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FAST FACTS ABOUT LINEWORKERS

You probably don't think about them until your power goes out, but electric lineworkers protect our homes and communities 24 hours a day. Like other first responders who keep us safe, lineworkers endure all kinds of weather and challenging conditions.

In April, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Month to honor the men and women who power life. Here are some quick facts about lineworkers and the work they do.

Lineworker history

Lineworkers first appeared during the 1840s rush to spread telegraph service across the U.S., stringing wires between trees and other natural objects. It didn't take long for everyone to realize tall poles were safer and more practical.

What electric lineworkers do

Restoring electricity after a power outage is just one of the many duties of lineworkers, who also:

- Install and connect new power lines to homes and businesses
- Maintain and perform upgrades to improve our electric grid
- Diagnose and pinpoint power delivery issues
- Plan and manage large-scale projects
- Ensure safe work practices in often challenging conditions

Lineworkers are responsible for maintaining and upgrading the nation's electric grid that connects more than 7,300 power plants to 145 million consumers through 60,000 miles of high-voltage lines, millions of miles of distribution lines and more than 50 million transformers.

Geared for safety

Lineworkers climb with up to 40 pounds of safety gear and tools. That's like carrying a 5-gallon water jug! Here's what they typically wear to stay safe while working:

- Hard hats
- Safety glasses
- Flame-resistant clothing
- Arc flash protective clothes
- Rubber gloves & sleeves
- Climbing belts
- Fall-protection harnesses

One hot stick

One essential tool for lineworkers is the hot stick, an insulated fiberglass pole used to safely move energized wires and other equipment. Hot sticks vary in size depending on the job.

The wild side of work

Squirrels and snakes are a major cause of power outages, and lineworkers encounter plenty of both while working. They've also been known to rescue kittens that climbed too high in a tree and curious bears on top of utility poles. When your office is the great outdoors, these encounters are part of the job.

On-the-Job training

Described by the Energy Department as one of the nation's highest-paid professions that doesn't demand postsecondary education, becoming a journeyman lineworker typically requires a high school diploma or equivalent, training and a paid apprenticeship, which typically spans four years. Apprentice lineworkers receive hands-on training and experience in the field before advancing to "journeyman" status.

Inspiring safety

Roughly 60,000 lineworkers hit the road annually to respond to devastating storms and the damage they leave behind. In addition to extreme weather exposure, lineworkers face a variety of dangers, including electric shock, falls from elevated work locations and roadside traffic accidents. High injury rates among early lineworkers led to the creation of apprenticeship programs and organized labor throughout industry.

Safety is always the number one priority, which is why lineworkers continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

Lineworkers power our lives. The next time you see one, remember to thank them for the essential work they do.



Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi's 37th COOPERATIVE LEADERS WORKSHOP

A group of 85 high school juniors from all over the state gathered in Jackson from Feb. 21 to Feb. 23 for the 37th Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi Cooperative Leaders Workshop. The program instills leadership skills, inspires creative thinking, encourages community service, and introduces students to legislative elected officials from their communities. The conference was held at The Westin in downtown Jackson. The students earned the trip to the workshop following a competitive selection process sponsored by their local electric cooperative. They will travel to Washington, D.C. in June for a seven-day youth leadership tour.

Central Electric students Abreale Leflore, Katie Sockey, and Mitch Pucklitsch spent the three days in Jackson with other students from around the state. They met with their state lawmakers, toured the state capitol, participated in problem solving activities, and attended speeches by motivational speakers — including one by political cartoonist Marshall Ramsey — who urged them to serve their communities. Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann and Secretary of State Michael Watson spoke to the students during the workshop.

LEARN. GROW. EXPERIENCE.



A. Katie Sockey, Mitch Pucklitsch, and Abreale Leflore take photos on the first day of the workshop. **B.** More fun photos with Katie, Mitch, and Abreale. **C.** (From left to right) Rep. Jason White, Central Electric youth leaders, and Rep. Scott Brown. **D.** Abreale Leflore, Mitch Pucklitsch, and Katie Sockey stand in front of the state capitol.

Celebrate Earth Day:

WHY TAKING STEPS TO CONSERVE MATTERS

by **Miranda Boutelle**

Earth Day is April 22, a time when we celebrate this beautiful planet we are lucky to call home. During this day of appreciation, I encourage you to take action at home by making changes to conserve energy. If we all contribute, even small adjustments and changes to how much energy we use can have positive impacts.

Electricity is essential to our daily lives. It gives us opportunities to learn, keeps us safe and comfortable, and provides entertainment. The downside is that every source of energy generation has consequences. Fossil fuels emit carbon. Hydropower dams limit the passage of migrating fish. Even solar panels can't be made without mining minerals. Using less electricity is a way to mitigate the impact of producing the electricity that powers our lives.

Before diving into ways to use less energy, it's important to know the difference between conservation and energy efficiency. Energy efficiency refers to equipment that uses less energy to do the same job. For example, ENERGY STAR®-certified refrigerators keep your food just as fresh as standard models but use about 9% less energy to do it, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Conservation is using less energy by changing behavior and practices. For example, adjusting your thermostat to be closer to the temperature outside or turning off the lights or a ceiling fan when you leave the room conserves energy.

Conservation has the best return on investment. It's often free and can save a little or a lot — depending on what you are changing and how drastic of a change you make.

Let's start with what's typically the biggest energy user in the average household: heating, ventilation and air conditioning

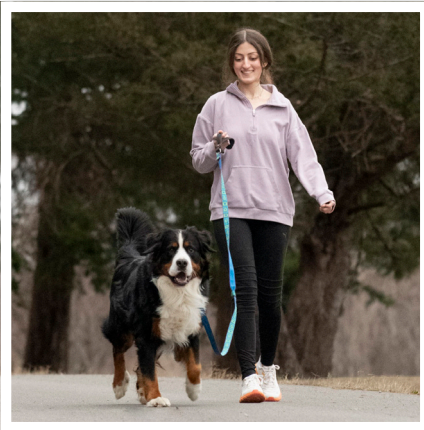
(HVAC) equipment. Save energy while you sleep by programming your thermostat to be a few degrees closer to the outside temperature at night. In colder climates, add an extra blanket or comforter to your bed to keep you warm.

Typically, the second biggest energy user is the water heater. Replacing an electric storage water heater with a heat pump/hybrid water heater is a great example of an energy efficient project. Adjusting the temperature setting to the recommended 120 degrees and using less hot water in your home conserves energy. Wash clothes in cold water. When washing dishes, don't let the hot water run longer than necessary.

Earth Day also lends itself to thinking of ways we can connect with each other and limit our screen time. Look for electricity-free opportunities with your family or community. I like to unplug and get outside with friends and family. Going for a hike, a walk or even just spending time in your yard or local park is a great way to reconnect with others and nature. Before you head out, adjust that thermostat and turn off everything possible. Unplug chargers from outlets and turn off all electronics and lights.

I am grateful for this planet we call home. It offers so much to sustain us. Any small changes we can make to benefit the planet can add up if we all pitch in.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.



Before you go for a walk with your two- or four-legged companions, adjust the thermostat and turn off everything possible. Unplug chargers from outlets and turn off all electronics and lights.



On Earth Day, think of ways your family can limit screen time and connect with each other.



Look for electricity-free opportunities with your family, such as starting a game night.