



THANK A LINEMAN ON APRIL 12



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Oakdale Electric Cooperative, I bet you would picture a lineworker. Among the the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That’s why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at Oakdale Electric Cooperative, it’s important to note that

there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-op. Member service representatives are always standing by to take your calls and questions. Our information technology (IT) experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn’t be able to “bring the light” to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent Oakdale Electric Cooperative, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, I hope you’ll join me in thanking them for their exceptional service. I also hope you’ll remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep.

Chris Tackmann, General Manager/CEO

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees...it’s important to note that there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes.



Meet the linemen who bring the light: (l to r) Bobby Thompson, Stew Walters, Cory Johnson, Eric Flock, Tommy Liddane, John Ollendick, Ryan Betthausen, Josh Von Haden, Dane Pasch, Joe Engel, Kurt Starkey, Ethan Thorson, Pat Eirschele, Andy Steele, Quinten Reuterskiold, Dalton Linzmeier, and Brock Brown. Not pictured: Travis Moser



IT TAKES TEAMWORK TO BRING THE LIGHT



Oakdale Electric Cooperative’s operations department, which includes 16 journeymen linemen and two apprentice linemen, is responsible for the construction, maintenance, and operation of the electrical distribution system. They are tasked with bringing the light across five counties, for a total of 2,736 miles of underground and overhead lines.

Lineworkers work in challenging, dangerous situations to keep the lights on.

“It takes a dedicated individual to be a lineworker,” stated Glenn Pampuch, operations manager. “Our lineworkers are the

first responders of our electric distribution system, and they work around the clock on high-voltage lines. Conditions can be dangerous, but they power through to ensure reliable service for our members.”

In order for the linemen to succeed, they must also have equally dedicated co-workers supporting and surrounding them. Pampuch concurred by stating, “We must all work together, and depend on each other, because that is what makes a cooperative successful.”

Let’s learn how linemen’s fellow cooperative employees work to bring the light.



Paul Gerke, Mechanic

I bring the light with reliable transportation.

A lineman’s job is reliant on their transportation, and my job is to ensure they have what they need to get their job done. I provide the routine maintenance to the co-op’s fleet of 32 trucks, 19 trailers, and 16 equipment vehicles to keep them running. This also includes ordering parts, purchasing vehicles, and making service repairs when and wherever needed, include on-site of a job. If it’s a new repair I have never performed before, I enjoy the challenge of researching the service needed to make it operate again. It’s a great feeling knowing that I am able to fix most repairs needed in-house to help the crews do their jobs.



Lori Larsen, Operations Assistant

I bring the light with communication.

Communication is a key duty in my position. I am in constant communication with our linemen all day long. This includes in-person and by radio, cell phone, iPad, and Outage Management System [OMS] software. When an outage occurs, I communicate the exact outage location and the number of members affected. I consistently update and push out mapping changes to the linemen’s iPads to ensure location accuracy during line maintenance or storm situations. The linemen know I am always here for them, by being only a radio call away, and I am proud to provide that assistance.



Travis Champlin, Field Engineer

I bring the light with line design.

When a member contacts the co-op for new service, electrical line extensions or service upgrades, as a field engineer, I’m the first employee they meet. I provide on-site evaluations to discuss their project’s electrical needs. With that information in hand, I prepare work orders, digger’s tickets, easements, permits, and finally design the staking sheets for overhead and underground electrical line system improvements. All of these steps are completed in preparation for the linemen to complete the construction. My journeyman lineman background provides me with the knowledge and skills to designing line “blueprints” that are best for both the members and the linemen.



Chad Schauf, IT Director

I bring the light with technology.

iPads are now a required piece of equipment that all linemen are equipped with to be connected to the co-op. The information they need, mapping systems and resource manuals, have to be right at their fingertips, no matter their location. It's my responsibility to not only setup their iPads, but ensure all crew members have the skills and knowledge to use them successfully. A lineman's main responsibility is to keep the lights on, and I never want to endanger their safety by distracting them with complicated technology. For that reason, everything I push out, I try to make as simple and user-friendly as possible, for all ability levels. My door is always open to teach, train, and build relationships with our linemen through technology.



Kurt Spolum, GIS Specialist

I bring the light with data measurement.

In my role at the co-op, providing accurate data from the office to the field is essential. I provide continual trouble-shooting assistance by monitoring voltage, blinking lights, and transformer loading. In simpler terms, I track areas of the electrical system, by plotting historical outage data, to be improved in the future. The data I collect is presented to the engineering department to use for line redesign improvement projects, which in turn, our linemen use for construction. I am proud to use my expertise in Geographical Information System management to help our crews improve our system's reliability.



Ben Bella, Safety + Compliance Coordinator

I bring the light with safety.

Safety is at the forefront of each and every decision made at the cooperative, and I am honored to have the opportunity to assist in providing timely and relevant information, training, and guidance within the ever-changing areas of state and federal regulations. Employees are required to adhere to the rules of OSHA, DOT, EPA, and DNR and we strive to not only meet these requirements, but exceed them through various policies, procedures, programs, documentations, and discussions. My number one goal, every day, is to ensure all linemen have the tools, knowledge, and resources to return home to their families at night in exactly the same shape they left in morning.

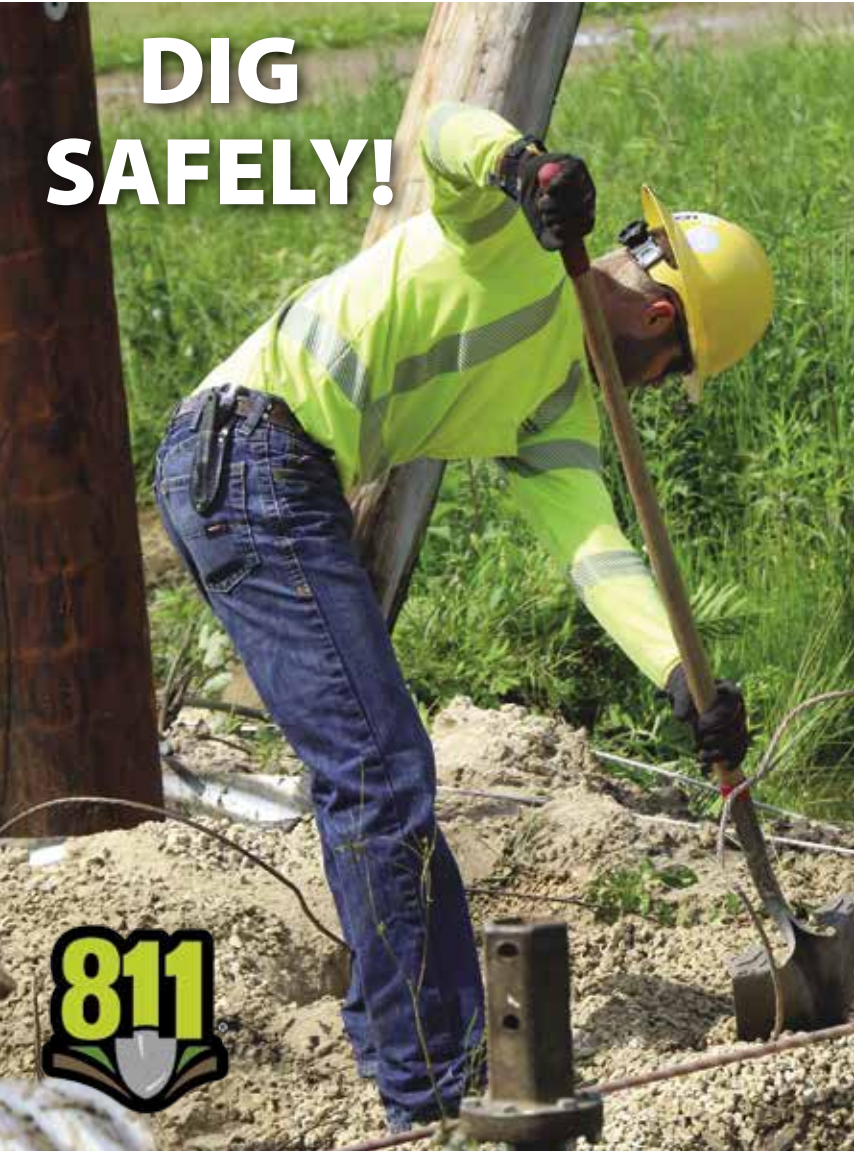


SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Oakdale Electric Cooperative helps members bring the light in their future professions by providing post-secondary education scholarship. The three scholarship programs available include: Lineworker, At-Large/Non-Traditional, and Youth Essay Contest.

For more information visit www.oakdalerec.com/scholarships or contact Deana Protz at dprotz@oakdalerec.com.

DIG SAFELY!



Five Steps for Safe Digging

1. **NOTIFY:** Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your request.
2. **WAIT:** Wait two to three days for a response to your request. They 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.

Annual Meeting

We invite our members to attend the 86th Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 17 at 5 p.m. at Oakdale Electric Cooperative, in the service area.






The Annual Report will be published in the June issue of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*. There will not be a separate mailing for the Annual Report.



Chris Tackmann, General Manager/CEO


P.O. Box 40, Oakdale, WI 54649
608-372-4131 • 800-241-2468

   info@oakdalerec.com

Deana Protz, Editor



**Oakdale Electric
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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.