

Phalaborwa

Power Outage Statistics Report

(May 2022 – Dec 2023)



**LET'S CHANGE
BA-PHALABORWA**

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INTRODUCTION

Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa (LCBP) is a non-profit, non-political, community-based and volunteer organisation established to protect, promote, advocate for, and advance the best interests of the Ba-Phalaborwa community in relation to municipal service delivery, governance, and development. As a registered NPC (Non-Profit Company) and recognised stakeholder, we are dedicated to addressing the collapsing state of municipal infrastructure, failures in sustainable service delivery, and deficiencies in the governance of the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (BPM) and other organs of government, particularly regarding local government affairs that directly affect the people of Ba-Phalaborwa.

Our mission is simple: to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for all residents of Ba-Phalaborwa. We strive to create a thriving community where residents enjoy reliable municipal services, transparent governance, and sustainable development opportunities. By empowering the community and working with various stakeholders, we aim to improve municipal service delivery, governance, and development for the community.

We have consistently engaged with both the Mopani District Municipality (MDM) and Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (BPM) in efforts to address these challenges, but both municipalities have closed their doors to us, hindering progress. In response, we have escalated our efforts and requested intervention from several key organisations, including the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Public Protector, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGHTA), and the Provincial Premier.

To hold those responsible accountable, we have laid **criminal charges** against both the BPM and MDM municipalities, as well as the municipal managers and the water manager in their personal capacities under the following sections:

- Sections 49(1)(e) and (f) of NEMA
- Section 151(1)(d), (i) and (j) of National Water Act
- Sections 24 and 152(1)(b) and (d) of Constitution

These charges were initially filed with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), which subsequently transferred the case to DWS.



As part of our commitment to ensuring clean water for our community, we partnered with WaterCan, which is affiliated with OUTA (Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse), to conduct annual water testing for the past three years. While our reservoir water has been deemed safe for drinking, all our freshwater streams have been found to be contaminated with high levels of E. coli and coliform bacteria. These streams flow into the Tshutsi tributary, which then enters the Kruger National Park and eventually reaches the Massingir Dam in Mozambique. The Tshutsi tributary, which only flows during the rainy season, has been a constant flow of sewage since 1998, contributing to a long-standing environmental and health crisis in the region.

Moreover, communication with Lepelle Northern Water has been severed by both municipalities, further complicating our efforts to resolve the ongoing water crisis and other infrastructure issues in the region.

Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa remains resolute in our mission to advocate for the community and drive the necessary changes to ensure sustainable service delivery and accountable governance. We will continue to pursue all available avenues — legal, administrative, and collaborative — to ensure the well-being of the Ba-Phalaborwa community and hold those in power accountable for their failures.

Our vision is clear: a thriving Ba-Phalaborwa where residents benefit from excellent municipal services, transparent governance, and meaningful development opportunities. We believe in the power of the community, and through persistence and collective action, we are confident that we can secure a brighter, more prosperous future for Ba-Phalaborwa.

SUMMARY



The Ba-Phalaborwa community faces significant challenges in power supply, impacting residents' well-being and economic prosperity.

Urgent action is needed to address infrastructure deficiencies, improve service delivery, and ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

- 1. Impact of Power Outages:** Water supply severely affected during power outages due to lack of backup power at reservoirs.
- 2. Aging Infrastructure:** The infrastructure is old and inadequate for the growing population.
- 3. Unaddressed Maintenance Issues:** Bush clearing, cable faults, temporary repairs not made permanent, and infrastructure contribute to recurring power outages.
- 4. Inadequate Response to Emergencies:** The lack of skills, resources, equipment and a Chief Electrical Engineer.
- 5. Tourism Impact:** Constant power outages impacts tourism and local economy adversely.
- 6. Service Delivery Limitations:** Municipal service failures exacerbated by lack of standby support, and urgency in addressing issues.

Worst Affected Areas: Numerous areas experienced prolonged power outages, with residents enduring days without electricity due to various infrastructure and maintenance issues and insufficient supplies in stock.

Power Outages: Frequent power outages and loadshedding, often lasting for days, result from cable/transformer theft, infrastructure damage, and lack of maintenance, impacting residents, tourists, and critical facilities.

CRUCIAL NOTES



- Our water supply suffers greatly during power outages/load shedding due to the absence of backup power at any of the reservoirs.
- Our infrastructure is extremely old and fragile.
- Power outages are easily caused by the slightest rainfall or a gentle breeze.
- The population has experienced substantial growth over time and continues to expand. However, the electrical infrastructure has not been expanded to meet the increasing demand, despite ongoing development, including the construction of student accommodation blocks. In numerous cases, this expansion involves converting or extending a typical 3 to 4-bedroom house into multiple rented rooms.
- Urgency is lacking in attending to power outages in the heavy industrial area (Extension 5), some of which remain unattended for days, resulting in food losses and income.
- Constant power outages severely affecting a large part of our tourism and businesses as tourists/guests are checking out early and therefore refunds are required to be paid out and our businesses cannot operate as staff are sent home.
- The Auditor General's report revealed the Municipality paid approximately R1.8 million for overtime, which was subsequently cut in November 2022, resulting in no standby support during weekends, public holidays, or after hours.
- There is no 24/7 Help Desk available for residents.
- Due to the absence of a chief electrical engineer and failure to appoint one, the current electrical team severely lacks essential skills and knowledge.
- While the issues highlighted above are prevalent throughout the town, this report delves into the area's most severely impacted from May 2022 to December 2023.
- Furthermore, this report incorporates statistics presented in graphs:
 - Hours without electricity due to aged infrastructure per extension per month
 - Power outage incidents reported per extension per month
 - Power outage incidents vs. hours without electricity per extension per month
 - Hours without electricity due to load shedding per month

NUMBER OF DAYS AND HOURS PER MONTH



MONTH = DAYS = HOURS	
2022	
April	30 days = 720 hrs
May	31 days = 744 hrs
June	30 days = 720 hrs
July	31 days = 744 hrs
August	31 days = 744 hrs
September	30 days = 720 hrs
October	31 days = 744 hrs
November	30 days = 720 hrs
December	31 days = 744 hrs
2023	
January	31 days = 744 hrs
February	28 days = 672 hrs
March	31 days = 744 hrs
April	30 days = 720 hrs
May	31 days = 744 hrs
June	30 days = 720 hrs
July	31 days = 744 hrs
August	31 days = 744 hrs
September	30 days = 720 hrs
October	31 days = 744 hrs
November	30 days = 720 hrs
December	31 days = 744 hrs

The information presented in this report has been extracted from our Incident Register →



LCBP Incident Register 2022/2023

POWER OUTAGES



The worst affected areas:

1. From April 14th to 19th, 2022, Ward 12 experienced a **power outage lasting 5 days** over the Easter weekend. This outage stemmed from cable theft, followed by an underground explosion damaging the cable. Additionally, a burnt jumper cable on the overhead cable, located 2.5km south on the R40 road, exacerbated the situation. Subsequent inspections revealed extensive damage to the substation on the corner of Sperwer Street and Grosvenor Street, as well as a power deficit at the junction/distribution box on the corner of Bataleur and Mossie. These issues were further complicated by the need to clear overgrown vegetation due to maintenance neglect.
2. From May 23rd to 25th, 2022, Extensions 2, 3, 4 and 6 experienced a **power outage lasting 3 days** due to a cable fault. The electricians refused to approach PMC for assistance.
3. On July 7th, 2022, Extensions 1, Dorp, and 7 endured a nearly **23-hour power outage** due to insufficient cable stock.
4. A power outage occurred in Ward 12 on July 27th, 2022, when a cable blew on the corner of Bataleur and Spekboom Streets, the same cable involved in the Easter weekend incident in 2022, which had been temporarily fixed. **Power outage lasted 2 days.**
5. A power outage occurred in Ward 11 on July 27th, 2022, due to cable theft in Potgieter Street. **Power outage lasted 2 days.**
6. On October 15th, 2022, Extension 5 affecting 2nd Street **lasting 47 hours and 49 minutes** due to a faulty transformer and none in stock.
7. November 8th, 2022, a power outage lasting **25 hours and 38 minutes** caused by a damaged pole during bush clearing, leading to the collapse of 10 additional poles.
8. On February 13th, 2023, electricity at 25 Tulbach Str was "temporarily" connected to the neighbouring property at 27 Tulbach Str. However, no further rectification has been undertaken by BPM. There are numerous similar cases in Town.
9. On 5th March 2023, a power outage occurred in Extension 5 severely affecting 4th Street for **9 days**, a total of 207 hours, due to cable theft.
10. From April 1st to 5th, 2023, Ward 11 experienced a **power outage lasting 5 days** due to a blown cable on corner Potgieter and Alex du Toit Streets.
11. From 31st April to 3rd May 2023, Extensions 1 and Dorp experienced a **power outage lasting 4 days** due to a damaged cable and the period waited for the TLB to arrive.

POWER OUTAGES



The worst affected areas:

12. A power outage affecting Ward 12 from May 4th to 5th, 2023, resulted from the collapse of four poles outside the Selati substation due to termite damage, reflecting maintenance neglect. Ward 12 was temporarily connected to Ward 11 until repairs on the Selati line were carried out, a situation that remains unresolved. This connection has significantly worsened the overload on an already burdened electrical system. New poles have been installed, however to date Ward 12 is still connected to Ward 11.
13. A power outage from October 26th to 30th, 2023 lasted for **6 days**, due to multiple cable faults affecting in and around the light industrial area.
14. The theft of a transformer behind the Municipal Parks Division/SPCA on September 10th, 2023, caused a **14-day power outage** at the SPCA lasting until September 23rd, 2023, totalling 316 hours and 45 minutes.
15. A power outage from November 17th to 20th, 2023 lasted for **4 days**, due to a faulty cable and fuses affecting in and around the light industrial area.
16. From October 23rd to November 13th, 2023, 7 SAI experienced a **22-day power outage** due to cable theft occurring two weeks prior. During this time, 7 SAI also lacked water supply as the reservoir had no backup power. Total outage duration: 478 hours and 53 minutes.
17. From December 21st to 28th, 2023, 124 and 126 Tulbach Street experienced an **8-day power outage** due to a faulty cable located at the substation. Total outage duration: 169 hours and 48 minutes

Recurring Power Outages



Fourteen (14) power outage incidents affected the light industrial area (our business industry in Extension 1 and the CBD)

October 2022	11H57	1 power outage
April 2023	96H28	1 power outage spanned over 5 days
June 2023	0H45	1 power outage
July 2023	33H37	1 power outage
September 2023	21H44	1 power outage
October 2023	151H12	5 power outages of which 2 spanned over 3 days and 1 spanned over 4 days
November 2023	124H09	3 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days and 1 spanned over 4 days
December 2023	23H35	2 power outage

Twenty-five (25) power outage incidents affected residents residing in these streets: Anna Botha, Lang Hans, Bronkhorst, Frans Du Toit, Nollie Bosman, Frederick Van Wyk and Molengraaf

September 2023	61H56	2 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days
October 2023	122H27	8 power outages
November 2023	82H47	8 power outages
December 2023	46H10	7 power outages

Twenty-one (21) power outage incidents affected Kruger National Park, 7 SAI, Spar, Forever Resorts, Laasteplaas and Bushveld Terrace (our business and tourism industry)

March 2023	37H25	2 power outages
July 2023	25H06	1 power outage
September 2023	34H43	3 power outages
October 2023	53H29	4 power outages
November 2023	72H01	5 power outages
December 2023	48H59	6 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days

Six (6) power outage incidents affected Bush Villas On Kruger & Sefapane Lodge (our tourism industry)

December 2022	1H58	1 power outage
March 2023	32H12	1 power outage
September 2023	24H52	1 power outage
October 2023	8H07	1 power outage
November 2023	93H24	2 power outages each spanned over 3 days

Recurring Power Outages



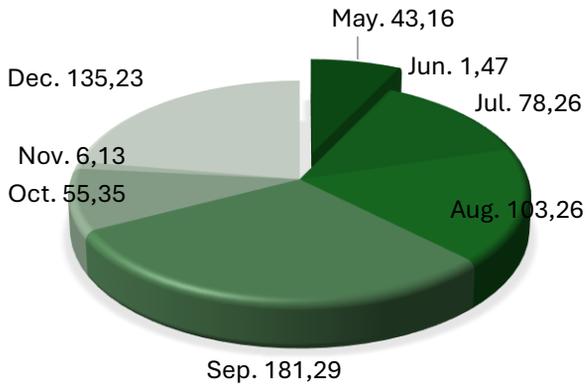
Sixty-nine (69) power outage incidents in 2022 and fifty-one (51) in 2023 affected the heavy industrial area (our business industry in Extension 5)

May 2022	2H06	1 power outage
July 2022	17H52	2 power outages
September 2022	203H55	11 power outages of which 1 spanned over 4 days and 1 spanned over 3 days
October 2022	56H26	3 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days
November 2022	16H19	3 power outages
December 2022	68H24	4 power outages
January 2023	77H58	9 power outages
February 2023	90H36	3 power outages of which 1 spanned over 4 days
March 2023	323H54	6 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days
April 2023	53H59	2 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days
May 2023	36H14	2 power outages
August 2023	162H34	5 power outages of which 1 spanned over 5 days and 1 spanned over 3 days
September 2023	102H26	6 power outages
October 2023	127H10	5 power outages of which 2 spanned over 3 days
November 2023	114H57	4 power outages of which 1 spanned over 3 days
December 2023	119H12	3 power outages of which 1 spanned over 5 days

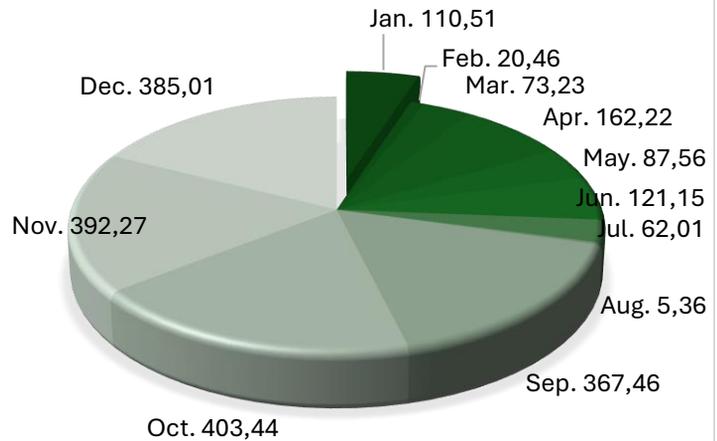
HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY DUE TO AGED INFRASTRUCTURE



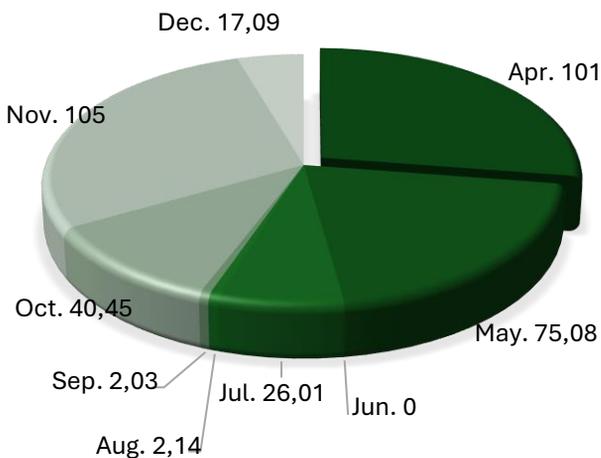
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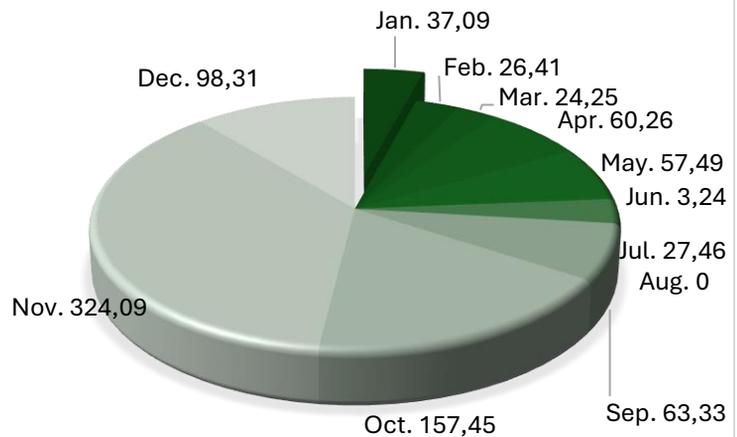
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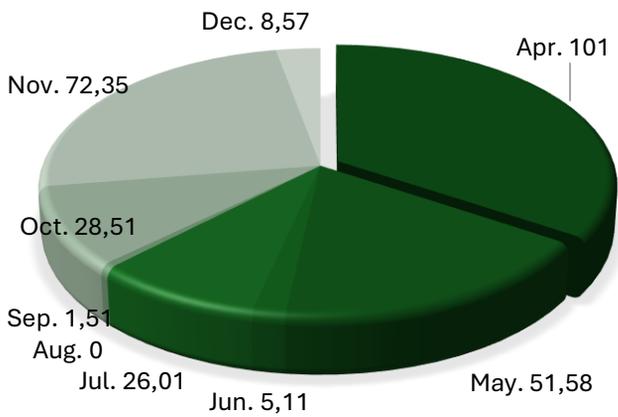
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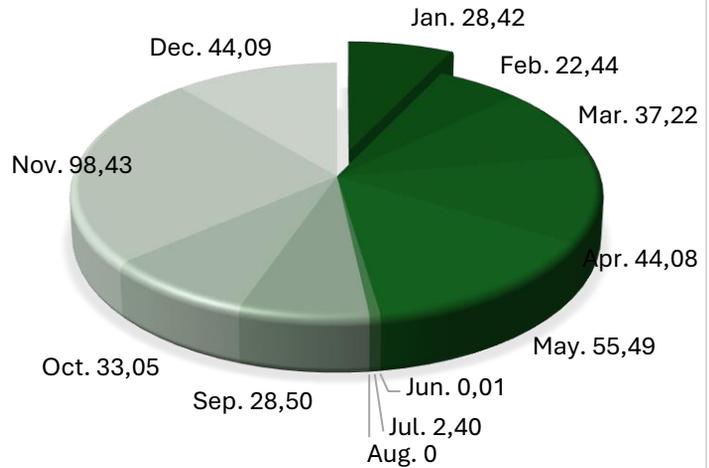
HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY DUE TO AGED INFRASTRUCTURE



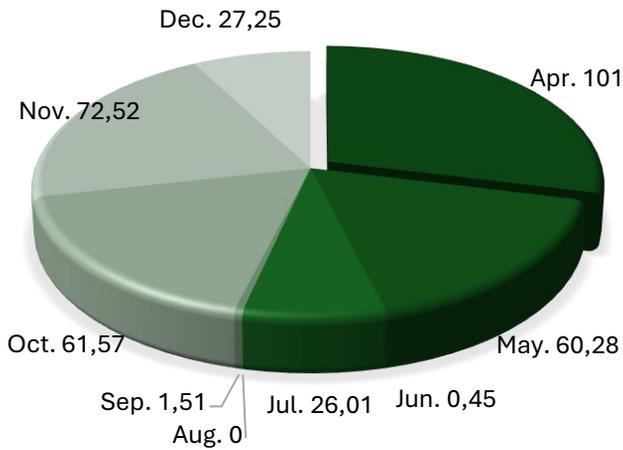
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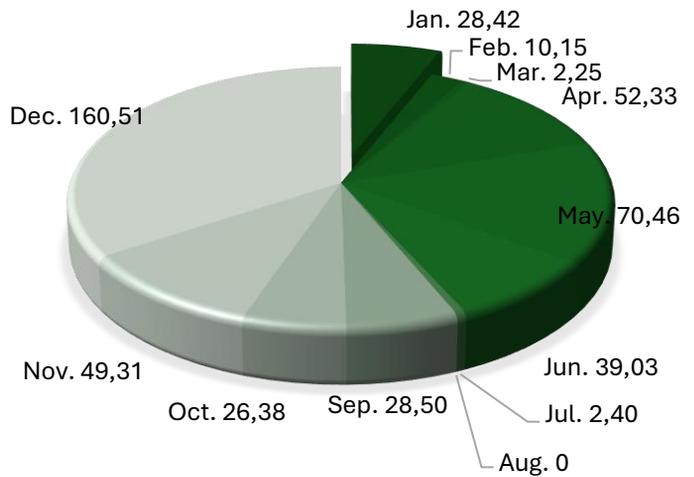
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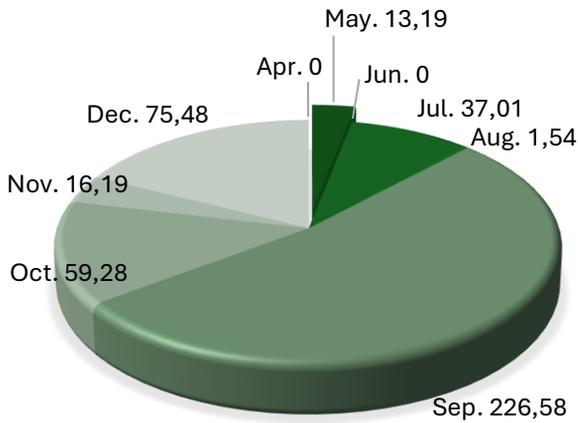
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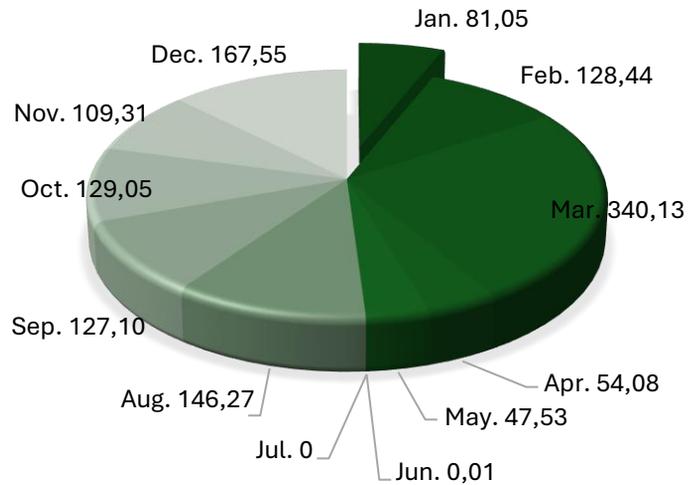
HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY DUE TO AGED INFRASTRUCTURE



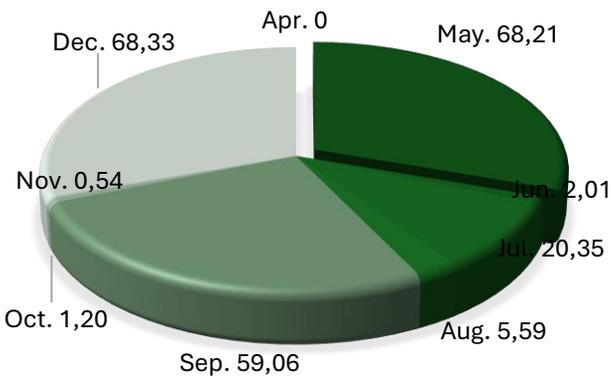
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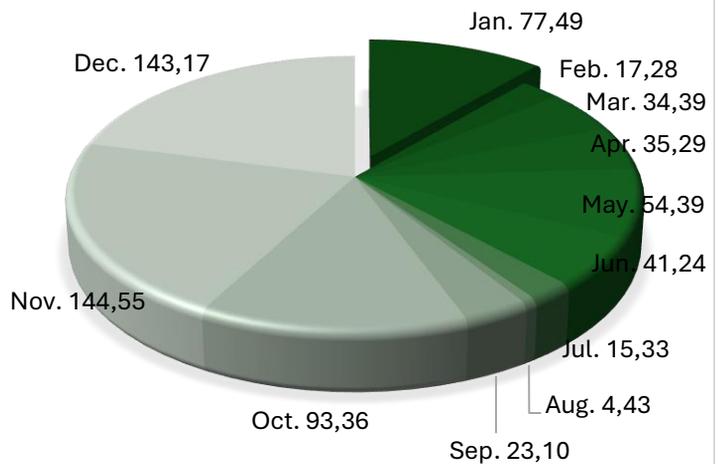
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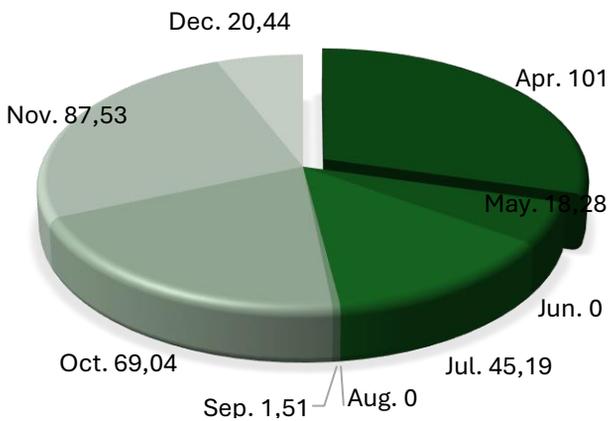
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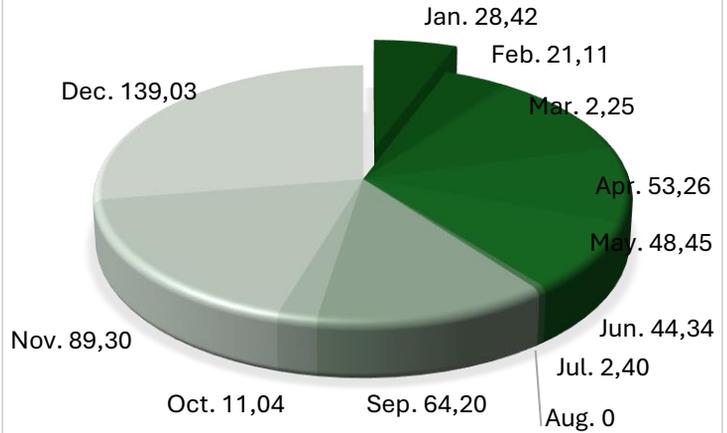
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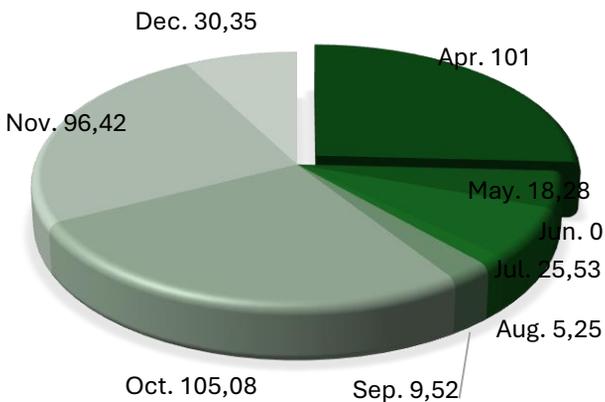
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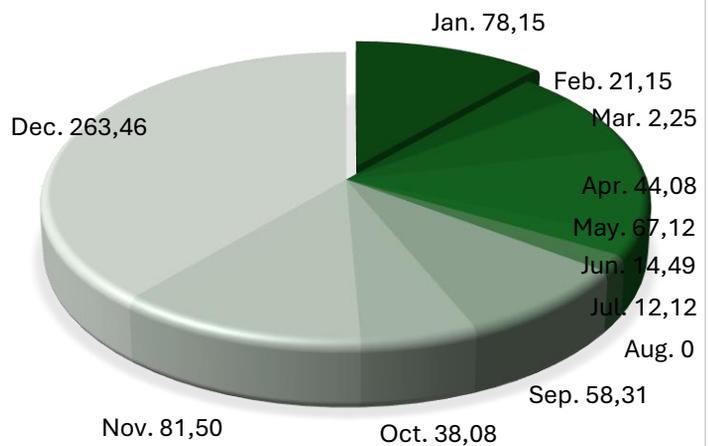
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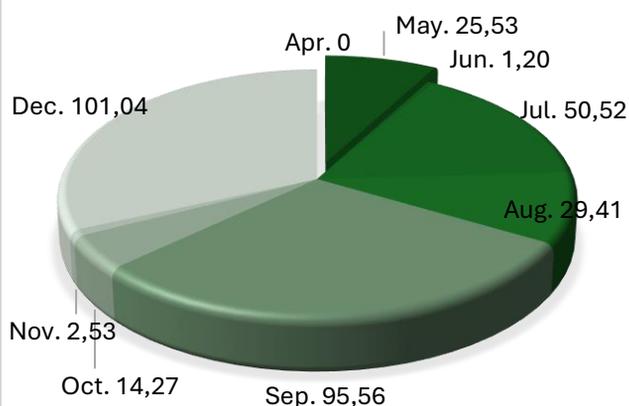
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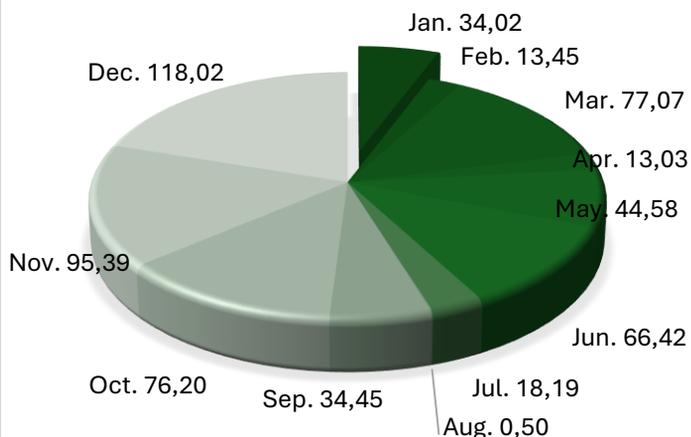
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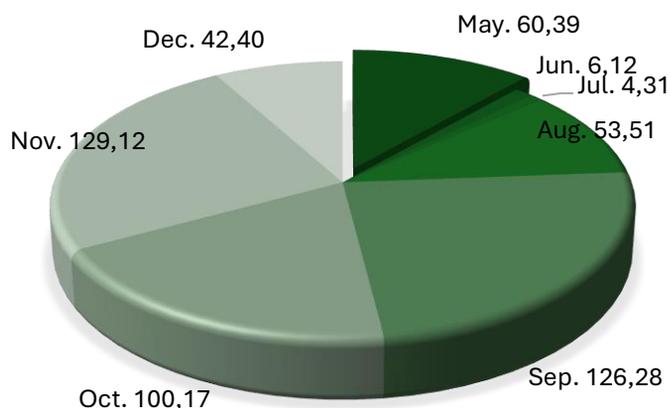
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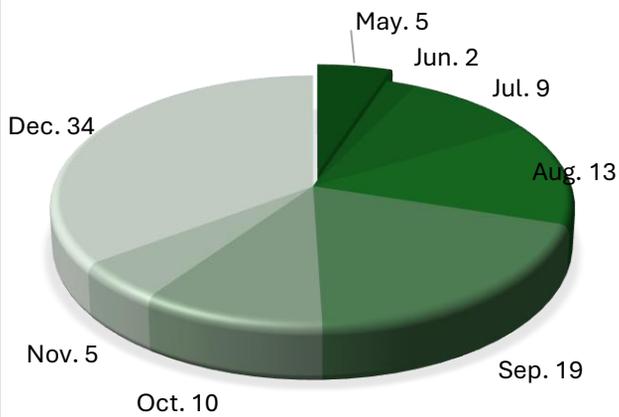
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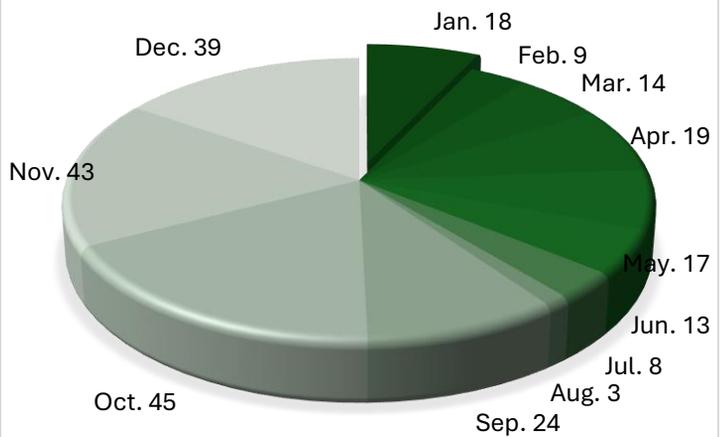
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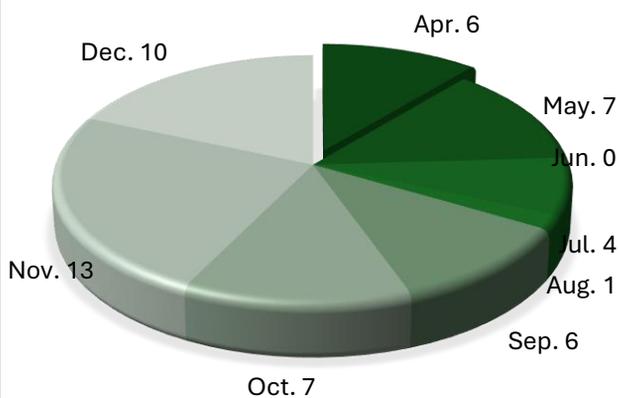
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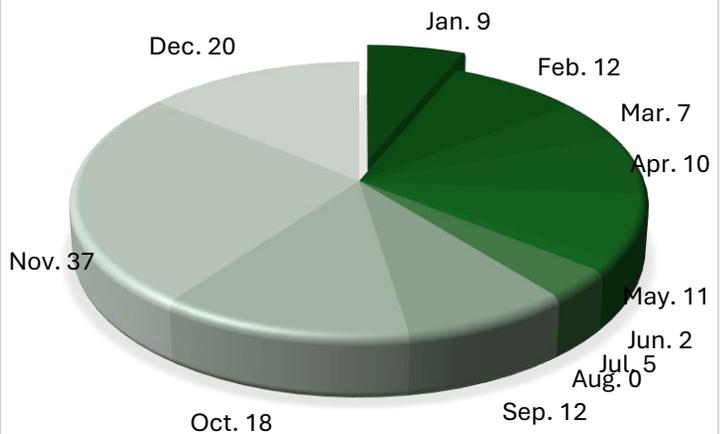
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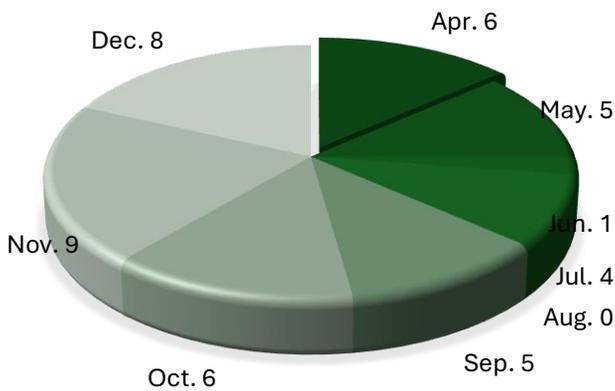
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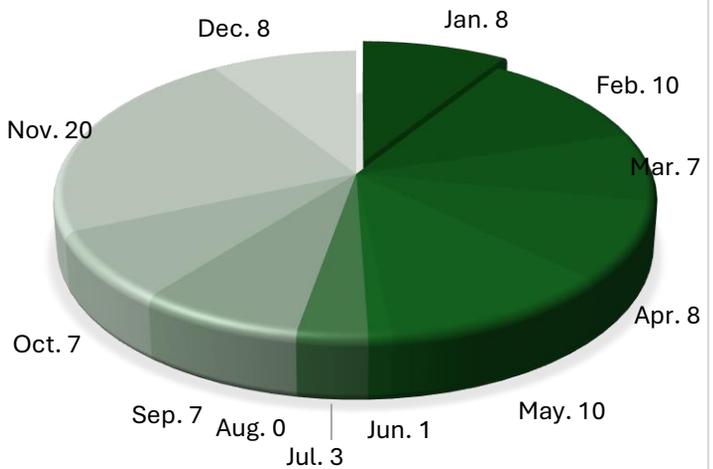
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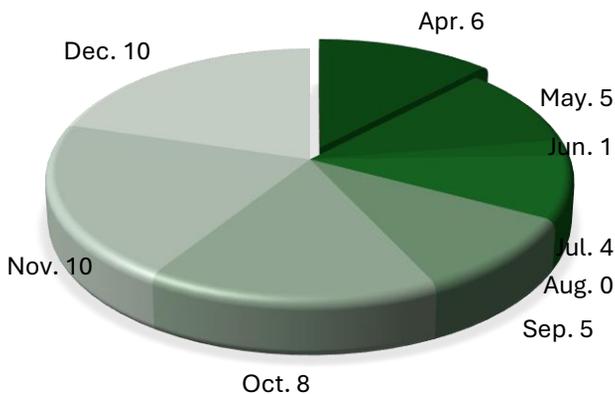
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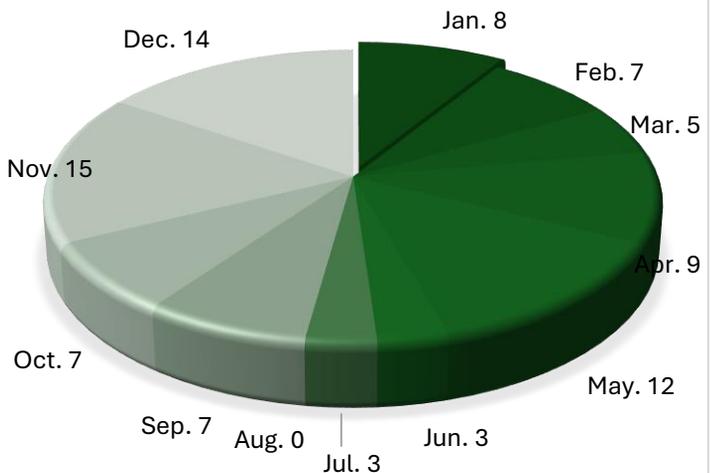
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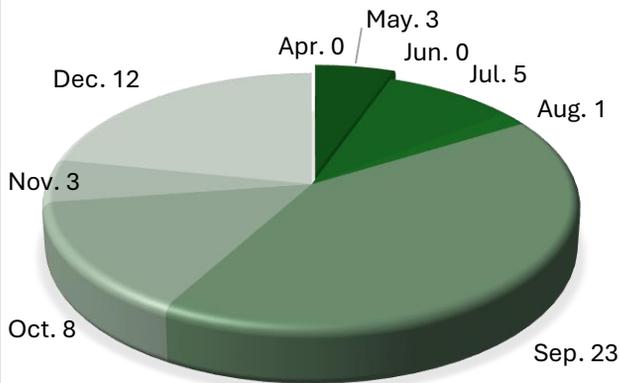
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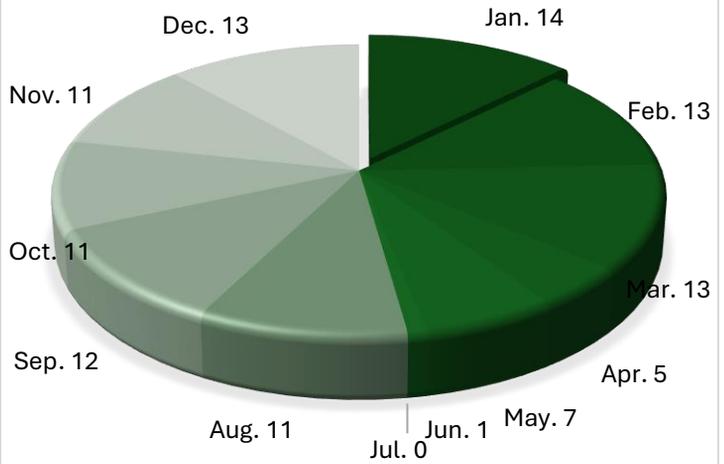
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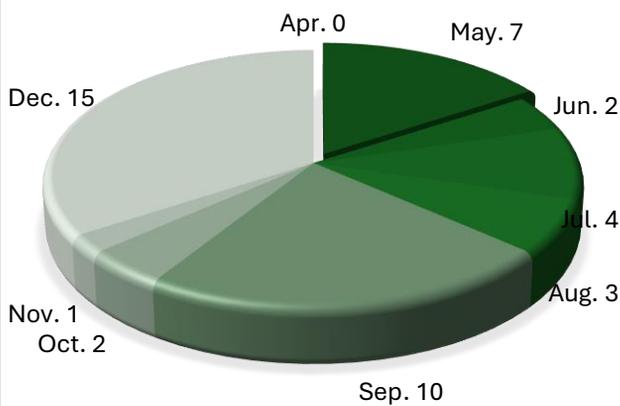
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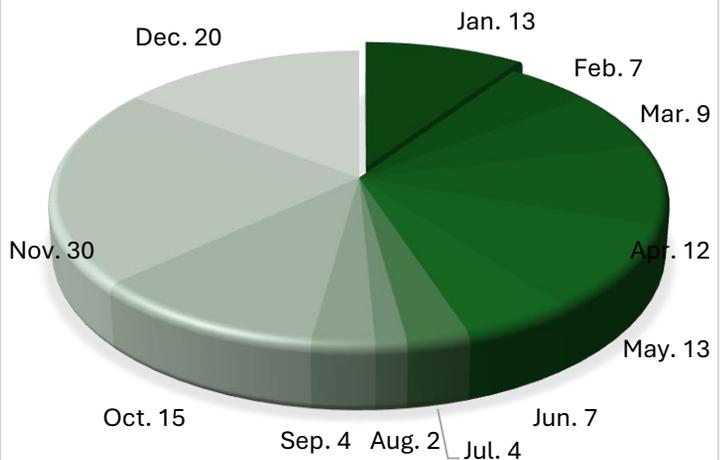
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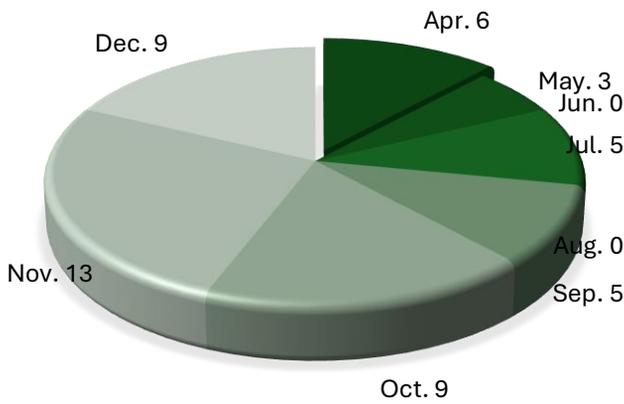
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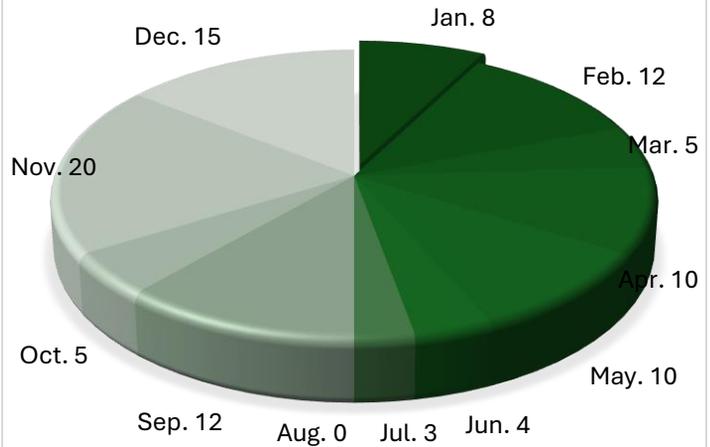
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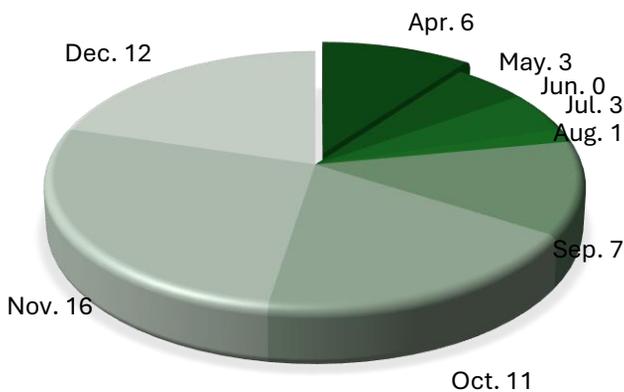
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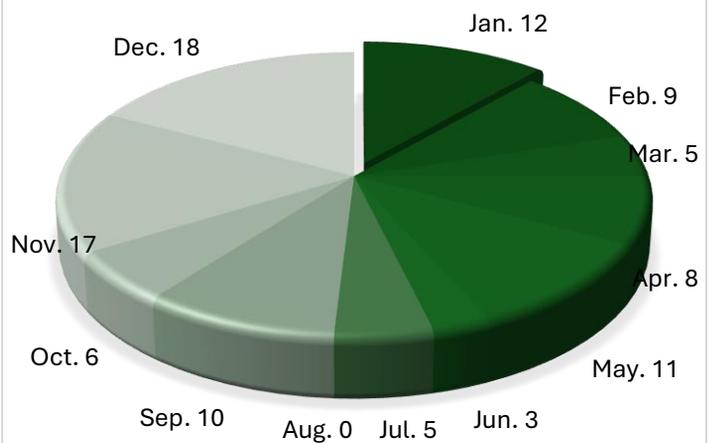
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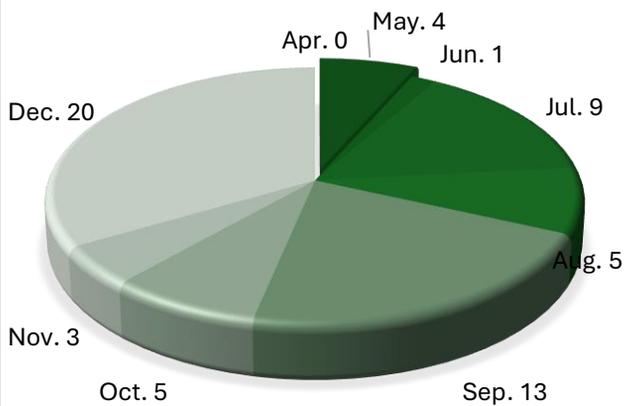
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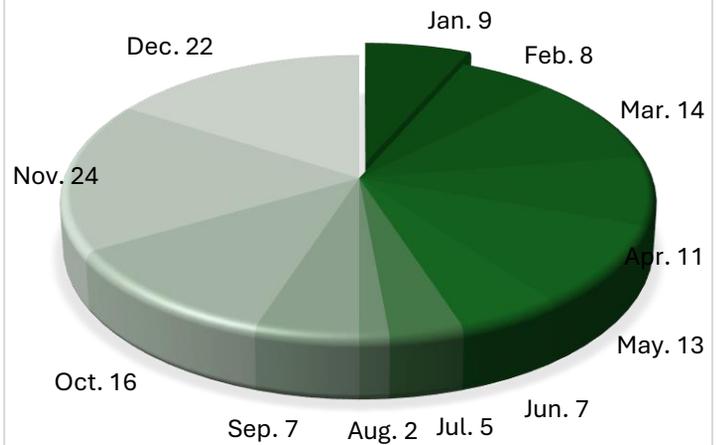
POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS REPORTED



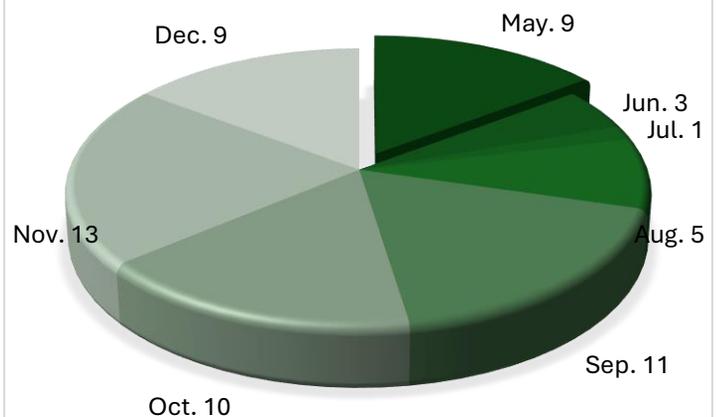
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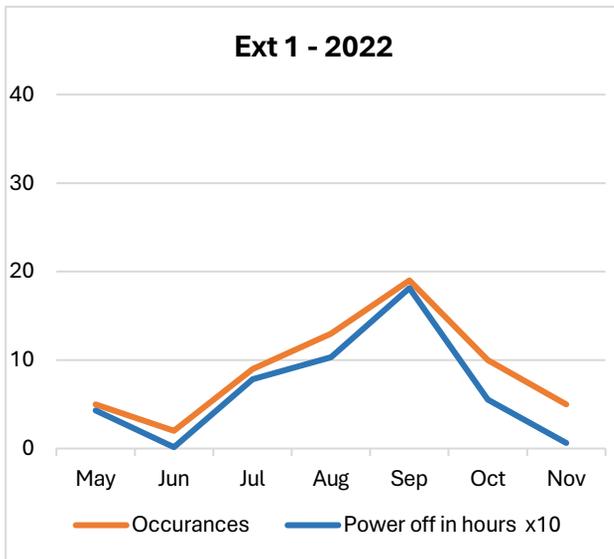


POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS vs. HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY

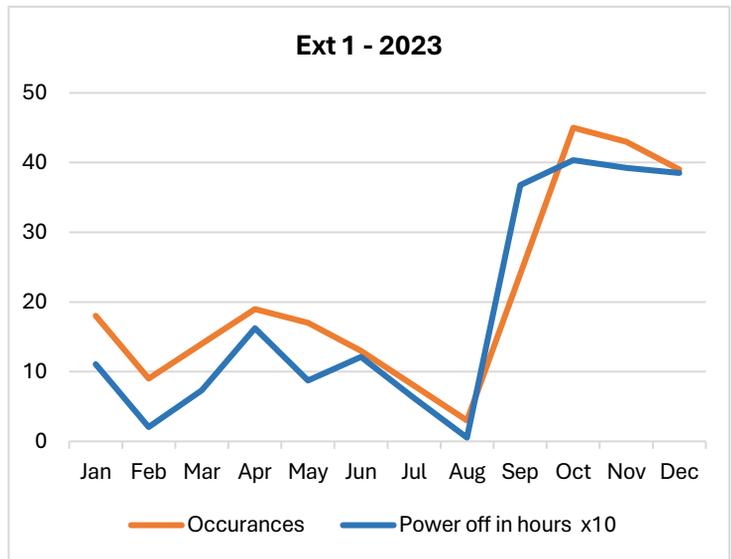


The purpose of the graphs below is to highlight the impact of the rainy season on our deteriorating infrastructure. It is evident that, during this time, both the frequency of incidents and the duration of power outages increase significantly.

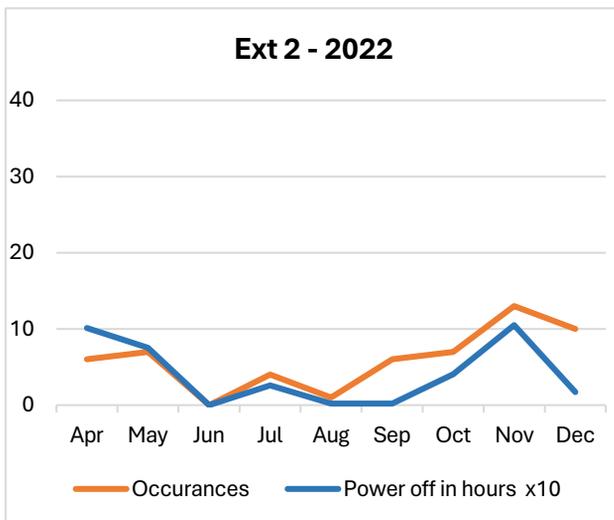
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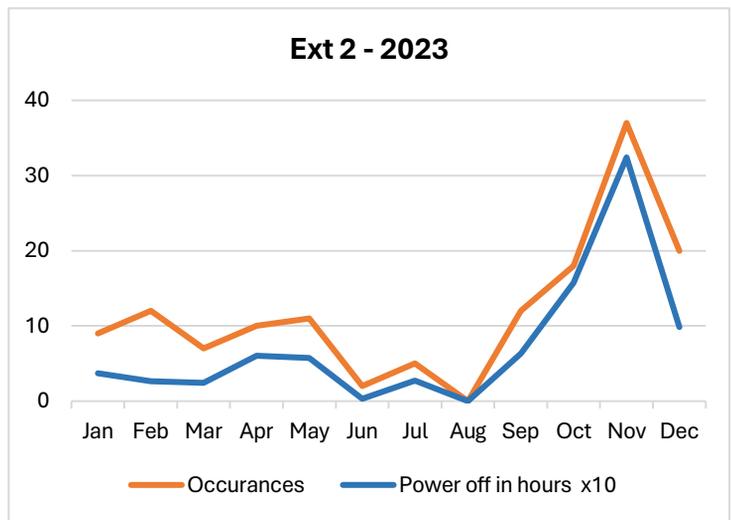
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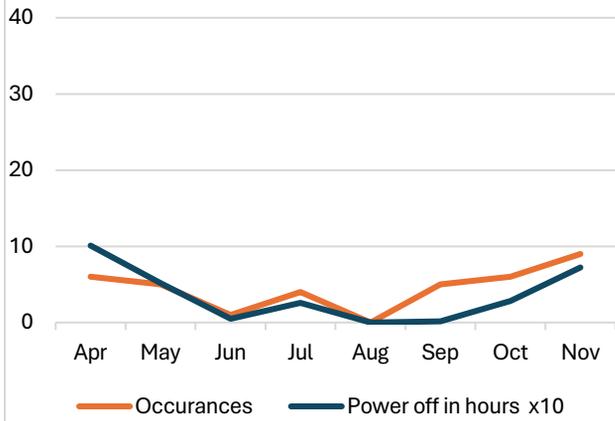
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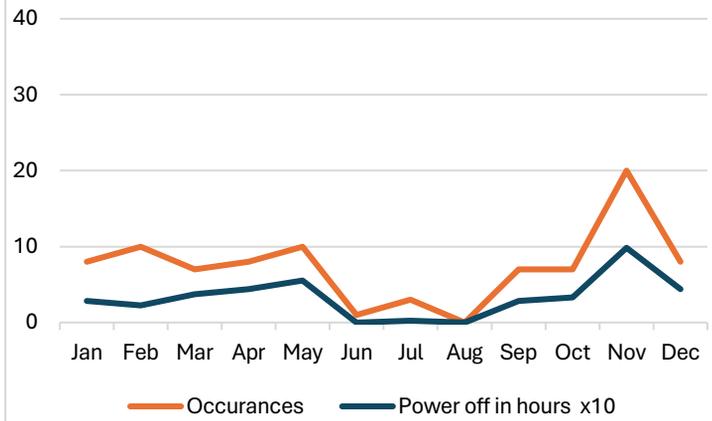
POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS vs. HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY



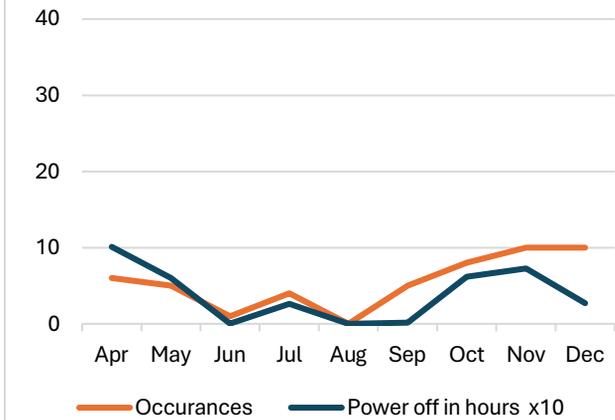
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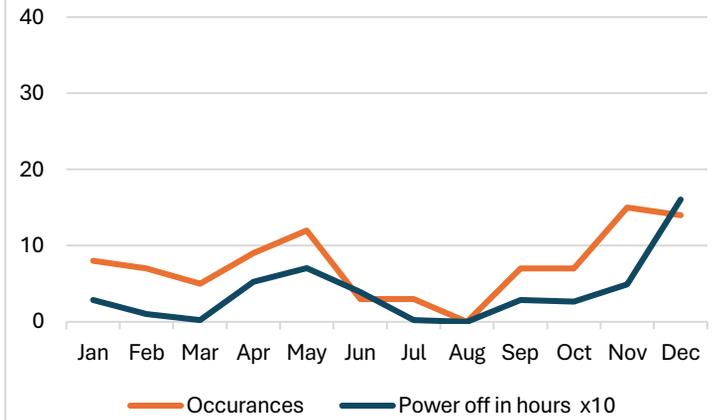
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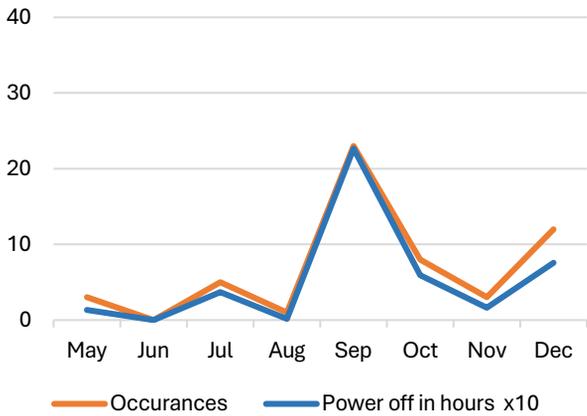
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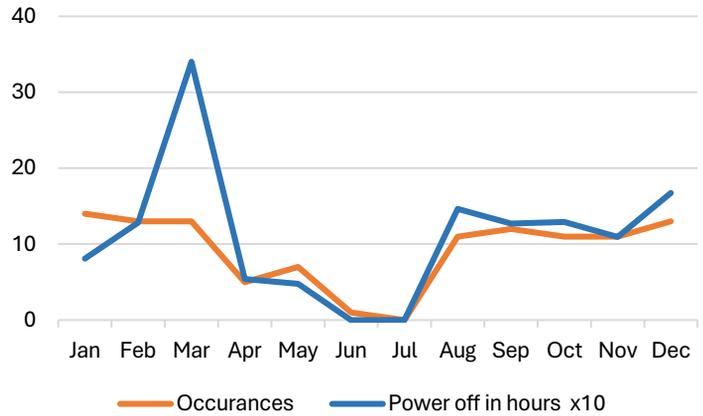
POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS vs. HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY



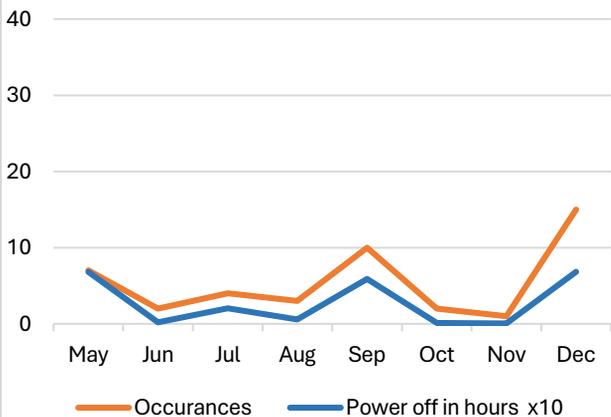
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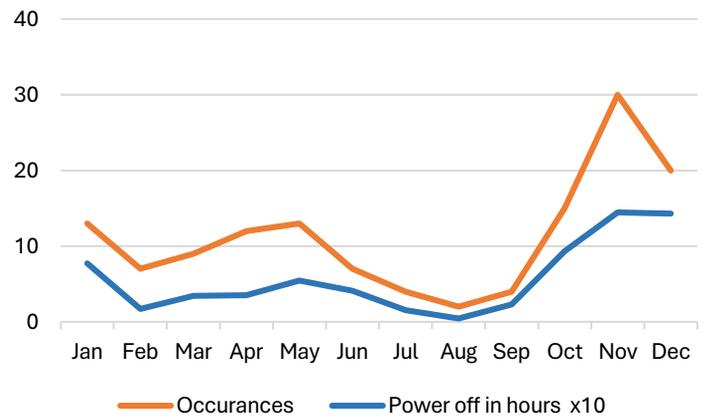
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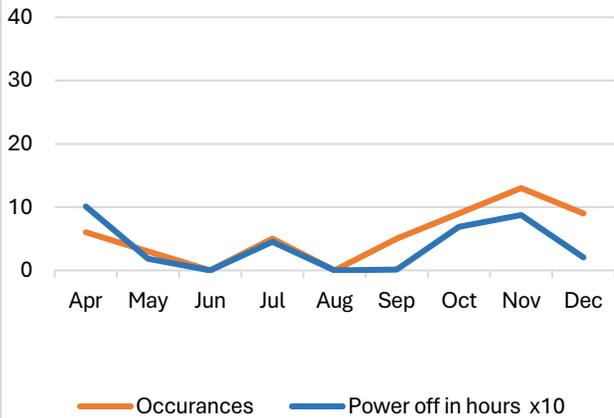
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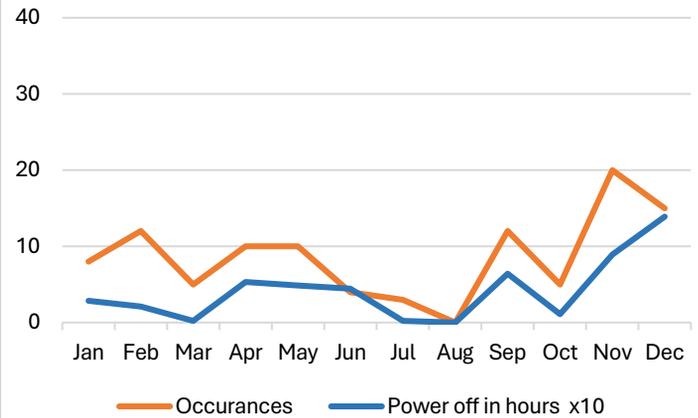
POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS vs. HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY



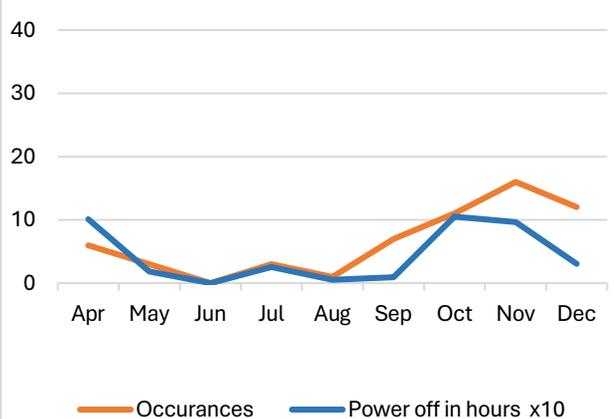
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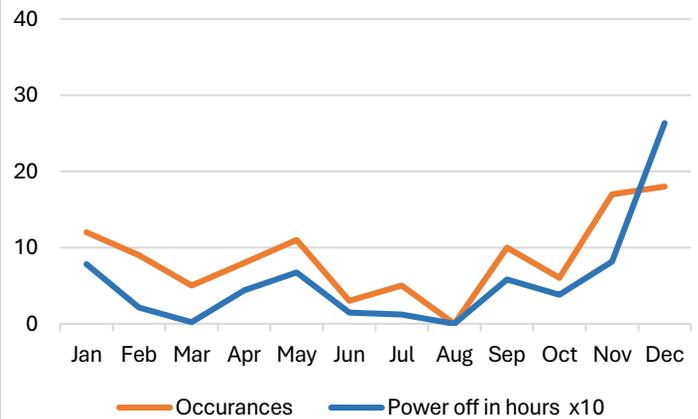
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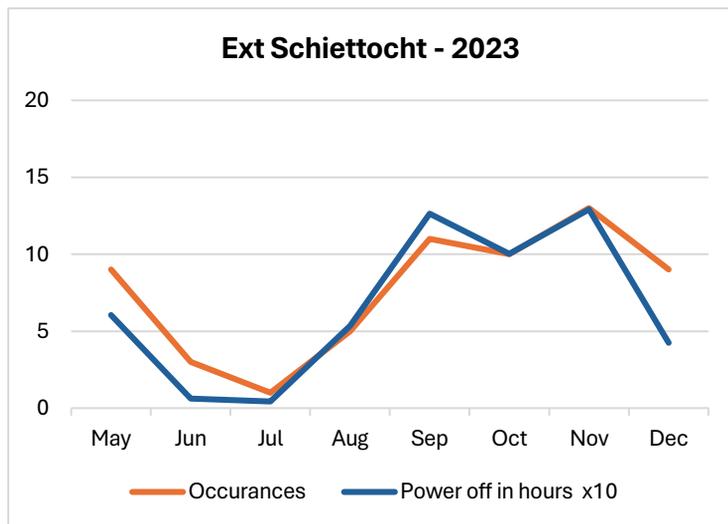
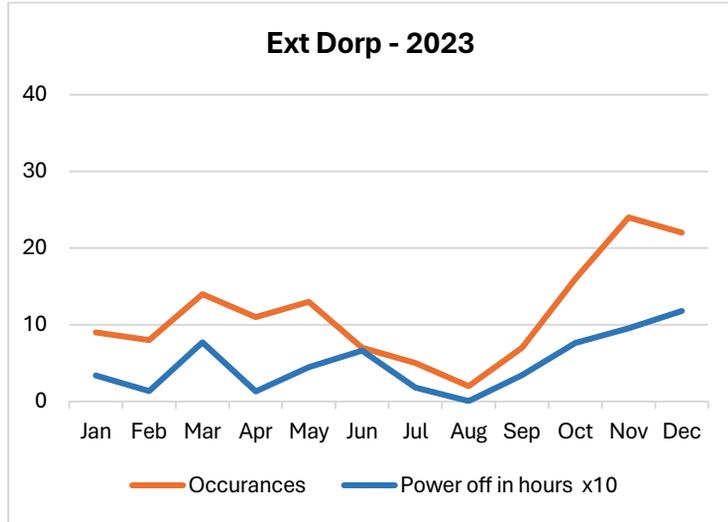
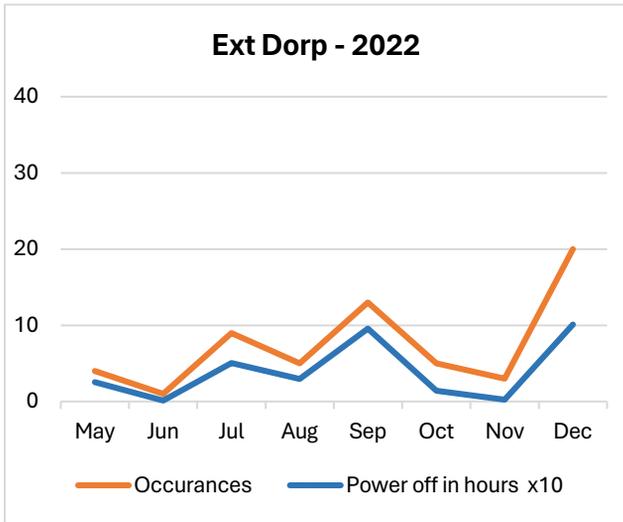
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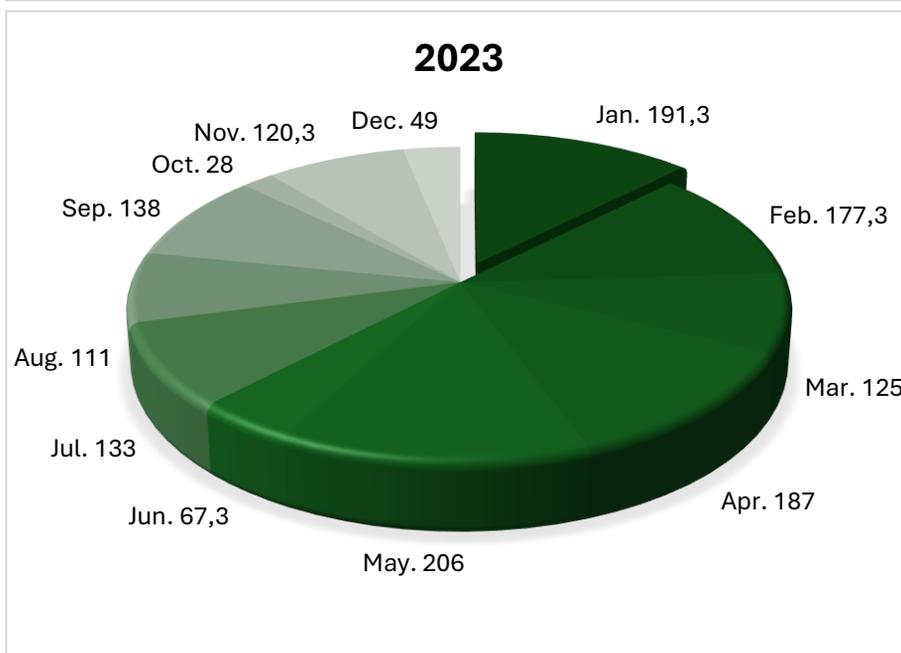
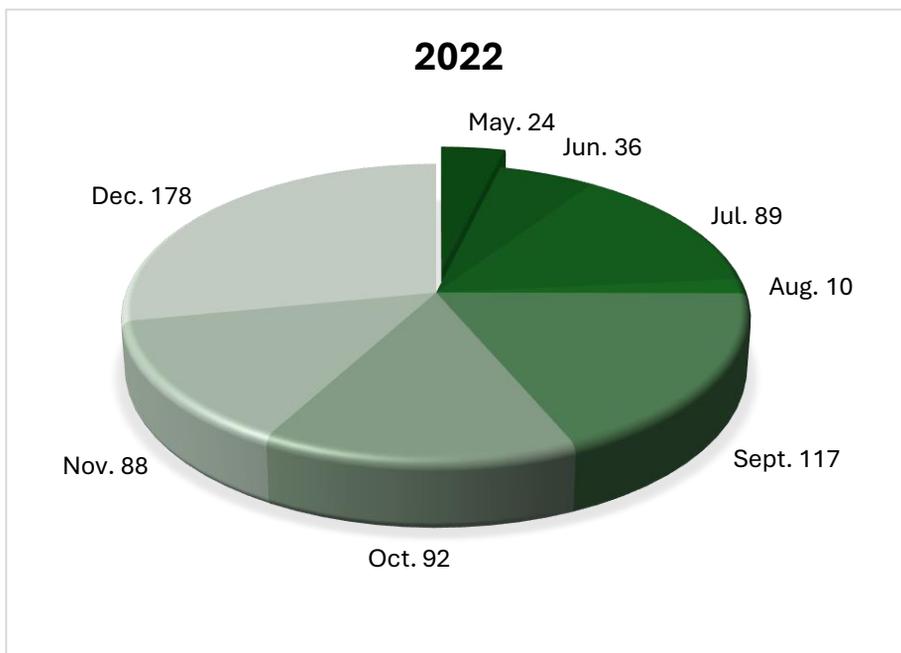
Ext 8 - 2023



POWER OUTAGE INCIDENTS vs. HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY



HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY DUE TO LOADSHEDDING



ENGAGEMENTS



- AfriForum SA
- Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality (BPM)
- Community Police Forum (CPF)
- Foskor Zirconia (PTY) Ltd. (Foskor)
- Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)
- The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA)
- Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA)
 - I. WaterCan platform – annual water testing
 - II. Community Active Networks (CAN) platform
 - III. Towns Active Networks (TAN) platform
- Palabora Mining Company (PMC)
- The Premier
- The Public Protector
- The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)
- SAKELIGE Selfstandige Sakegemeenskap



LET'S CHANGE BA-PHALABORWA

✉ info@lcbp.co.za www.lcbp.co.za  [ChangeBaPhalaborwa](https://www.facebook.com/ChangeBaPhalaborwa)

Non-Profit Company with registration number 2022/780255/08

The Directors of Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa Community Forum (LCBP):

Rachel Longster – Chairperson

Trevor van Rooyen – Vice Chairperson

Rodger Ferguson – Governance and Legislation

Kim Duverge – Secretary/Administrator

Danie Buys – Director

Prepared by:

Kim Duverge

Secretary/Administrator

Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa

Date: April 2024