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News Release

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UPDATE: AUB WORK ON DOWNTOWNPOWER SYSTEM; OUTAGE NOW PLANNED FOR AUGUST 3

ATHENS, Tenn. – After last week’s schedule was upset by other system emergencies, Athens Utilities Board (AUB) has rescheduled the start of upgrading portions of the downtown power distribution system.

The first phase of the work will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 3, depending on weather conditions and system operations. AUB spokesman Wayne Scarbrough said that twelve to sixteen customer accounts will be without power for approximately three hours that evening as crews work to upgrade lines.

“The work had originally been set for last Wednesday, but trouble calls from other parts of the system kept crews busy past midnight that night,” Scarbrough said.

Once again, AUB is working to personally contact each affected account holder. Scarbrough said that he hopes customers will understand the nature of the work and the reason AUB is making the personal contacts.

“A couple of customers were very upset when we called last week to talk about the planned outage because they had business plans for that evening. While I understand the frustration, I would hope that everyone will understand that the very reason for the notification calls is two-way communication. When we call about a planned outage, we’re calling to discuss all aspects and one aspect is the impact on a customer’s business that we may not be aware of,” Scarbrough said.

Crews will start the work at 7 p.m. instead of waiting until later in the night because the initial portions of the job involve “hot work” with energized lines. “We need to start when we still have some daylight to enhance safety for the crews who will be working the lines hot,” he explained.

Portions of the downtown area currently are served by a four-kilovolt (KV) distribution system supported by a small, aging four-KV substation downtown near the old jail, Scarbrough said. “We are switching these customers over to the 13-KV system served by our South Athens substation, located on Rocky Mount Road. It is a matter of enhanced reliability and better service for the downtown area,” he said.

This is the first phase of the downtown transfer from four to 13-KV distribution, Scarbrough said. Additional downtown areas will be addressed in the coming weeks.

“We will do our best to schedule this work to make the least impact on customers while still ensuring worker safety. Each phase will undoubtedly involve some inconvenience for short periods of time, but in the end the downtown area will be better served.”

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