



NEWS

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Lineman Appreciation Day

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men and women are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

Western's linemen are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineman. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic. The job requires linemen to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience, along with a safety commitment to complete the job safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineworker

may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

"We have had an empty chair many times at holiday gatherings," quoted a Western lineman's spouse. "During his absence, the kids and I are always a bit nervous knowing the conditions he is working in, but trust that he is alert and aware of his surroundings. A little prayer for all the guys' safe return always helps as well."

Within west central Kansas and across the country, electric cooperative lineworkers' mission-focused mentality of helping others often extends beyond their commitment to their work at the cooperative. Lineworkers are often familiar figures in the community. Western's linemen are involved in a variety of community involvement including coaching youth sports teams, volunteer fire departments, city councils and civic and church groups.

Monday, April 8, is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of Western's lineworkers, both on and off the job, we encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in the town, please offer them a thank you as well.

Having a Successful Planting Season Rooted in Safety

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Western urges farm workers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.

- ▶ Always be aware of the location of power lines, and designate preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- ▶ Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters, sprayers, cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- ▶ Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending

on dampness, dust and dirt contamination

- ▶ When guy wires (a grounded wire used to stabilize utility poles) are broken, these normally neutral wires can be anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call Western.
- ▶ If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until electric linemen arrive.
- ▶ If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet hitting the ground at the same time.



GETTY IMAGES/I-STOCKR

Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment before the power has been shut off.

Western offers safety demonstrations addressing these scenarios and how to deal with them safely.

For more information, contact us at 800-456-6720 or western@westerncoop.com,

Kansas Electrorally Spring Competition Approaches

Step aside Tesla, the spring competition for Kansas Electrorally is about to begin. Each year, the Kansas Electrorally, with representatives from electric utilities, high school instructors and college vocational technical instructors, offers events in which high school students can compete with small scale electric vehicles. Students from across Kansas build and design a single driver, lightweight, aerodynamic, racing unit within the Electrathon America Design and Event Rules booklet. These cars are powered by two batteries with a maximum weight of 73 pounds.

Competition is based on time and distance, so a race is won by the most laps completed in one hour. Race tracks range in length with a variety of shapes, including sharp turns and curves. Surfaces consist of concrete, asphalt or a combination of both. With speeds up to 30 mph, safety is of utmost importance, so a safety inspection of the car and equipment is mandatory before competition.

Along with building and racing a car, each team is asked to submit a written report. This report is designed to build on the

learning experiences of constructing and racing an electric car.

Once this report is evaluated and awarded points, these points are added to the school's total points for the competition in hopes of taking home the coveted state champion award. Fundraising for these projects can be fun while helping to build partnerships in your community with people and businesses willing to help.

This year's schedule for state races includes:

- ▶ **APRIL 11** – Touchstone Energy West Electrorally, Hoisington
- ▶ **APRIL 25** – Sunflower Electrorally, Scott City
- ▶ **MAY 4** – Touchstone Energy East Electrorally, Olathe

“We’re proud to be a sponsor of this program,” said Tom Ruth, General Manager of Western Cooperative Electric. “Even though winning a race is the goal, the knowledge and experience gained from building and competing with these cars is also valuable.”

For more information about the electric car program in Kansas, please visit www.kansaselectrorally.org

Safety Indoors During a Thunderstorm

With the thunderstorm season upon us, Western wants to be sure that you and your loved ones are aware of the dangers associated with lightning and how to protect yourselves.

If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows with the shades drawn. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining, and you do not have to see clouds. A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables and plumbing.

Avoid water, electric appliances and other objects that could conduct electricity, and use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls. Other recommendations to avoid lightning shock and damage include:

- ▶ Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears—never during. Do not expect a surge protector to save appliances from a lightning strike, unplug it as well.
- ▶ Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools and TVs. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.

- ▶ Turn off your air conditioner to protect the compressor from a power surge and avoid a costly repair job.
 - ▶ Avoid water and contact with piping—including sinks, bathtubs and faucets. Do not wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.
 - ▶ Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains wire mesh.
 - ▶ Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.
 - ▶ Don't forget your pets. Dog houses are not lightning-safe and dogs chained to trees can easily fall victim to a strike.
 - ▶ When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going outside.
- More information on lightning safety can be found at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. Western offers safety demonstrations related to these topics as well. Contact us at 800-456-6720 or western@westerncoop.com.

Mark Your Calendars

May 2019						
S	M	T	W	U	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Annual Meeting is Wednesday, May 8, 2019,
Lunch at noon, meeting 1 p.m.
635 S. 13th St., WaKeeney, KS
Prizes and ice cream

Prepaid Metering

Western will soon offer a prepaid metering option, which is a pay as you go billing option. Benefits include:

- ▶ No deposit
- ▶ No late fees
- ▶ No due date
- ▶ Optional payments and amounts
- ▶ Easy options to monitor usage

2019 Spring Resolution

Preparing for warmer weather with the first day of spring on March 20 could also include preparing to simplify your bill paying process with Western Cooperative Electric. Payment options include bank draft with checking/savings or recurring card (debit/credit).

Additional options include enrolling for e-business (ebiz) or going green by opting for paperless billing. With paperless billing, you may opt to receive text or email notifications to get your information.

Ebiz allows you to see your monthly bill, view daily electric usage, along with historical data, store a payment method and make payments. Using ebiz allows you to enroll in automatic payments.

If you need assistance contact us at 800-456-6720. There are no forms to complete, so signing up is fast, friendly and convenient. Automatic payment guarantees on-time payments, while maintaining an excellent payment history.

Selecting any one of these payment options makes you eligible for a monthly drawing for a \$25 voucher to a local business of your choice. Already signed up for these payment options? Your name will also be included in the drawings. **WESTERN'S MARCH WINNER IS JAN KEITH, OTIS.**

Get a fresh spring start by enrolling in an easy payment option. Enter today for a chance to win.



Register for eBiz

1. Go to www.westerncoop.com
2. On Western's homepage, click the link to eBiz
3. Enter the information requested



GEARED FOR SAFETY

Western’s lineworkers wear special gear to help them stay safe on the job. Can you match the descriptions below with the correct safety equipment? Use the answer key to check your work!

Hard Hat

Safety Goggles

Flame-Resistant Clothing

Insulated Gloves

Equipment Belt

Work Boots



▶ These provide extra protection while lineworkers work with heavy materials that could fall near their feet.

▶ This material keeps lineworkers safe from electrical hazards.

▶ This protects lineworkers from head injuries and falling debris.

▶ These insulated protectors keep lineworkers safe from electrical shock while working on power lines.

▶ These keep debris away from lineworkers’ eyes while on the job.

▶ This is a handy piece of safety gear that holds tools and other equipment.

Answers: 1. Work Boots 2. Flame-Resistant Clothing 3. Hard Hat 4. Insulated Gloves 5. Safety Goggles 6. Equipment Belt