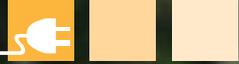




Five Steps to DIG SAFELY:

1. **NOTIFY:** Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you dig.
2. **WAIT:** Wait Two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility line.
3. **CONFIRM:** Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.
4. **RESPECT:** Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.
5. **DIG CAREFULLY:** If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18–24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.





NEVER GIVE UP

Giving up and going home during a storm isn't an option for linemen, and it was never an option for Tangie Schendel or her beloved dog, Cinch, either. This commonality has now bonded an Oakdale Electric Cooperative crew to a dog and her owner forever.

Cinch, a 3 ½-year-old female border collie, always enjoyed exploring the sights and scents of the great outdoors. She never roamed far and always came back. In January, that all changed when her nose tracked a rabbit trail that lured her away from home for 10 straight days.

Tangie was grief-stricken but determined to bring Cinch home. She searched by foot, car, even horseback, visited and placed calls to local animal shelters, and shared posts on social media. Giving up was never a consideration.

Six days and nights passed without any sighting of this loving, mild-mannered dog, before a series of lucky breaks occurred.



Cinch was spotted alive.

With this newfound information, Tangie persevered with hope her dog would return home.

"I stopped at the shelter daily asking if they had any updates on my brown and white border collie," shared Tangie.

A project received approval.

To improve reliability, Oakdale Electric Cooperative converted the overhead line that crossed Interstate 90 to underground service. The removal of the overhead line required coordination with multiple organizations to complete because traffic would need to be stopped in both directions.

Glenn Pampuch, operations manager, stated, "This type of project requires advanced planning, and ultimately the State Patrol dictates when the project will occur."

He added, "It was decided the safest date for work was January 28. We were provided this notification two weeks prior to the start date."

In the right place at the right time.

Upon arrival at the project site, a shape underneath the pine tree brush caught the line crew's eyes. A dog was discovered

nestled in the snow, and they hurriedly carried it back to the bucket truck.

The friendly dog with the purple collar cozied itself right into the lineman's lap.

"We were just lucky that we were there to pull the pole," Construction Foreman Joe Engel acknowledged.

He continued, "We took the dog to Monroe County Animal Shelter. The volunteers knew it was Cinch immediately."

When Tangie received confirmation that her best friend was found alive, she drove, in her own words, "a little too fast to get to her."

Winter weather conditions remained mild.

A stretch of warm nights kept Cinch from freezing. Her placement in the ditch provided additional protection from the elements while keeping her hidden from predators.

"Cinch was very lucky the nights were so mild," Engel stated, "but she is also a tough girl."

It is said that dogs often take on the same personality traits as their owner. This could not be truer for these two. Cinch was hurt, but she fought to stay alive for Tangie.

Health report was positive.

When volunteers initially took Cinch in their arms, a crunching noise had them think the worse. A veterinarian examination revealed that Cinch had a dislocated hip, torn ACL, and nerve damage, all the result of being hit by a car. Cinch, luckily, had no broken bones.

Tangie was advised that surgery, costing \$3,000, would provide Cinch a great quality of life; otherwise, leg amputation was the next best option.

“I just love this dog,” Tangie simply stated.

Community support shown.

With a big decision ahead of her, unbeknownst to Tangie, another break was in the works.

“My aunt created a GoFundMe page [an online fundraiser] to raise money to pay for Cinch’s surgery,” Tangie stated.

Donations flooded in, and the full surgery costs were quickly raised. “I am just overwhelmed by the support and love. It’s awesome!” exclaimed Tangie.

Cinch underwent surgery a week following her rescue to remove the knob on her femur bone, which will allow her leg to go back into place. With a successful surgery under her purple collar, Cinch has a long road to recovery, but she is going to be okay.

“I am just so thankful the guys were there,” Tangie said.



Cinch is carried to an Oakdale Electric Cooperative truck after linemen spotted her in the ditch on a job site on Hwy. 171. Once safely inside the truck, she cozied up to her rescuers.



Linemen don’t go home until the storm is over and service is restored.

After the storm Tangie and Cinch (now nicknamed Lucky) weathered, home is exactly where they want to be. Together, they never gave up.—*Deana Protz*



Cinch is surrounded by her owner, Tangie Schendel, and her co-op rescue team, Eric Flock, Cory Johnson, Joe Engel, and Dane Pasch.





ELECTRICITY DOESN'T GIVE YOU A SECOND CHANCE

“Even at 120 volts, the amount of electricity inside your school and home, is enough to stop your heart,” Journeyman Lineman Brock Brown informed students at recent electrical safety demonstrations in the Tomah and Sparta School Districts. He stated further, “You can’t pull your hand away fast enough to avoid the potential deadly contact with electricity.”

Brown has led the electrical safety demonstrations for the past 10 years, and spoken to over 10,000 area youth. As a parent himself, he believes in the importance of Oakdale Electric Cooperative visiting schools to talk electrical safety. “I never want to learn of a child hurt by electricity, ever,” Brown said.

Students are listening and taking what they learn home. Parent and Tomah Area School District Principal JoLynn Schmidt stated, “My son came home worried about orange wire he saw on an extension cord, and we addressed it immediately. It is great to see the impact this presentation has on day-to-day situations in the lives



of kids and promoting safety!”

The presentation starts with youth dressing up as electrical lineworkers to demonstrate the equipment crew members use to stay safe on the job. Brown next goes through various situations, and how to safely respond. This includes walking around a tree to ensure it is not touching a power line before climbing up. Brown educates students to stay inside their vehicle if it were to collide with an electric pole. “Unless your vehicle starts on fire,

and then you have to get out,” Brown explained, showing how to properly jump and shuffle to safety.

The presentation closes with a visual of a hotdog touching a power line to show the reality of what electricity can do to a person’s body. “Electricity doesn’t give you a second chance,” Brown stated.

Oakdale Electric Cooperative provides electrical safety demonstrations to schools, organizations, and more. For more information, contact Deana Protz at 608-372-431 or dprotz@oakdalerec.com.

Provide a Valuable Service To Your Community. Become a lineworker.

A \$1,000 scholarship is available for a high school senior pursuing a post-secondary education in an electrical lineworker program. View oakdalerec.com for more details.

#ThankALineman



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Oakdale Electric Cooperative

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Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
24-Hour Emergency Power Restoration: 800-927-6151
Toll-free Online Bill Payment 866-392-4307

Diggers Hotline: For underground cable locates and power line clearance information, call 800-242-8511.