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## Lindon company wants to help prepare residents for potential summer blackouts

4-5 minutes



Courtesy Humless

This undated photo shows a Humless system installed in a home.

With an elevated risk of energy shortfalls in Utah this summer, one Utah County business is working to make in-home energy storage systems more accessible.

According to the 2022 Summer Reliability Assessment released by

the North American Electric Reliability Corp., NERC predicts that there is a 1-in-10 chance that the Northwest Power Pool, which includes Utah, will not have enough resources to meet power demands during the peak risk hour of 7 p.m. due to drought conditions and supply chain shortages.

Lindon-based Humless has developed solar power panels, solar storage batteries and home battery backup systems in the hope of equipping families during power grid failure.

“Our goal at Humless is to help people control their own power, or take charge over their own power,” said Glenn Jakins, founder and CEO of Humless. “As time goes on, we’ve made some really fun and cool developments to achieve that.”

“We’ve been lucky as Americans to have such a stable electrical grid. We’ve always had it, we’ve had it our whole lives,” added Eric Lobdell, vice president of product development and sales at Humless. “But we’re at a point in time where the grid and the infrastructure has never been this old and fragile. ... That’s where we are right now and people are more aware of it than ever before.”

While a 1-in-10 risk of a blackout may seem like low odds, for those who rely on the power grid to run medical devices, the 1-in-10 chance of a power outage can be much more sinister. This was the case for Freeman, a resident of Orem who declined to give his last name and who had a Humless battery backup system installed in his home.

According to Freeman, the biggest benefit his Humless system has provided him with is peace of mind — not just that the lights will be on in case of emergency, but also that his family members who require medical devices and refrigerated medications will have their needs met during a blackout.

“Power is pretty important for a lot of people who depend on those medical devices to live and to potentially have life-saving drugs. ... It’s not a question of if the power’s gonna go out, it’s a question of when,” Freeman said. “Humless has the computer technology to manage the system so that my battery backup automatically kicks in if the power goes off, and I’m still up and running 24/7.”

Buying a Humless system wasn’t Freeman’s first attempt at harvesting and storing his own energy. He had previously invested in having solar panels installed on his roof but was disappointed to learn that like many other residential solar users, his solar power

was grid-tied and would not work during a power grid failure.

“I went ahead and took the plunge several years ago with installing the best solar panels I could in my roof, and I was very excited about that until I realized the installer hadn’t really told me the whole story,” Freeman said. “I didn’t have a battery backup system, which means when the power goes out at Rocky Mountain Power, then my solar goes offline.”

Humless’ solar storage batteries retain harvested solar energy and can be used during power grid failure.

“The Humless system uses intelligent energy management, and it’s universal; it works with many types of solar rays,” Lobdell said. “We create a microgrid, meaning when the grid shuts off, we take over and send a signal to that solar and say, ‘No-no, we’re the grid now, stay on,’ which is filling your batteries and running your loads until the grid comes back.”

While not against helping his neighbors out if they find themselves in a tough situation during a power outage, Freeman does wish that more members of his community would start investing in ways to harvest and store their own power.

“It’s pretty clear that the national grid is aging, it’s not getting renewed fast enough,” Freeman said. “My neighbors are welcome over here if things go south and they need help, whether it’s power or whether it’s food ... but it would sure be nice if a few more people out there were in a good position to help.”

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