



WHATEVER IT TAKES

Our Heroes Wear Hard Hats

On Lineworker Appreciation Day, and every day, we salute the power behind your power

In the cooperative world we are celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8 this year. It's a day to express our appreciation to the men and women who work so hard for us every day. They work all hours of the day, often in dangerous conditions away from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to our members. While we appreciate our lineworkers every day, we commemorate them every April to give them the recognition they deserve. Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative invites our members to take a moment to thank a lineworker for all the work that they do. If you use electricity, a lineworker has had an impact on your life. When the lights go out, so do they.

In 2024 we celebrate these work anniversaries of our linemen, pictured above:

Back Row, L to R:

- Kyle Glaus – 1 yr
- Tyler Jones – 5 yrs
- Quentin Muska – 3 yrs
- Eric Zurakowski – 1 yr
- Trevin Jensen – 3.5 yrs

Front Row, L to R:

- Kevin Scheidler, Line Superintendent – 24 yrs
- Ben Modl – 5 yrs
- Zach Sonnentag – 4 yrs
- Ed Rosseter – 6 yrs
- Chris Larson – 10 yrs
- Greg Olmstead – 5 yrs
- Dan Ferris – 33 yrs
- Nic Alberson, Operations Manager – 15 yrs



Powering Life, from a Lineworker's Perspective

By Dan Ferris, Journeyman Lineworker

My name is Dan Ferris and I'm one of 10 lineworkers at Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community has the power to live their lives. I love my job—I've been at CVEC for 33 years. 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 Many 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. You have to be aware of your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you. We often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. There's always an element of danger, and 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, wind, extreme heat or 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.

Continued



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 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 be outside.

The Sacrifices There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires, and damage from severe storms. You don't know what type of situation you're going to face or when you're going to face it. We get calls all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed a lot of time with my kids, grandkids, 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. In this work, you have to depend on the person beside you 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.

CVEC and its employees are members of this community. We live in the same neighborhoods. We shop at the same stores. Our kids, or grandkids, 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.

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.

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.

Journeyman Lineworker

Post-apprenticeship and with roughly 7,000+ hours of training under the belt, journeyman lineworkers are fully trained in their field. They repair, update and install overhead and underground power lines, as well as other electrical equipment.

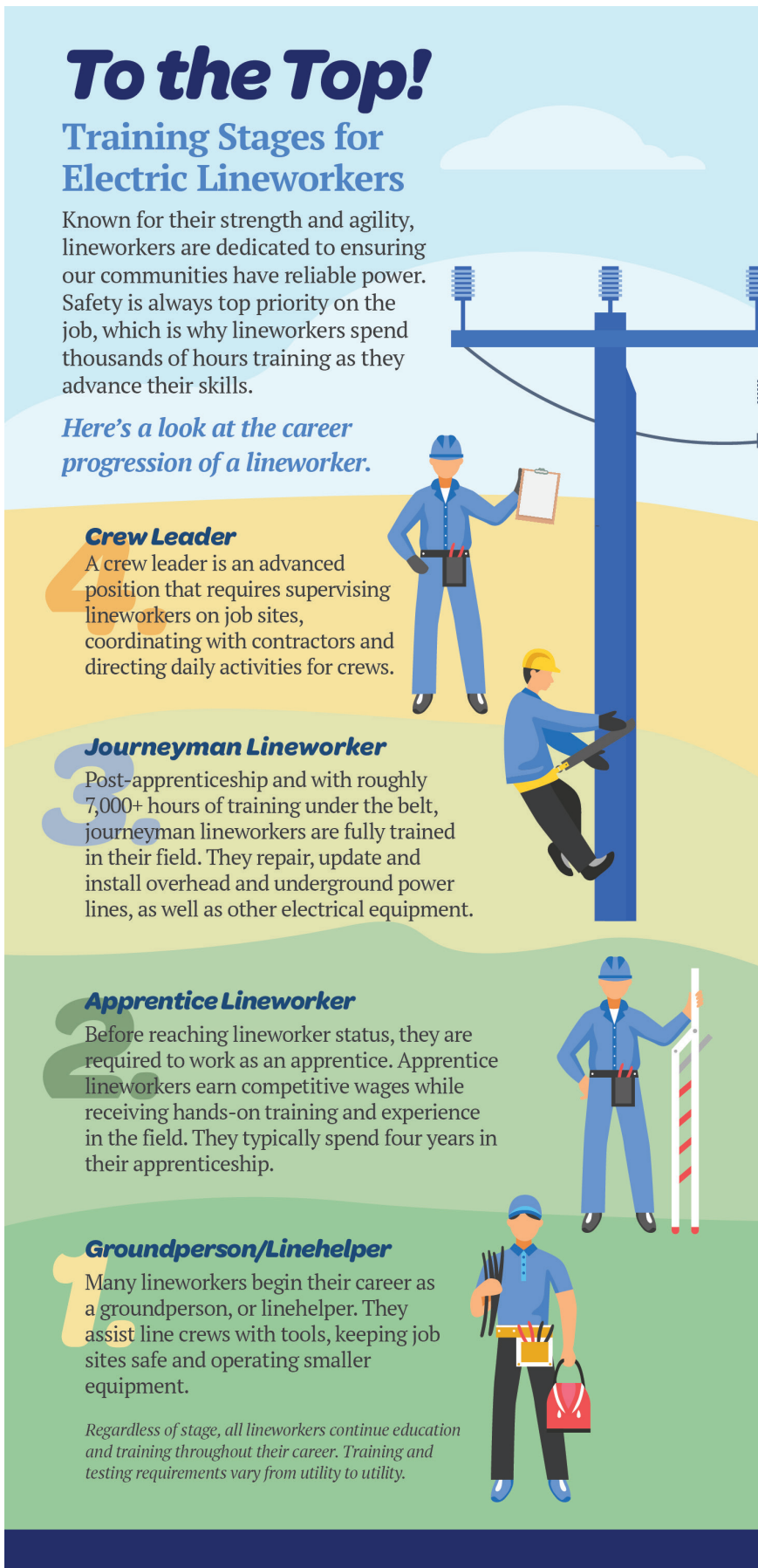
Apprentice Lineworker

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.

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.



CALLING ALL THIRD-GRADERS:

You're invited to participate in the
Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's

ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative by **April 30, 2024**, for a chance to win a **\$25 gift card!** The top three posters will be entered into the statewide poster contest for a chance to win one of three great prizes:

- 1st place – Chromebook**
- 2nd place – \$100 Gift Card**
- 3rd place – \$75 Gift Card**

Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include completed entry form and student's name on the back of the poster.

Go to www.weca.coop for more information.



SAFETY POSTER CONTEST REGISTRATION AND RULES

By entering the contest, each contestant and/or parent/guardian agrees the submission is the artist's original work and consents to use of the artist's first and last name and artwork in publications, exhibits, displays, social media, and websites, as determined by the local electric cooperative and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. Original drawing/artwork will not be returned to the participant.

Rules:

- Free entry
- One entry per third-grade student
- The poster must be themed around Electrical Safety
- No computer-generated images will be accepted
- Poster should be at least 8.5x11-inches, but no larger than 11x14-inches
- Entries must include completed entry form (at right)
- Student's name must be written on the back of the poster
- Entries must be submitted to your local electric cooperative no later than April 30, 2024

Form **MUST** be filled out completely to be entered into the contest.

Student's Name: _____ Student's Age: _____

Student's School: _____

Parents/Guardian Name: _____

Parents/Guardian Email: _____

Parents/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Electric Cooperative: _____



Your Cooperative **CVVEC** Powering Your Future
CO-OP NEWS
CELEBRATING OUR CO-OP COMMUNITY!

Calling All Third-Graders

CVVEC, along with Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), is sponsoring an electrical safety poster contest again this year. Deadline to submit an original poster to CVVEC is April 30, 2024, for a chance to win a \$25 gift card. The top three posters will be entered into the statewide poster contest for a chance to win one of three great prizes: first place, Chromebook; second place, \$100 gift card; third place, \$75 gift card. (See page 16 for more details.)



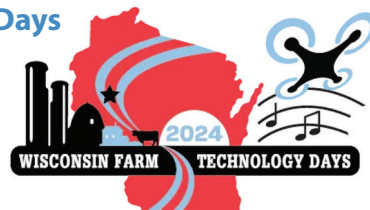
Youth Leadership Conference

The annual Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) will be at UW-Stout on July 16-18, 2024. The YLC is a dynamic three-day event for high school students across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative business. High school sophomores and juniors with family members who belong to CVVEC are eligible. To request an application, please contact CVVEC at cvec@cve.coop or call 715.239.6800. Applications are due to CVVEC by June 14, 2024.



WI Farm Technology Days

Save the Date: August 13-15, 2024. Hosted at two CVVEC member locations, Close Farms and Chippewa Valley Music Fest grounds. CVVEC is sponsoring this event and will be there with the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon and our live high-voltage safety demonstration. As the largest outdoor agricultural event in the state, Wisconsin Farm Technology Days welcomes more than 45,000 attendees, with more than 500 commercial and education vendors. You won't want to miss it!



If you are interested in volunteering for this extraordinary community event, contact Barb Close, closebj5@gmail.com, or Cheryl Scheidler, cl_petska@yahoo.com.

Now accepting sponsors and exhibitors. This is a show you don't want to miss. wifarmtechdays.org

Scholarship Deadline: April 1

There may still be time. Graduating high school seniors from co-op member families are eligible to apply for one of many CVVEC scholarships. The application can be found at cveccoop.com. All applications and supporting documentation must be in the co-op office no later than April 1. Email cvec@cve.coop with any questions.

Incentives Offered for Energy Efficient Purchases

All throughout the year, keep in mind that CVVEC has an incentive program for qualifying energy efficient products. All incentive information and forms can be found at www.cveccoop.com. You don't want to miss out!




Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative
 317 S. 8th St., P.O. Box 575
 Cornell, WI 54732
 715.239.6800 • 1.800.300.6800
www.cveccoop.com • email: cvec@cve.coop
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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 Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30–4 p.m.

Nicole Whipp Sime, Editor