

CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Enlightener

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LIGHTBULB WINNERS

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- ▶ Clint Darnell
- ▶ Tony Dinh
- ▶ Ben Dome
- ▶ Dean Fieser
- ▶ Lory Finke
- ▶ Jennalee Galese

Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!

NONDISCRIMINATION

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

YOU HAVE A VOICE AT YOUR

CO-OP

CMS Annual Meeting May 2, 2024

The 2024 CMS Annual Meeting of the Members will be Thursday, May 2, 2024, at Meade County Fairgrounds in Meade, Kansas. There will be a delicious meal catered by John Ross & Co. Signature Catering for all cooperative members and their immediate family starting at 5:30 p.m.

The business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Business will include reports on cooperative activities and the election of trustees. Valuable prizes and many energy credit certificates will be given away at the conclusion of the meeting. You must be present at the time of drawings to win.

**Please don't
miss your
annual meeting.
Your participation
is important!**

**JOIN US MAY 2
MEETING AT 6:30 P.M.
MEADE COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS**

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**



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.

WHATEVER

Powering Life, From a Lineworker's Perspective



Michael Bushnell
Coldwater
District Manager

Lineworkers are ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. The lineworkers at CMS Electric work rain or shine, in often challenging conditions to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8, 2024. The following column was written by Michael Bushnell, one of our district managers.

My name is Michael Bushnell, and I'm a district manager in Coldwater, previously one of 14 lineworkers at CMS Electric who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community has 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 into what we face and more importantly, why we do it.

THE DANGER

A lot of people know linework is dangerous because we work near high-voltage electricity. Move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, and it could be deadly. We have to be aware of our surroundings and the safety of the person next to us. We often work on energized power lines, and we can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. We'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. I'm 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 lineworker. We typically start as a groundperson, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then we transition to apprentice status, which typically spans four years. After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training under our belts, we transition to journeyman lineworker status — that's when we're considered officially trained in our field.

But the education is ongoing. Lineworkers 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 lineworker are physically demanding, but you won't hear any of us complain about that. 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

IT TAKES:

BY MICHAEL BUSHNELL, COLDWATER DISTRICT MANAGER

be hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job. Most of us are just glad to spend our days outside.

THE SACRIFICES

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm sometimes first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. We don't know what type of situation we're going to face or when we're going to face it. We get calls at all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed a lot of sporting events and family dinners, but my family is very supportive, and it pays off in the end. 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 co-op is my second family, and

the line crews are a brotherhood (and sisterhood). In this work, we have to depend on the person beside us 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 everybody 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.

CMS 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 — so you can get back to normal life.



How long will it take to RESTORE POWER?

Depending on the reason(s) for a power outage, power can be restored relatively quickly, or it can take a few hours or more. Restoring power safely and efficiently is always the goal.

The length of time to get the power restored depends on several factors including:

- ▶ The extent of a storm's destruction.
- ▶ The number of outages.
- ▶ How much time it takes to troubleshoot the issue(s).
- ▶ The exact cause(s) of the outages.
- ▶ Whether it is safe for utility crews to get to the damaged areas.



According to the Energy Information Administration, in 2021 Power Outages in the U.S.:

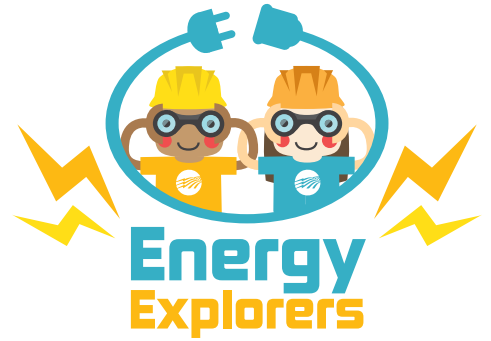
- ▶ Lasted an average of two hours, excluding major storm events.
- ▶ Were resolved after a little more than seven hours, including major storm events.
- ▶ Equaled 1.42 events per consumer per year.

To Stay Safe:

- ▶ If you are already inside, stay inside until the power is restored.
- ▶ Never approach a downed power line as it could be energized and deadly.
- ▶ Do not enter a flooded basement since the water could be energized.
- ▶ Keep a portable generator at least 20 feet away from all doors and windows.
- ▶ Do not turn off the power or flip a switch if you are standing in water.
- ▶ When cleaning up storm damage, look up and look out for overhead power lines.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

LINEWORKER SAFETY GEAR WORD SEARCH



Lineworkers use a variety of gear to stay safe while working near power lines and other electrical equipment.

Read about their safety gear below, then find and circle the **BLUE** words in the puzzle.

- ▶ Safety **GOGGLES** keep debris out of a lineworker's eyes while they work.
- ▶ Rubber **GLOVES** are insulated and protect lineworkers from electric shock.
- ▶ Steel toe **BOOTS** provide extra protection when lineworkers lift heavy objects.
- ▶ **HARD HATS** protect lineworkers from potential head injuries.
- ▶ Lineworkers wear a safety **HARNES**S to prevent falls while climbing poles or working in a bucket.
- ▶ Lineworkers use a **HOT STICK**, an insulated tool made from fiberglass, when working on energized lines.

