

The Power Behind Your Power

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While NorVal Electric strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – co-op linemen.

One of the most dangerous jobs


Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, linemen often must climb 40 or more feet in the air, carrying heavy equipment to restore power. Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., linemen must perform detailed tasks next to high voltage power lines. To help keep them safe, linemen wear specialized protective clothing and equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds additional weight and bulk making the job more complex.

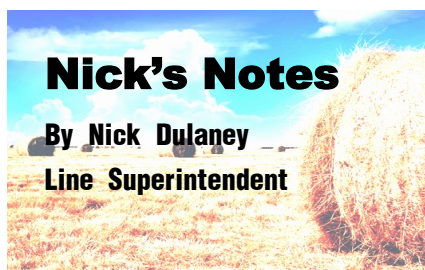
In addition to the highly visible tasks linemen perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair

a wire. They are also information experts that can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their laptops and cell phones to map outages, take pictures of the work they have done and troubleshoot problems. NorVal Electric's linemen are responsible for keeping 2002 miles of distribution power lines and 193 miles of transmission lines in 5 counties working in order to bring power to your home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools that linemen use have changed over the years, namely the use of technology, the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineman is not a glamorous profession, but if you know linemen you realize that adventure is part of the spirit that keeps them going!! During winter or summer storms, wildfires, day or night, year-round these professionals exude pride for their craft, despite the long hours, and missing family activities and holidays, they wouldn't trade their hard hat or climbing gear for anything.

A day of appreciation and gratitude

Lineman Appreciation Day is April 9th. So during the month of April, if you see a lineman, please pause to say thank you to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate the hard work they do to keep the lights on, regardless of the conditions. 



Nick's Notes

By Nick Dulaney
Line Superintendent

Your assistance is very much appreciated!

We will be ordering our material, like poles and wire, for the construction season ahead. While we prepare our Work Plan, those numbers are then used to calculate approximately how much material we will need to order. By doing one bulk sized order, we save money, which in turn saves you money.

Other projects we've been working on include replacing the high side fuse holders in the Peerless Substation and repairing weather-related damage.

Mother Nature did make March a challenge. Whether snowing, or blowing and drifting, we sure appreciate those folks who helped get our crew unstuck and helped move snow so we could gain access to our lines.

In addition, it is our mission to continually educate our staff on best practices for our industry, as well as improve safety procedures. The crews have safety meetings monthly, in which we cover annual and general education safety topics. During the February safety topic the crews updated their understanding of Lock Out Tag Out, using a model of a system comprised of pipe.




Crew members discuss Lock Out Tag Out procedures. LOTO is used to prevent an accident by physically locking a substation switch in place until clearance orders are received.


Recipe Corner

Crunchy Asian Salad

1 envelope Italian Dressing Mix
2 tbsp. light soy sauce
2 pkgs (16 oz. each) coleslaw blend
1/2 c. dry roasted sunflower kernels
1/2 c. sugar
2 pkgs (3 oz. each) ramen noodle soup mix
4 green onions
1/2 sliced almonds, toasted

Prepare dressing mix in small bowl as directed on envelope. Stir in sugar and soy sauce. Break noodles apart, place in large bowl. Discard seasoning packets or reserve for future use. Add coleslaw blend, onions, sunflower kernels and nuts to noodles. Mix lightly. Add dressing; toss evenly to coat noodle mixture. 

You are our eyes and ears

A big thank you to our attentive member from Lustre who noticed this insulator that was hanging off of the pole. A quick call to our office saved what could have been a potential outage or even bigger problem. We have 2002 miles of distribution and 193 miles of transmission line to monitor, so we truly appreciate our members who help keep an eye on things and let us know when something is out of place! 




Enroll now for Budget Billing

With the erratic winter we've had your electric bills probably reflect the chill! If you're looking to budget for your future electric bills, we have the answer! Budget Billing is a balanced approach so you know exactly what your bill will be for the next 12 months.

April and May are the enrollment months. To qualify for Budget Billing, your account must be billed as a residential rate class, you must have 12 months of billing statements at the service location,

and your bill must be paid in full prior to starting.

To remain on Budget Billing you must pay your budgeted amount in full by the due date.

For members already enrolled in Budget Billing, April is the True-up month. If you have a credit or a balance due, your electric bill will be adjusted accordingly. If you are interested in enrolling in Budget Billing please call Karla at 406-228-9351. 



Outback Power, our contractors, work to reconductor the South River Road line in February.








#ThankALineman

Just another day at the office for the linemen. We salute these hard-working professionals and their dedication to the cooperative spirit!



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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: energy.gov

