



MIDSTATE CONNECTION

Office Hours: 7:00 am-5:30 pm, Monday-Thursday
Closed Fridays & Holidays

Business Hours: 541-536-2126
After Hours Outages: 800-752-5935

Whatever it Takes:

Powering Life, from a Lineworker's Perspective

Lineworkers are ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. The lineworkers at Midstate Electric work rain or shine, in often challenging conditions to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8, 2024. The following column was written by Reily Boyce, one of our many dedicated lineworkers.



Photo: Reily Boyce, Journeyman Lineman

My name is Reily, and I'm one of eleven lineworkers at Midstate Electric Co-op who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community has the power to live their lives. I love my job. 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

A lot of 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. You're working 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. I'm often working in storms with rain, wind, 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 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.

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 family time, 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 (and sisterhood). 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.

Midstate Electric 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 get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible—so you can get back to normal life.

Let's get connected on social media so you'll never miss an update on MEC activities, programs, and contests.



Safely Connect Your Portable Generator



Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring without an appropriate transfer switch installed. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line workers making repairs.

We recommend using a UL-listed, socket-mounted transfer switch that provides a safe and convenient way to connect portable generator power to your home. It is installed behind your electric meter, and delivers generator power directly to your breaker box, eliminating the hassle of running power cords through your home.

Check out <https://www.generlink.com> to see if your portable generator is compatible with a GenerLink transfer switch. Call us for more information on transfer switch installation at 541-536-7226.

Can You Dig It?



An underground utility line is **damaged once every 9 minutes** because someone didn't call 811.



Call 811, the "Call Before You Dig Number," at least **2 business days** prior to digging.



811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.



Even if you have previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it's best to call before starting a new project.



Once **all of your utilities** have been located, then you can start your digging project!

Learn more at



Last Call for Scholarship Applications

**DUE
APRIL
9th!**

Get your scholarship applications in before the April 9th deadline! We have scholarships available in the following categories:

- One-time **\$2,500 Continuing Education** scholarships
- Four-year **\$10,000 Graduating Senior** scholarships awarded in four allotments
- **\$25,000 Lineworker** scholarship
 - MEC will send the line school \$20,000, and recipient must put forward \$5,000. We will reimburse the \$5,000 once schooling is complete.

Submit your application online today! Paper applications are also accepted in person at the Midstate office located at 16755 Finley Butte Rd in La Pine or via mail to Midstate Electric, P.O. Box 127, La Pine, Oregon 97739.

Applicant or parent/guardian of applicant must have primary residency in Midstate service territory.

For more detailed information, please visit our website at www.mse.coop/scholarship-programs or contact us at 541-536-2126, option 5.



JOIN US FOR MIDSTATE ELECTRIC'S

ANNUAL MEETING

May 18, 2024

9 AM - 12 PM

Midstate Headquarters
16755 Finley Butte Rd., La Pine



JIM ANDERSON
CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

FREE EVENT!

Community Resource Fair
High-Voltage Safety Demos
Board of Director Election

FREE BARBECUE
DOOR PRIZES & RAFFLES



HAVE A VOICE IN THE FUTURE OF
YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE