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4 RIVERS
Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

4 RIVERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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FROM THE ASSISTANT MANAGER/COO

Use Caution and Have a Plan Before Burning

This spring, farmers and ranchers inside our 16-county service territory have started the annual process of lighting fires to remove old grass or thatch from pastures encouraging new growth and controlling unwanted plants and pests. The result is a healthier pasture ecosystem, but it is crucial to prioritize safety, especially around power lines and poles. These structures can become dangerous fire hazards if not properly considered, leading to power outages, property damage and personal injury.

PREPARATION IS KEY

Before burning, check local regulations and obtain any necessary permits. Informing your neighbors and notifying the local fire department are essential steps. However, when it comes to power lines, additional precautions are vital.

CREATING A SAFE BUFFER ZONE

► IDENTIFY AND ASSESS

ALL POWER POLES IN THE BURNING AREA. Ideally, you should never burn within 15 feet of a power pole. If this minimum distance isn't achievable, consult with a 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative representative for specific guidance and safety protocols.

► CLEAR THE AREA AROUND THE BASE OF THE POLE.

Remove any dry grass, weeds or other burnable materials that could act as fuel and potentially ignite the pole itself. This creates a firebreak and minimizes the risk of flames reaching the structure.

► MOISTURE IS YOUR FRIEND.

Thoroughly wet down the ground and vegetation around the base of



Mark Doebele
Assistant General Manager/COO

Continued on page 12D ►

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 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**



THE HEADER PHOTO ABOVE, HIGHLIGHTING THE BEAUTY OF OUR COOPERATIVE TERRITORY, WAS TAKEN BY MEMBER KIMBERLY STITHEM OF RURAL FREDONIA.

To the Top!

Training Stages for Electric Lineworkers

Known for their strength and agility, lineworkers are dedicated to ensuring our communities have reliable power. Safety is always top priority on the job, which is why lineworkers spend thousands of hours training as they advance their skills.

Here's a look at the career progression of a lineworker.

4 Crew Leader

A crew leader is an advanced position that requires supervising lineworkers on job sites, coordinating with contractors and directing daily activities for crews.



3 Journeyman Lineworker

Post-apprenticeship and with roughly 7,000-plus hours of training under their belts, journeyman lineworkers are fully trained in their field. They repair, update and install overhead and underground power lines, as well as other electrical equipment.



2 Apprentice Lineworker

Before reaching lineworker status, they are required to work as an apprentice. Apprentice lineworkers earn competitive wages while receiving hands-on training and experience in the field. They typically spend four years in their apprenticeship.



1 Groundperson/Linehelper

Many lineworkers begin their career as a groundperson or linehelper. They assist line crews with tools, keeping job sites safe and operating smaller equipment.



Regardless of stage, all lineworkers continue education and training throughout their career. Training and testing requirements vary from utility to utility.

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8

In 2014, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) adopted a resolution recognizing the second Monday of each April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. This year, electric cooperatives across the country celebrate our “heroes in hardhats” on Monday, April 8. Regardless of the date, the month of April is a time to recognize those hardworking men and women helping keep the lights on in our homes and businesses across the country.

Electric lineworkers provide an essential service installing and maintaining overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. They are on call 24/7 responding to outages and other



electrical emergencies. They work with high-voltage electricity at great heights and in all kinds of weather conditions. 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative line crews work hard to maintain our system and safely deliver reliable power to our members.

“Our line crews work in challenging conditions while serving and caring for our members and communities,” said 4 Rivers General Manager/CEO Dennis Svanes. “We are proud to honor the lineworkers who are helping to keep the lights on in our service territory.”

This month, remember to thank a lineworker, as we salute those who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.

Whatever It Takes: Powering Life, From a Lineworker's Perspective

BY CHAD GUIMOND, 4 RIVERS ELECTRIC JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN



Chad Guimond

As one of 23 lineworkers at 4 Rivers Electric Co-op, I go to work every day to make sure our members have the power necessary to live their lives. I love my job. Being a lineman is hard work but rewarding.

Of course, linework is known to be a dangerous job. Working near high-voltage electricity means that if you move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, it can be deadly. We must always be aware of our surroundings and the safety of the person next to us. The environment often increases the pressure factor, since we often need power the most when weather is the worst. We work in storms with rain, wind, extreme heat and cold, in the dark, or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. It's dangerous, but we train to mitigate the risk.

Individuals must have years of training before becoming a journeyman lineman. Most attend a trade or technical school to learn the basics and intern as a groundman, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then transition to apprentice status for usually about four years. After completing an apprenticeship, they transition to official journeyman lineworker status. However, education is ongoing. Our team continuously receives training on safety requirements and the latest equipment and procedures.

Line work is physically demanding, but we know what we signed up for — loading heavy materials, climbing poles and in and out of buckets. Often, we must work in narrow right-of-ways or other places trucks can't go. At any time, I might need to hike through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment to access the area where I need to make a repair. But that's part of the job. Most of us are just glad to be spending our days outside.

Line work requires a measure of personal sacrifice. We don't know when or what type of situation we will face when we get called out after hours. There are times when we are among the first on the scene of an emergency, such as a car accident, structure fire or severe storm damage. I've missed family events and dinners, but my family is very supportive, and it pays off in the end. We are there to safely restore power and help our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

One great thing about being a lineman is the camaraderie. My co-op is my second family, and line crews are a brotherhood. In this work, we depend on the person beside us in life-or-death circumstances. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everybody else.

I take pride in my work. When it's cold and wet and miserable outside, I know I'm working to keep our members safe and warm. It's satisfying to hear someone yell “Thank you!” from a house 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 makes it worth it.

4 Rivers Electric 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.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE
APRIL 8, 2024

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative, Inc. may fund up to two lineman scholarships annually for tuition, fees, books, tools and supplies not to exceed \$5,000 for each scholarship for up to one year at an electrical lineworker school. Eligible candidates for the scholarship must be high school graduates from any high school or a home school program or have attained their GED within the cooperative's service territory. Check out our website for further details on this awesome opportunity!

Use Caution and Have a Plan Before Burning *Continued from page 12A ▶*



Make safety a priority and take special considerations when burning near electric utility lines.

the pole before starting the burn. This creates a fire barrier and helps prevent embers from climbing the pole. Remember, never spray water directly on the pole itself, as this can create an electrical hazard.

CONTROLLING THE BURN

Burn only during favorable weather conditions. Avoid windy days, as strong gusts can easily carry embers towards power lines. Always have a team present to manage the fire with proper tools like rakes, shovels and fire extinguishers.

CONSTANT MONITORING

Never leave a burning pasture unattended. Remain vigilant and closely monitor the fire's behavior, ensuring it stays within designated boundaries. If the fire becomes uncontrollable and is approaching power lines, immediately contact your local fire department and 4 Rivers Electric Cooperative.

POST-BURN SAFETY

After extinguishing the fire, continue monitoring the area for several hours to ensure no smoldering

embers reignite. If you notice any damage to a power pole or lines, immediately contact 4 Rivers Electric and report the issue.

By following these safety measures and prioritizing responsible burning practices, you can help ensure the safety of yourself, your property and the electrical grid, while maintaining healthy pastures. Remember, taking precautions and seeking proper guidance can prevent accidents and ensure a successful burn.

If you come across a line or structure that has been compromised by fire, please call 4 Rivers Electric and visit with a member service representative. Being proactive about pole maintenance and replacement due to burn damage helps minimize repair costs and outage time while maximizing safety.

In closing, I'd like to give a shoutout to our line crew. April is Lineworker Appreciation Month, and electric cooperatives across the nation celebrate this on the second Monday in April, which falls on April 8 this year. Remember to thank a lineman this month — they work hard to make sure the power is there when we need it.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMER PROGRAM WINNERS ANNOUNCED

4 Rivers Electric Cooperative is committed to the communities we serve, which means investing in our youth and providing educational, leadership and team-building opportunities. Our cooperative continues this tradition of promoting youth leadership by sending four high school juniors on an all-expenses-paid leadership experience of a lifetime! Two students will attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and two students will attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

During the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, June 14-20, students will travel to Washington, D.C., explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress, and make lifelong friends with students from across the country. This trip of a lifetime provides leadership lessons from our nation's history and the cooperative spirit that built our nation.

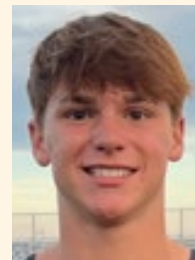
The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp is July 12-18, at Glen Eden resort near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. High school students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado,

Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming participate in this leadership camp. Together, they will create a candy cooperative, hear from dynamic speakers, and raft down the Colorado River.

We had such an awesome group of applicants this year and are so proud to see such engagement and commitment to community by the young leaders in our cooperative. We congratulate the four students selected to represent 4 Rivers at these events:

- ▶ **BRODY ANDERSON**, Burlington, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour
- ▶ **ELI ERVIN**, Westphalia, Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp
- ▶ **MARISA GHARAMM**, Fall River, Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp
- ▶ **DERGAN TRUE**, Neosho Falls, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

4 Rivers is proud to have such a great group of student leaders represent us this summer. Fostering youth leadership skills helps cultivate the strong leaders of tomorrow.



Brody Anderson
Youth Tour



Dergan True
Youth Tour



Eli Ervin
Leadership Camp



Marisa Ghramm
Leadership Camp