

COLUMBUS CURRENTS

Whatever it Takes: Powering Life, from a Lineworker's Perspective Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 18th

The job of an electrical lineman is ranked as one of the most dangerous jobs in the country. The linemen at Columbus Electric Cooperative work rain or shine, in often challenging conditions to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineman Appreciation Day on April 18, 2024. The following column was written by Daniel Lopez, one of our many dedicated linemen.

My name is Daniel Lopez, and I'm one of the ten linemen at Columbus Electric Cooperative. We work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our members have the power to live their lives. I love my job. It's hard work, but it's very rewarding. I hope this will give you a better look our daily operation and more importantly, why we do it.

The Danger

A lot of people know linework is dangerous because we work near high-voltage electricity. It is critical that you are aware of your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you.

We often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. You're working with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. The environment compounds the pressure, because when you need power most is usually when the weather is worst. We are often working in storms with rain, wind, extreme heat and cold, in the dark, or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what we're trained to do.

Many may not realize it, but we undergo years of training before we can officially be called a lineman. We typically start as a ground person, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe. We then transition to apprentice status, which typically spans four years. After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training, we transition to journeyman lineman status. But the education is ongoing. Linemen continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

The Physical Demand

The daily expectations of a lineman are physically demanding, but you won't hear any of us complain. I know what I signed up for—loading heavy materials, climbing poles and in and out of buckets. A lot of times, we go places the trucks can't, so I might be hiking through the rough terrain loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job. Most of us are just glad to be outside.

The Sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineman. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. You don't know what type of situation you're going to face or when you're going to face it. We get calls at all hours and in the middle of the night. We make sure there is nothing standing in the way of helping our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

It's Worth It

One thing that makes this job worthwhile is the camaraderie. My cop is my second family, and the line crews are a brotherhood (and sisterhood). In this work, you have to depend on the person beside you in life-or-death circumstances. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everyone else.

I have a lot of pride in my work. Even when it's cold and wet, I know I'm working to keep people warm. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "Thank you" from the window after the lights come back on or seeing people flipping the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored. No matter how tired I am or how long I've been working, that feeling always makes it worth it.

Columbus Electric Cooperative and its employees are members of this community. We live in the same neighborhoods. We shop at the same stores. Our kids go to the same schools. If your lights are off, there is a good chance ours are off too. So, you can trust that we are doing our best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible—so you can get back to normal life.

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TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.



DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machinery or truck makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with your feet together as far as you can.



Learn more at:



2024 Safety Poster Coloring Contest



Every year Columbus Electric Cooperative sponsors a safety poster coloring contest for students in our service area for 2nd, 3rd & 4th grades. Congratulations to this year's winners! This year's theme was "Use Electronics Safely"

Overall CEC winner – Lluvia Zeferino- Deming

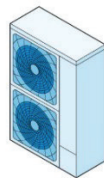
1st Place- Abigail Cuevas- Animas

2nd Place- Juliette Amaya- Columbus

2nd Place- Laney Mikow- Animas

3rd Place- Efren Contreras- Columbus (pictured at right)

3rd Place- Matthew French- Animas



Heat Pump Rebate Reminder

Have you recently had a new air or ground source heat pump installed in your home or business? Don't forget CEC offers rebates for heat pumps to all its members. Rebates are also offered for whole house fans, split system air conditioners and evaporative coolers. Members have 90 days from date of install or purchase to submit their rebate applications!

To learn more about Columbus Electric Cooperative, Inc. rebate programs call us at 1-800-950-2667 or visit us online at columbusco-op.org/rebates



Our office will be closed Monday, May 27th in observance of Memorial Day

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: energy.gov

Board Highlights

The Board reviewed the operations and financial reports for the month of February. The Board also approved two facility expansion projects – one to expand the Deming headquarters office to provide additional warehouse and office space. The other is the construction of an equipment storage facility in Animas in order to protect our vehicles and heavy equipment from the elements.

Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)

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