

Our dedicated linemen are doing all they can to restore power

Throughout the massive effort to restore power after crippling ice storms snapped trees and utility poles, knocking out power to more than 30,000 Jackson Energy members, Jackson Energy is so grateful to our membership for their continued encouragement, support and patience. We recognize that for those still without power, it is a frustrating situation. We were formed to bring power to the last mile and when storms, like this recent ice storm, interrupt our ability to do so, we share in your frustration and are committed to doing whatever is needed to expedite power restoration.

This ice storm is a natural disaster. The damage to much of the Jackson Energy system is so extensive that this is not simply

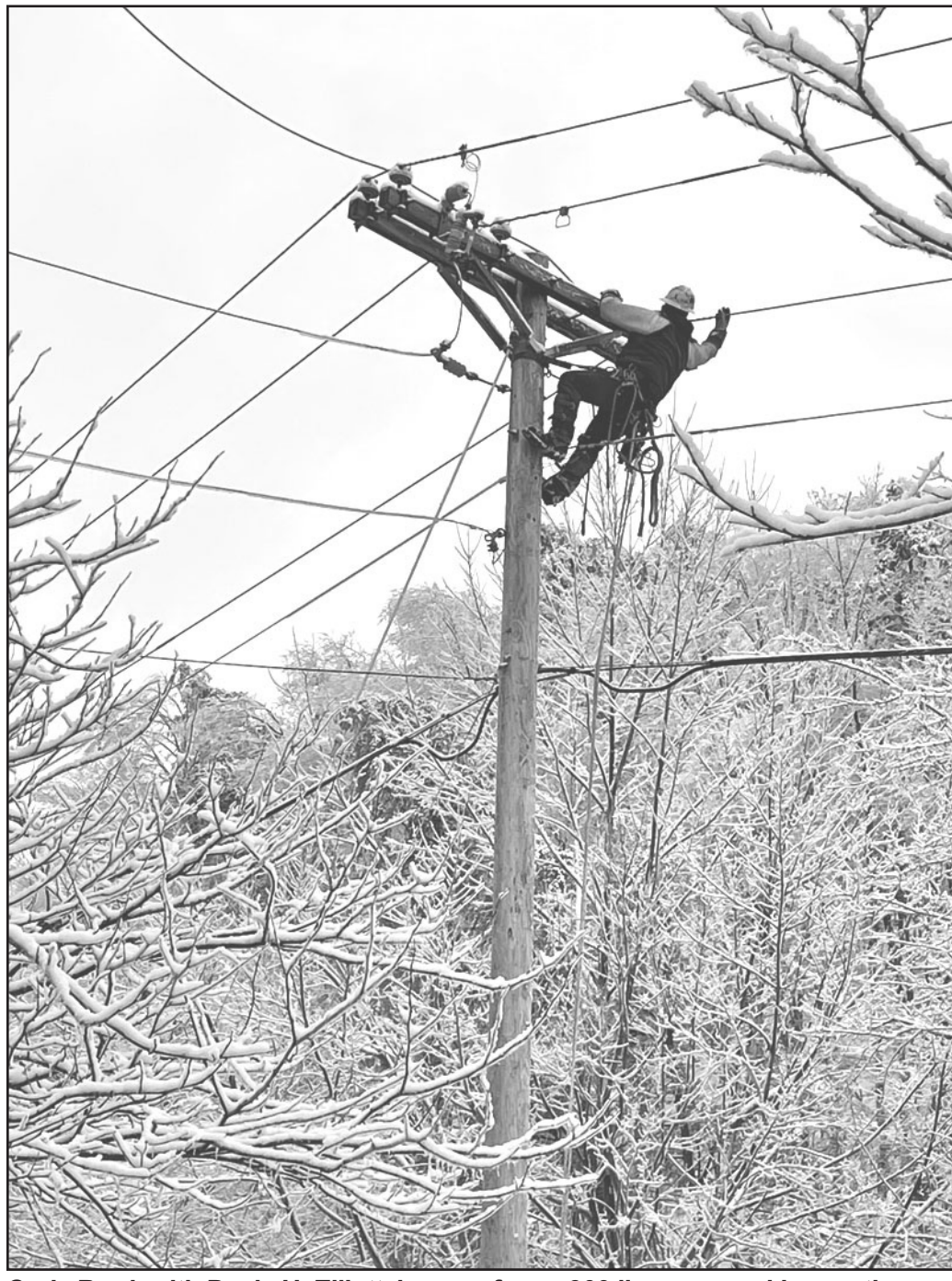
a repair job; it requires a significant rebuild of the co-op infrastructure. Unfortunately, that takes time. On an ideal day without any weather issues, safely replacing a utility pole is about a four-hour job. When you compound that task with tree debris, treacherous roads, icy conditions as well as falling ice and trees, these jobs become that much more difficult.

Because of the immense scale of the damage, Jackson Energy has aggressively increased manpower to record levels. More than 300 field personnel are working to restore power, including mutual aid crews from multiple electric cooperatives from Kentucky, Georgia and Alabama. These crews are working long hours in terrible conditions and share Jack-

son Energy's mission to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. As of Monday morning, power has been restored to all but 3,500 Jackson Energy members. Among those still without power are Jackson Energy linemen who are working long, extended hours to restore power.

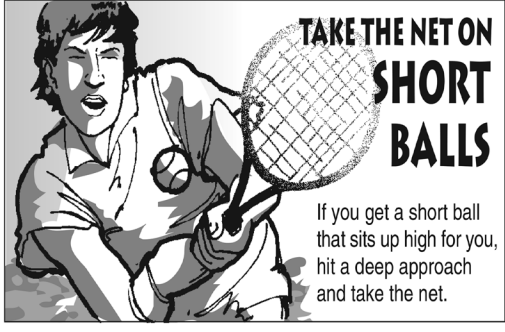
"At Jackson Energy, the safety of our members and employees is our number one priority. We appreciate all of our crews continuing to work safely, yet diligently, to restore service to our members," said Carol Wright, President & CEO.

If you are experiencing a new power outage, members are encouraged to call the automated phone system at 800-262-7480 or report the outage through the SmartHub app.



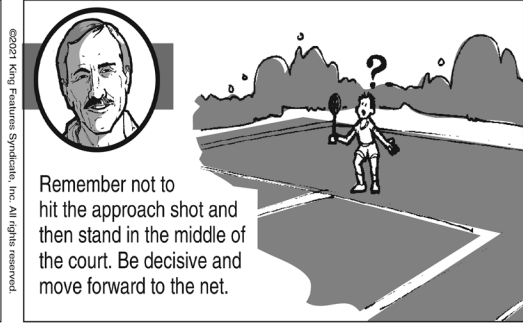
Cody Byrd, with Davis H. Elliott, is one of over 300 linemen working on the restoration effort to restore power to Jackson Energy members devastated by last week's winter storms. (Jackson Energy photo)

STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS



TAKE THE NET ON SHORT BALLS

If you get a short ball that sits up high for you, hit a deep approach and take the net.



Pandemic is taking toll on mental health of youth and teens

By BRANDON PORTER, Kentucky Today

As COVID infection rates begin to slowly decline, a recent study reveals the number of mental health-related medical visits for children is rising.

A CDC report released in late November shows that emergency department visits for children aged 5-11 were up by 24%, and for children 12-17 were up by 31% from the previous year.

"I am not surprised at all by these statistics. Many school-aged children were already mentally and emotionally 'limping in' to the pandemic," said Deana Caldwell, a school psychologist and behavioral specialist with the Estill County school system. "The latest data from the CDC says that 1 in 6 American school-aged children have a mental health disorder that severely impacts their ability to function. That doesn't count the young people who have anxiety or depression who don't have access to see a physician."

Caldwell says the pandemic showed that students' coping skills weren't as strong as assumed. "So, when the pandemic hit and we all went into quarantine,

the social isolation, lack of routine and family-specific anxieties have naturally added to the stress of already having a mental health condition. Further, for those children without a diagnosed mental health condition, who were developing in mentally typical ways, all the above stressors have brought a realization that life really can change on a dime and not everything always works out perfectly," she said.

Matt Flanagan, children and student ministry consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, says the study confirms what was already suspected. "The statistics from the CDC give evidence of what many church leaders see anecdotally - more children and students are experiencing increased levels of stress and anxiety during the pandemic," he said.

Caldwell and Flanagan agree that loss of community plays a significant role in the upswing of mental health issues in children.

"Children and students have been separated from their friends, sports teams, activities, extended family, teachers, coaches and much more," Flanagan said. "For adults with decades

of life experience, we have the perspective to see this pandemic as temporary. Yet for a 10-year-old child, this pandemic has continued for nearly 10% of their life and a much higher percentage of their memory."

"As Christ-followers, we know that God created us to be in community with others. A lot of our normal social networks have been rocked, changed and haven't looked like they have in the past," Caldwell said. "Children and youth don't have the brain development or life experience yet to be able to use perspective. Many cannot even verbalize that what they really need is close, one-on-one interaction with their peers and loved ones because they just know they feel bad or depressed."

Caldwell says parents and guardians can utilize these practical helps as they care for their children with the following tips:

- Establish and maintain routines as much as possible.
- Model coping skills for children.
- Show extra patience.
- Be mindful of stress and anxiety that is directed toward children.
- Be aware of social interaction. Online interaction is



The mental health of children has risen during the pandemic, statistics reveal. (Adobe Stock photo)

helpful, but safe in-person interaction with peers and loved ones is important when possible.

- Ask them if they would like to talk about how they are feeling or dealing with the current situation.
- Be intentional to get outdoors and exercise regularly.

Flanagan says Christian parents should intentionally speak of how their faith impacts the ways they are persevering in the crisis and pray with their children. "As Christian parents, we need to be reminded that our God is mighty and sufficient to work in our every need. We need to continue to point our children to Christ in the midst of the current circumstances and remind

them that He is our hope," he said.

Parents should watch for signs of struggle, according to Caldwell. She says when children mention harming themselves or others, parents should take the comments seriously.

An inability or unusual unwillingness to complete routine tasks are potential signs of trouble. "If they aren't functioning normally, such as not bathing regularly, eating too much or not eating at all, suddenly stopping seeing or talking to friends, withdrawal from the family that is more than normal, or grades significantly drop and homework is not being completed," Caldwell said.

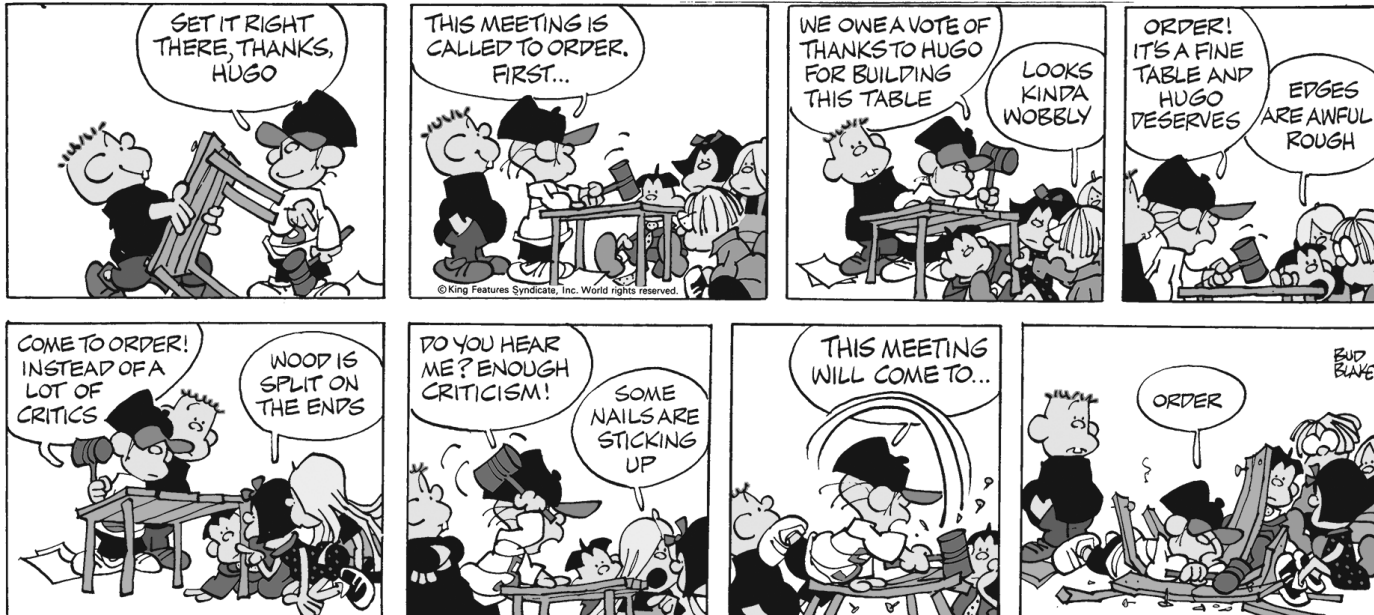
Flanagan encourages parents and guardians to

reach for help when they feel unequipped to help their child. "In the same way we reach out to others for medical help or music lessons, we should do the same with certain mental health struggles," he said.

There is a silver lining to the mental-health findings. "This research shows parents and guardians are better equipped than in previous years to recognize the signs of severe mental and emotional distress, and they are asking for help," Caldwell said.

If you or anyone else you know are having thoughts of suicide, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or text "hello" to 741741.

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

GRIN AND BEAR IT



"The employment figures have been seasonably adjusted to allow for the firing of football coaches."