Project Manager for Midwest in Hays.

The Midwest crews worked 16 to 20 hours, or more, from June 28 through July 1, in different areas of Wichita and Haysville. Most of their work was done overnight, climbing poles in alleys and confined areas where using buckets was impractical.

"There was a lot of tree damage and lines down," said Nathan Harter, line foreman from Colby, who led one of the six crews. "We spent most of our time climbing poles and connecting the wires back in."

Harter said his crew worked 18-hour shifts, but that he found the work satisfying.

"It's always kind of nice to go down and help out," Harter said.

Westar reported power restored to most all its customers on the afternoon of July 1, and Midwest crews returned home on July 2.



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