



circuit breaker A switch that opens an electric circuit when a short occurs or the system otherwise experiences abnormal stress.

CT (combustion turbine). Type of engine used to drive a generator. A gas CT is a combustion turbine fueled by natural gas. CT also stands for current transformer. This is used in the substations for metering and amp measurements.

crossarm A wooden support attached to a pole that holds wire and insulators.

cutout A transformer or line fuse holder so named because when the fuse blows, power goes out.

demand. The electrical power required for a given load at a given instant or averaged over any designated period of time.

distribution system. Most rural electric systems are distribution cooperatives; that is, organizations that purchase their power at wholesale and deliver it at cost to members.

fuse A protective device for electric circuits containing a wire designed to melt and open the circuit under abnormally high electric loads or fault condition.

insulators Devices that support electric wires and prevent an undesired flow of electricity; typically made of glass or porcelain, although fiberglass and polymer versions are coming into favor.

load shed. Is what electric utilities do when there is a huge demand for electricity that exceeds the generation available. The alternative is to have a brown-out where the voltage is reduced.

loop feeder. An electric distribution system that allows consumers to receive electricity from more than one direction, providing a backup power feed in case of an outage.

net metering An incentive where owners of small renewable energy systems receive retail credit for at least a portion of the electricity they generate. In its pure form, a consumer's electric meter will spin backwards whenever he/she uses less power than the renewable energy system produces, effectively banking excess electricity production for future credit.

outage Interruption of service to an electric consumer because of malfunctioning power plants, transmission lines, substations, or distribution equipment.

peak load The amount of electric power required by a consumer or a utility system during times when electric consumption reaches its highest point; measured in kilowatts or megawatts.

load factor The ratio of average demand to peak demand; a measure of efficiency that indicates whether a utility system's electrical use over a period of time remains reasonably stable or if it exhibits 64 extreme peaks and valleys. A high load factor usually results in a lower average price per kilowatt-hour than a low load factor.

single phase. Denotes an electric distribution line with one conductor and one neutral line.

substations. A transformer facility which converts transmission level voltage to distribution level of voltage. Which serves the customers.

three phase. Denotes an electric distribution line with three conducting and one neutral line.

utility plant. The poles, lines, meters, transformers, etc. that a utility owns to provide electric service.

wheeling. Delivering large amounts electricity from a generating plant to a distribution system across another utility's transmission lines.