



MESSAGE FROM THE COOPERATIVE

Whatever it takes: Powering life, from a lineworker's perspective



Josh Johnson
LINEWORKER



Greg "Fuzz" Lemon
LINEWORKER

Being an electric lineworker is ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. The linemen at Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative work rain or shine, often in challenging conditions, to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8, 2024. The following column provides valuable information and perspective from two HWEC linemen, Josh Johnson and Greg "Fuzz" Lemon

My name is Josh Johnson and I work at our West Salem location, and I'm Greg Lemon (most people know me as Fuzz) and I work out of our Millersburg location. As linemen, we work any day, in any weather, to make sure our community has the power to live their lives. It's hard work, but it's very rewarding. We hope this will give you a better look into what we face and, more importantly, why we do it.

The danger

Many people know line work 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 often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. We work 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. We often work in storms with rain and wind, in 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. At HWEC, a lineworker starts as an apprentice, which requires 8,000 hours of on-the-job specific training as well as completion of classroom work and testing at COLT (Central Ohio Lineworker Training). Becoming a Class A lineman after completing this training doesn't mean our education ends. Learning 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 we don't complain. I know what I signed up for — loading heavy materials, climbing poles, and in

and out of buckets. Often, we go places the trucks can't, maybe hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job. Most days, we're just glad to be outside.

The sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. One of the most difficult scenarios is being 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. We get calls at all hours. We can all share times when we've missed a lot of our kids' sporting events, social activities, and family dinners, but we are so fortunate to have families that are very supportive. We understand together that our job allows us to help our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

It's worth it

One thing that makes this job worthwhile is the camaraderie. We both agree that HWEC is our second family, and the line crews are a brotherhood. In this work, we 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.

We have a lot of pride in our work. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "thank you" from the house, or bring out some cookies and coffee when you've been working long hours after a storm.

HWEC 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 restore power as quickly and safely as possible, so you can get back to enjoying all the day-to-day benefits electricity provides.



Thank you, lineworkers!

Holmes-Wayne Electric is recognizing and expressing our appreciation to our lineworkers and their families for their dedication and commitment to our community.

Our lineworkers (shown on the front cover of this magazine) are:

- Steve Asbury**
- Zach Condren**
- Alec Eldridge**
- Bowe Firebaugh**
- Hunter Flinger**
- Logan Huffman**
- Steve James**
- Josh Johnson**
- Greg Lemon**
- Cole Marley**
- Mike Martin**
- Michael Maurer**
- Matt Morris**
- Carter Quay**
- Mike Rowe**
- Nathan Shaffer**
- Garrett Smith**
- Zach Snow**
- Cody Spreng**
- Sean Stewart**



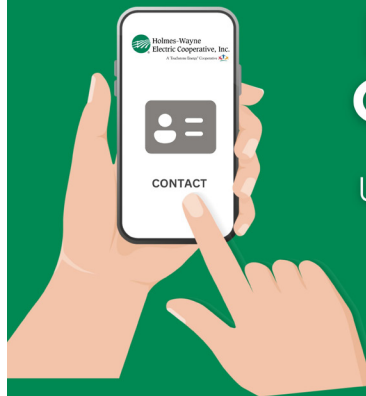
SPRING SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMERS



We serve a beautiful agriculture community. Farmers, don't forget to look up during planting season. Always maintain a minimum of 10 feet of clearance from power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters and sprayers near power lines.

If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately and remain inside the cab until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.

To the rest of us, don't forget to allow proper distance and space in sharing the roadways with large agricultural equipment.



LET'S STAY CONNECTED

Update your contact info to stay in the know about service updates and important alerts.

Want to be contacted for planned outages, tree trimming and easy outage reporting? Make sure we have your up-to-date contact information. Easy form on our website - www.hwecoop.com or our mobile app - SmartHub or call us toll-free at 866-674-1055.

Protect new trees by putting them in safe places

“Why can’t they just leave my trees alone?”

If you’ve ever wondered that as you’ve watched a tree-trimming crew change the look of your favorite tree, you’ll find the reason in rural Ohio. On the steamy afternoon of August 14, 2003 — with everyone’s air conditioners cranked up to their highest settings — a sagging transmission power line in the state came in contact with nearby tree branches. In minutes, 45 million Americans and 10 million Canadians had no electricity and no air conditioning.

Transmission lines, which crisscross North America, are a critical element of the U.S. power grid. The giant wires suspended from poles or towers can carry enough electricity to power more than a million homes, moving it from distant power plants to electric cooperatives and other users.



Federal regulators placed most of the blame for the 2003 blackout on technology that failed to reroute power properly after the line touched the trees. But they also recognized the problem wouldn’t have happened if those trees had been a safe distance away from the line. The outage led to strict rules your electric co-op and other utilities are required to follow to prevent blackouts.

Co-ops must document that all equipment and power lines are a safe distance from trees and other vegetation. If one of our tree-trimming crews visited your home, it was likely because your trees were closer to power lines than the rules allow, and we are legally required to act.

The last thing we want to do is alter or remove a prized part of your landscaping. We’d rather help you avoid conflict between electricity and greenery altogether. How? By reminding you to plant your new trees, shrubs, or other vegetation where they won’t grow into power lines or other electric equipment.

When you want to plant a tree or shrub, consider how it’s going to grow over the next 20 or 30 years. Consider both the eventual height and how wide the canopy of branches is likely to spread. Even small trees and shrubs that can reach 15 feet tall should be planted at least 20 feet from power lines. Trees that will be 40 feet high or less should be at least 25 feet from electricity, and larger trees should be at least 50 feet away.

Considering what’s above the ground is only part of tree-planting safety. Before you start digging, contact 8-1-1 to have underground utility lines marked so you won’t accidentally cut into any lines.

In case of problems, crews need clear access to pad-mounted transformers. That’s why, if you have one in your yard, you should keep plantings at least 10 feet from the transformer’s doors and at least 4 feet from its sides.

Finally, if you notice your trees or other vegetation have grown dangerously close to power lines or equipment, don’t try to trim them on your own. Let your local electric co-op know or hire a professional arborist. Tree-trimming is more dangerous than most people realize, and you don’t want to find yourself in the emergency room — or be the person who plunges your neighbors into the dark!



FEBRUARY

POWER STUDENTS



Josiah Charton

Son of
Scott and Kim Charton
6th grade
Norwayne



Ellen Holmes

Daughter of
Aaron and Kathryn Holmes
7th grade
Triway

Congratulations to our local Power Students and future community leaders! Power Students is an opportunity for HWEC to recognize students in grades 6 through 8 for their hard work and dedication to education. The next drawing May 10!

Do you have one in your house and live on our lines? Submit your student to win \$30 gift card. To learn more, visit our website www.hwecoop.com/community



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