Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

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The power behind your power

By Anne Prince

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While Clinton County Elelctric Cooperative strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – cooperative lineworkers.

APRIL 9, 2018 IS LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY.

One of the most dangerous jobs

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers often must climb 40 or more feet in the air, carrying heaving equipment to restore power. Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., lineworkers must perform detailed tasks next to high voltage power lines. To help keep them safe, lineworkers wear specialized protective clothing and equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds additional weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They are also information experts that can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their laptops and cell phones to map outages, take pictures of the work they have done and troubleshoot problems. In our community, Clinton County Electric lineworkers are responsible for keeping 1,056 miles of lines in parts of six counties working, to bring power to your home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools that lineworkers use have changed over the years, namely the use of technology, the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineworker is not a glamourous profession. At its essence, it is inherently dangerous, requiring them to work near high voltage lines in the worst of conditions, at any times of the day or night. During hurricanes, wildfires or storms, crews often work around the clock to restore power. While April is known for spring showers, there is also a day set aside to "thank a lineworker."

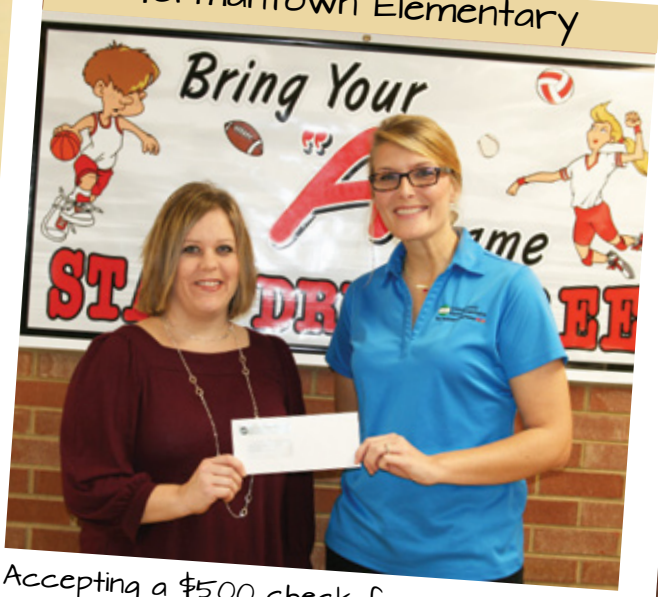
Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 9. So during the month of April, if you see a lineworker, please pause to say thank you to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate the hard work they do to keep the lights on, regardless of the conditions.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Grants awarded

Grants totaling $4,000 were awarded to area teachers through the Touchstone Energy 2017/2018 Classroom Empowerment Grant Program. Clinton County Electric Cooperative awarded checks to the following participants:

Germantown Elementary



Accepting a $500 check from Carrie Trame of Clinton County Electric Cooperative is Cheri Markwell, kindergarten teacher at Germantown Elementary.

Trenton Elementary School

Third grade Trenton Elementary School teacher Sara Barton accepts a $500 check from CCEC representative Carrie Trame.

Bartelso Elementary School

Fourth grade teacher Dianne Schroeder accepts a check for $500 from CCEC representative Carrie Trame.

Wesclin Middle School

Accepting a $500 check from Carrie Trame of Clinton County Electric Cooperative is Amy Woods, fourth grade teacher at Wesclin Middle School.

Wesclin High School

Cooperative employee Carrie Trame presented a check for $500 to Wesclin High School on behalf of a grant written by special education teacher Heather Klein.

ST. Rose School

A check for $500 was presented to Bev Kapp teacher at St. Rose School. Pictured left to right are Kapp and CCEC representative Carrie Trame.

Carlyle Junion High School

Carrie Trame, CCEC representative, presents a check in the amount of $1,000 to Carlyle Junior High School on behalf of grants written by special education teacher Tara Joiner (left) and library media specialist LuAlice Kampwerth (middle).

Clinton County Electric Cooperative wins statewide safety award

The annual Safety Supervisory Technical Conference (SST), sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, was recently held at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel in Decatur. The SST helps to keep cooperative attendees up-to-date on changes to safety procedures and topics of importance to their positions at their electric cooperatives.

This year's attendees heard information from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Vice President Corey Parr on trending injuries/accidents, its near miss reporting program and new job briefing app. Other topics included the Illinois Electric Cooperative Apprentice program, work zone safety, fall protection/rescue techniques for structures, towers and poles, and an OSHA update.

During the meeting, individual and cooperative safety leadership awards were presented. Cooperative safety leadership award nominations were submitted by cooperatives which had to document that their cooperative met a series of required and some optional criteria to prove their demonstration of safety awareness, leadership and culture. It also gave them an opportunity to showcase practices that went above and beyond what is normally required. All nominations were reviewed by an independent AIEC panel which made award recommendations.

Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc., Breese, was one of three electric cooperatives recognized for their exceptional commitment to safety. Accepting the award on behalf of Clinton County Electric were (l-r): Underground Line Foreman Mike Faust, Engineer Jared Kampwerth and Journeyman Lineman Jason Deering.

Effective
April 1, 2018,
the price of a 50-gallon water heater will be $250.