

POWERLINEMAN[®] MAGAZINE



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LINEMAN COLLEGES & TRAINING

**How Active Grid
Response Technology
is Changing Your Job**

Lucky Son of a Gun

**The American Lineman-
Lingo – The Language
of Heroes**

**Sturgeon Electric of
California Journeyman
Team Captures Top
Honors at the 2025
International
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**2026 Lineman
Rodeo Schedule**

**Grandpa Closes
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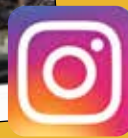
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Mother Nature, the Supreme Master of overtime, gave the continental United States a rare breather in 2025—no hurricanes made landfall for the first time in a decade (since 2015). We dodged the big ones, though tropical storm Chantal dumped heavy rain and flooding in the Carolinas, and distant storms kicked up

rough surf along the East Coast.

The Caribbean and beyond took direct hits, but stateside, it was quieter than usual. Don't worry, Mother Nature never clocks out—she's always working to take down what we build. That's why we invented maintenance, right?

Speaking of overtime, 2026 is the year we start seeing real benefits from the "no tax on overtime" provision in the One Big Beautiful Bill. For qualifying non-exempt hourly workers like most of us, you can deduct up to \$12,500 (or \$25,000 if married filing jointly) of that premium OT pay—the extra "half" in time-and-a-

half—from your federal taxable income. It phases out at higher incomes (starts around \$150K single/\$300K joint), and it's only for federal income tax (still hits FICA, Medicare, and state taxes), but it could put more money back in your pocket come tax time. The deduction runs through 2028, so make the most of it while it's here. We'll see how the paychecks and W-2s shake out—fingers crossed it delivers for the crews doing storm work.

In the meantime, if you're pulling extra hours and expecting that extra cash, here's a little advice: pay yourself first. Before the bills, the new truck payment, or that shiny toy you've been eyeing, squirrel away a chunk—automatically if you can—into a solid investment. A 401(k), IRA, emergency fund, or even a simple index fund can grow faster than you think. The future shows up quicker than you think!

I hope you enjoy your magazine!

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How Active Grid Response Technology is Changing Your Job

By Tim Bedford

If you've been working lines in certain regions, you may have noticed something new showing up on poles. Small weatherproof boxes equipped with an integrated solar panel, mounted below the electrical space. Called Active Grid Response, the technology offers real-time detection and is appearing on distribution networks across the country.

Utilities are deploying Active Grid Response technology to build a more resilient, reliable grid. The technology also benefits field resources directly, giving them better information before rolling out, so you're not randomly driving lines looking for a fault that could be anywhere on the de-energized circuit.

The Problem: Hazard Awareness Delay

When a fault trips a circuit, the control center knows something failed, but they often don't know what or where the incident occurred. They might narrow it down to a general section of line, but that's about it. That gap between when a hazard occurs and when a utility understands what happened is called Hazard Awareness Delay, and it's the root of a problem every lineman knows too well.

Traditional monitoring systems treat the grid like a circuit board, watching only voltage and current. But the grid is a physical system, more like a giant guitar than an electrical schematic. There's tension on conductors, supported by poles and cross-arms. When things interact with them, it creates vibration, noise and other physical signals.

Equipment with SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) monitors,

controls, and analyzes electrical signals only, but were never designed to detect those physical signals. It tells you when something has already failed electrically. It doesn't tell you a pole is leaning, a tree failed and hit the line, or a conductor is broken. In these instances, first responders get dispatched to patrol miles of line, looking for a problem that could be anywhere. You're working on a search pattern instead of responding to a known location with known conditions.

Less time patrolling means faster restoration and less time working in potentially dangerous conditions.

Hazard Awareness Delay is both an operational headache and a safety liability for first responders rolling out without complete information. It's also an issue for the communities and customers waiting for power to return.

What Active Grid Response Does and Why Utilities are Deploying it

Active Grid Response technology provides continuous monitoring of physical, electrical, and environmental conditions. Each unit contains multiple sensors working together: acoustic and vibration sensors, piezoelectric transducers, and environmental monitors.



These sensors pick up signals that used to require someone physically on site to observe, including pole tilt, vibration patterns, temperature changes, vegetation contact, and even the audio signature of an arc flash. Think of them as eyes and ears on the line when no one's there.

The sensors continuously capture this data and analyze it using machine learning. If it detects a potential issue, the unit transmits it in real-time via cellular networks, satellite connections, or device-to-device mesh networks. When something goes wrong, dispatchers receive the exact problem location down to the pole span, along with fault type and severity level, all before you leave the yard.

That's a fundamental change from the old model. Instead of driving trucks, hoping to spot something, you know exactly where you're going and what you're walking into. Utilities in wildfire-prone areas were the first to adopt this technology, for obvious reasons. Regions dealing with hurricanes, ice storms, and severe weather are also deploying it, as are utilities seeking to reduce patrol time and get customers back online faster.

What This Means for You in the Field

With Active Grid Response technology installed in a service area, first responders rolling out in the middle of the night know

the situation before they arrive. Dispatchers receive a specific alert with the fault type, exact location, and conditions before first responders depart. No more searching for obvious structural damage or branches tangled in a conductor and blind patrols where you don't know if a line is down, if a pole is compromised, or if conditions are still developing. Control centers can tell you whether a situation is stable or worsening, which changes how you approach each call.

The technology has already proven itself in the field. During severe wind events, sensors have detected structural failures through tilt and vibration data before they became electrical faults. In some cases, utilities caught failing poles before lines dropped, allowing crews to safely de-energize and make repairs without an active hazard. In high-fire-risk areas, the same technology has detected vegetation and conductor contact before ignition, giving crews time to respond while conditions were still manageable.

Less time patrolling means faster restoration and less time working in potentially dangerous conditions. More importantly, less exposure to surprises means fewer injuries. You arrive prepared with the right equipment and the proper procedures because you know what's waiting for you.

From a Career Lineman's Perspective

I started as a Journeyman Lineman and now work as a Principal Customer Success Manager at Gridware. I've seen this industry from both sides. After 36 years, I've driven more patrol miles than I can count. I've rolled out not knowing what I was heading into, searching for faults that could have been anywhere.

This technology supports linemen, providing information we simply never had when I started in this trade. Younger linemen will grow up with Active Grid Response as standard equipment on their networks. For veterans, it's worth understanding what this technology offers and why it's showing up on your lines.

The job still requires a first responder to make things safe and report materials needed to make repairs, but now you're equipped with better intel and thus will spend less time exposed to unknown hazards in unforgiving conditions. That's progress worth paying attention to.

What to Expect Going Forward

Not every utility has deployed Active Grid Response technology yet, but adoption is accelerating. If you start seeing these boxes appearing on poles in your system, know that they're working for you. The units are mounted below the electrical space and shouldn't obstruct your work zone. If you come across one in the field and need to remove it to access equipment, it takes just a few screws and a few minutes to replace it when you're done.

The goal of this technology is to eliminate Hazard Awareness Delay so you can work smarter and safer. These devices mean less time hunting for issues and more time restoring power for customers in your region.

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NON STEP-IN DESIGN

Lucky Son of a Gun

By Joe Rosenfeld

Bob, put the hook on the steel, not the Becket. Just that morning, the crew chief had told us to replace the frazzled poly rope becket on the hand line block... and we didn't. Yet.

Now my fellow apprentice was hanging my rescue line off of that tired old becket.

A second ago I was drifting the clevis pin out of the top arm bell string and now I was hanging upside down in my body belt, eye-level with the old lineman on our crew.

"You are one lucky son of a gun!" he said.

He was in the body of the tower just below the middle arm of a double circuit 115Kv structure. I was twenty feet away, dangling off the end of the top-arm that had collapsed and wedged to a stop thru the middle arm. It took me a second to figure out what he meant and where I was.

Unclipping and pulling the wire out was taking too long, so we started using the

dozer and a series of rigging blocks to drop the whole mess, wire and insulators, to the ground in one shot. It was going okay for the bottom and longer middle arm, but the upper



It worked for a while, until it didn't.



Joe in action wearing his Bashlin 88 belt with homemade rope safety.



bundle needed to be tagged out to clear the middle arm. Not too dicey on the field side, but there wasn't enough room on the parallel line side of the structures to easily tag the wire out around the middle arm. It worked for a while, until it didn't.

Somewhere between horizontal and vertical, the sharp ends of the buggy straps gashed my leg, shredded my jeans, hyper-extended my knee, and banged up my arm hard enough to lose feeling in it.

With the hand-line safely hooked on the steel, I was able to secure myself to it and shimmy out of the twisted steel into the tower body.

With the help of the hand-line and my crew mates, I slowly climbed down. Once on the ground, the feeling slowly returned to my arm, but the boss sent me to the hospital to get checked out anyways. In a rare moment of generosity, he sent a runner out to buy me some new jeans.

The next day we were back at it again. Later on that job, we took all the arms off the structures and replaced them. Go figure.

It's been a lot of ups and downs in the thirty-five plus years since that job, and I haven't seen anyone from the crew in years, so riding the arm down never comes up.

But once in awhile when my knee reminds me, I reflect on the places the work has taken me and all the things I've been able to see and do beyond that day.

No doubt about it, I'm a lucky son of a gun.

On a side note, a piece of that lucky old rope safety still hangs in my workshop and if Bashlin was ever interested, I'd be happy to endorse their 88-body belt.



The American Lineman Lingo – The Language of Heroes

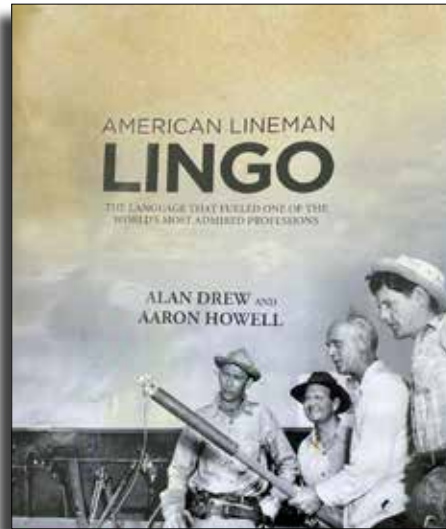
By Alan Drew

At long last, linemen are receiving the recognition and appreciation they have long deserved for their skill, dedication, and service. From largely uncelebrated beginnings more than 180 years ago, the lineman's trade has evolved into one of the nation's most vital professions. Throughout this history, linemen have made herculean contributions to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the telecommunications and power systems that sustain modern life. Their tireless efforts to restore service in the aftermath of major storms and disasters have become nothing short of legendary.

In an effort to supplement *The American Lineman*, which I authored in 2016, Aaron Howell and I set out to create a companion volume focused on the unique language and terminology used by linemen. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to editor Byron Dunn for his valuable contributions to the publication. This article offers an overview of the book's content.

Line work is physically demanding. The climbing, lifting, hoisting, and pulling requirements go beyond those in most jobs. Line work is mentally challenging, not in a bookish sense, but in a practical and functional sense. A journeyman lineman is a highly trained and skilled worker who encounters and solves problems, not with the use of advanced degrees in engineering, but with the use of bright minds and on-the-job seasoning.

Power linemen who build, repair, and maintain electric power lines in the United States speak a language of their own. The English spoken by linemen is



The new American Lineman Lingo book.

graphic, descriptive, imaginative, clever, humorous, blunt, and, if the occasion demands, profane. Linemen describe tools and procedures with vocabulary that would not be recognized by the elec-

Linemen are functional and pragmatic, and so is their speech; if something resembles a snake it will soon be referred to as a snake.

trical engineer who designed the project, and they describe themselves and their fellow workers with a vocabulary that the Human Resources manager would not recognize.

The Lineman's Lingo

This language, slang, jargon, or "lingo" continues to evolve with the industry, while certain terms are carved permanently from a proud history. It really makes an interesting subject. Other relative terms are the colloquial or everyday language used by linemen. It also leads to a better understanding of the linemen's profession and how they perform their duties. The "boomer" linemen who move from one job to the next across the country have spread the use of certain terms from one region to another.

The Lineman's language can be traced back to the logging industry, mining, railroads, and other construction trades. Slang from the logging industry about rigging methods, tools, and equipment used to handle logs carried forward to linework. As the railroads expanded across the country, so did the telegraph, the telephone, and electric systems in that order. Many workers transitioned from the railroad into telegraph and telephone work, bringing their lingo with them. As oil production proliferated throughout the Southwest, there were demands for electricity in the oil fields; because oil field workers and linemen worked side by side, their speech overlapped and intermingled. Just as country music is a mix of many musical traditions, the lineman's lingo reflects a broad and diverse mix of sources. As might be expected, certain terms are inappropriate to include.

Line work demands resourcefulness in solving problems, and the language of linemen shows an imaginative and clever appreciation of the spoken word. Linemen

are functional and pragmatic, and so is their speech; if something resembles a snake and it will soon be referred to as a snake.

Early Work Gangs

Any group of individuals, such as railroaders, soldiers, sailors, road builders, oil field workers, loggers, functioning together for a specific purpose, must be able to effectively communicate to get the job done. These groups are typically led by a foreman or "boss" who gives orders on who does what. In many cases, the tasks being accomplished by these groups were being done under difficult circumstances, such as extreme weather or on difficult terrain.

The use of "slang" terms allowed the "boss" to quickly issue verbal orders in a manner that was understood and carried authority. The "slang" or "lingo" associated with the trade took a while for the rookie to learn, but once it was learned, it was not forgotten.

As an example, we have a railroad engineer instructing his fireman what he wants him to do – in this example, he simply states "Dust her out," which tells the fireman to put sand through the fire door of the oil burner while working the engine hard; this cuts out the soot in the flues and makes the locomotive steam.

In a situation where the train needs to be stopped immediately, the engineer or brakeman would shout "Dump the air," which meant to apply the air brakes in an emergency, causing the train to stop abruptly.

It was common for certain slang terms to be used by different trades. For example, consider the following slang terms from railroaders that were also used by linemen.



Railroad and telegraph work gangs started many terms adopted by Linemen.

- **Bump** — Obtain another man's position by exercising seniority. When a crew is deprived of its assignment, as when a train is removed from the timetable, its members select the jobs they wish from those held by others with the fewest whiskers.

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- Boomer — Drifter who went from one railroad job to another, staying but a short time on each job or each road.
- Company Bible — Book of rules
- Coon it — Crawl
- Lunch hooks — Your two hands
- Nosebag — Lunch carried to work. ‘Putting on the nosebag’ means to eat a meal.
- Sawbones — Company doctor
- Shoo-fly — Temporary track, usually built around a flooded area, a wreck, or other obstacle; sometimes built merely to facilitate a rerailing.
- Straw box — Foreman of a small gang or acting foreman
- Traveling card — A card given by a Railroad Brotherhood to a man in search of employment.
- Whiskers — Lengthy seniority
- Get the rocking chair — Retire on a pension

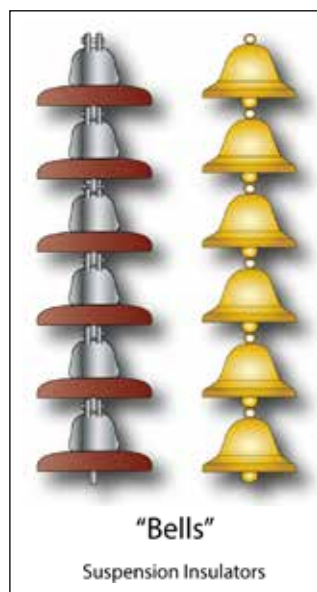
Iconic Lingo Terms

The following is a sample of the more widely recognized terms taken from the book.

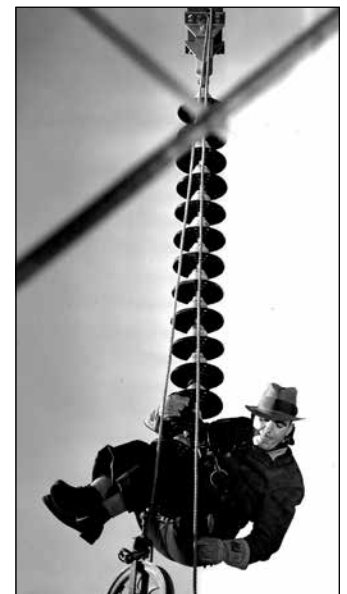
Bells – Suspension Insulators

This is a term that has been used for a long time. It must stem from the similarity of the insulator to the shape of a bell. Bells may be referred to as a single bell or a string of bells.

Use of the term: lineman on tower to groundman, “Send up the string of bells.”



Red Blayd from the movie *Slim* hanging from the bells.



Red Blayd from the movie *Slim* hanging from the bells.

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Can/Kettle/Pot/Tub/Hog/Tank

These terms are used interchangeably when referring to a pole-mounted transformer. The term 'pot' was also widely used for potential transformers.

Use of the term: lineman to apprentice, "Check the nameplate on the pot what the secondary voltage is."

Gut/Snake/Reptile/Eel

These terms refer to a rubber protective device that comes



Orié Van Rye, a district manager for New England Electric, is famous for his artwork. This is "Hanging a Pot."

in the shape of a tube and is available in different lengths. Snakes or guts were sent up the pole to linemen in a specially designed bag that was called a snake bag, gut bag, or reptile bag. The term "hose up" was frequently used by lineworkers to indicate the need to cover energized conductors. They

were typically applied

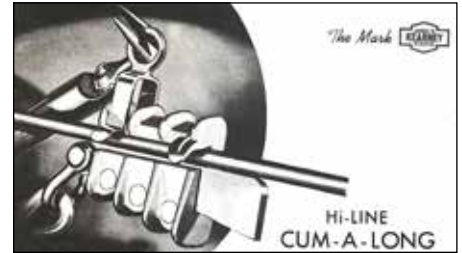
with rubber gloves and, in some areas, with live-line tools.

Use of the term: lineman to apprentice, "Make sure you cover that down guy with a snake."

Cum-Along

This is a metallic tool that will grip a straight wire at any point under tension without slipping. It is used to take the tension of conductors during wire stringing, bringing them to the proper tension along the way—one of the oldest and most famous slang terms, which dates back to the telegraph era. There are many types of come-alongs manufactured and used by linemen.

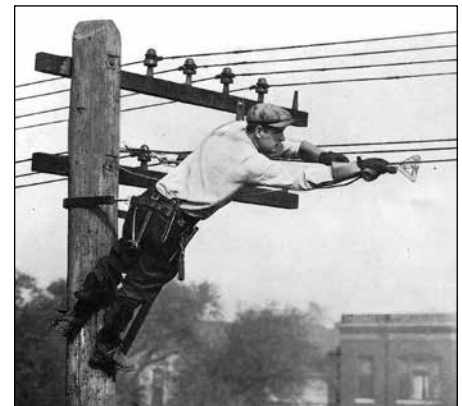
Use of the term: Lineman to groundman, "Send up a hoist with two come-alongs."



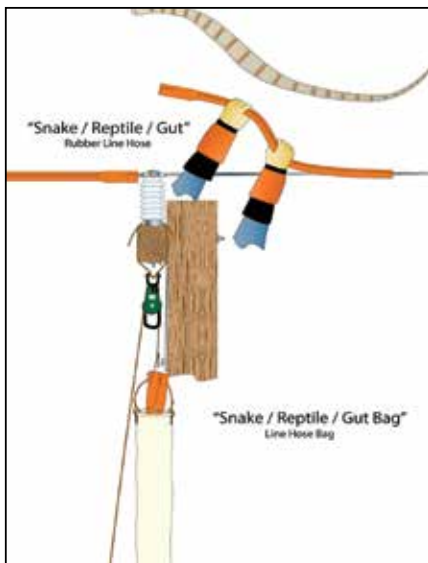
A Cum-Along, manufactured by the J.R. Kearney Company.

Conclusion

The language of linemen is more than colorful slang or trade jargon—it is a living record of the work, the risks, and the ingenuity that define the profession. Forged through generations of hard labor, shared experience, and problem-solving under demanding conditions,



Lineman installing a cum-along to a set of rope blocks.



Snakes and snake bag.



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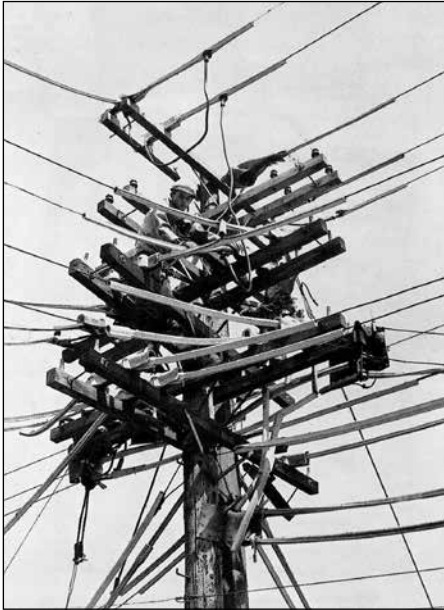
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Linemen using snakes to cover energized 2.4kV conductors during maintenance work."

lineman lingo reflects both the history of the trade and the character of the men and women who perform it. Each term carries with it a story, a lesson learned, or a moment survived.

As the industry continues to modernize, new tools, technologies, and methods will undoubtedly add new words to the lineman's vocabulary. Yet many of the old terms will endure, passed down from journeyman to apprentice, preserving a connection to those who built the systems long before today's workers took their place on the pole. In this way, the language serves as a bridge between past and present, honoring tradition while adapting to change.

The American Lineman Lingo was created to capture and preserve this unique spoken heritage. By documenting the

words linemen use every day, the book offers insight into the culture of the trade and the mindset required to do the work safely and effectively. Above all, it stands

The language of linemen is more than colorful slang or trade jargon—it is a living record of the work, the risks, and the ingenuity that define the profession.

as a tribute to linemen everywhere—whose skill, resilience, and shared language continue to power the nation.

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Sturgeon Electric of California Journeyman Team Captures Top Honors at the 2025 International Lineman's Rodeo

Overland Park, KS. — Skill, safety, and teamwork took center stage as the Sturgeon Electric of California Journeyman Team, proudly represented by IBEW Local Union 47, claimed top honors at the 2025 International Lineman's Rodeo, one of the most prestigious competitions in the line trade.

The winning team — Daniel Jameson, Enoch Verdin, and Joseph Maynes, coached by Steve Lelvold — rose above a highly competitive international field of elite journeyman lineworkers. Their victory reflects not only technical excellence, but also the discipline, preparation, and brotherhood that define union linework.

Leading up to the International Rodeo, the Sturgeon Electric team competed in seven rodeos throughout the season, delivering a dominant performance that included three first-place finishes, one second-place finish, one third-place finish, and one fourth-place finish. That consistency and momentum carried into the International



Enoch Verdin and Daniel Jameson.

competition, where the team ultimately secured the top spot.

Held annually in Overland Park, Kansas, the International Lineman's Rodeo brings together hundreds of teams from across the globe to compete in rigorous events that simulate real-world job scenarios. Competitors are judged on accuracy, efficiency, adherence to safety standards, and teamwork, making the Rodeo a true test of professional line skills.

IBEW Local 47 is proud to celebrate this accomplishment and the example these members set for the next generation of lineworkers.

Throughout the competition, the Sturgeon Electric team demonstrated exceptional proficiency across multiple events, executing each task with precision while maintaining strict safety protocols. Their performance exemplified the values instilled through union training and experience—doing the job right, doing it safely, and watching out for one another.

“This win represents countless hours of training and a deep commitment to our craft,” said Raul Guardado, Director of Transmission and Distribution Operations. “We’re proud to represent Sturgeon Electric of California and IBEW Local 47 on an international stage.”



Julian Ibarra, Paul Salgado, IBEW 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin, IBEW Senior Assistant Business Manager Casey Lavin, Enoch Verdin, Daniel Jameson, Joe Maynes, Coach Steve Lelvold, Director of T&D for Sturgeon Electric Raul Guardado, Clayton Loback and Robert Delgadillo.

Coach Steve Lelvold played a key role in preparing the team, emphasizing not only technical execution but also communication, strategy, and mental focus. His leadership helped ensure the team approached each event with confidence and cohesion throughout the rodeo season.

IBEW Local Union 47 congratulates Daniel Jameson, Enoch Verdin, Joseph Maynes, and Coach Steve Lelvold on this outstanding achievement. “Their success is a testament to the strength of union training programs, the professionalism of Local 47 members, and the pride they put in the trade,” said IBEW Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin.

Winning the 2025 International Lineman's Rodeo Journeyman title is more than a trophy — it is a recognition of the skill, safety, and dedication that keep the lights on every day. IBEW Local 47 is proud to celebrate this accomplishment and the example these members set for the next generation of lineworkers.



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- New hires with a valid out-of-state commercial driver's license will have to obtain a California commercial driver's license within 3 months of appointment

*After enrollment in underground cross-training program

For more information regarding our current journey-level line worker openings and upcoming apprentice lineman/splicer positions, please contact:

- John.Poplawski@ladwp.com or (818) 771-4884
- Kyle.Morgan@ladwp.com or (818) 771-4839



Los Angeles  Department of Water & Power

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2026 Lineman Rodeo Schedule

The following is the most comprehensive list compiled from available sources. Due to potential changes in scheduling, venues, or cancellations, please check the events calendar at Powerlineman.com for the latest status, registration, and details. If you're involved with any of these events, log in to Powerlineman.com to verify your posting is accurate, links are working, and info is current. We'd love to hear you're still out there—stay connected! If you have updates, corrections, or new info on any rodeo, please reach out to me at: byrond@powerlineman.com.



Florida Lineman Rodeo
March 6-7, 2026
Winter Garden, FL

Florida Lineman Competition
March 13-14, 2026
Apalachee Regional Park
7550 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL



South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo
March 20-21, 2026
Clarendon County
Industrial Park
2414-2163 Jo Rogers Jr. Blvd
Manning, SC



American Public Power Association (APPA) Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo
March 27-28, 2026
John Hunt Park
2180 Airport Road SW
Huntsville, AL

SCE Lineman's Rodeo
March 28, 2026
Prado Regional Park
16700 S. Euclid Ave,
Chino, CA



Duke Energy Carolinas Rodeo
April 17-18, 2026
New Hill, NC



Georgia Lineman's Rodeo Association (GLRA)
April 30-May 2, 2026
Camp John Hope
Fort Valley, GA



Gaff-n-Go Lineman's & Equipment Operator's Rodeo
May 15-16, 2026
Meadow Event Park
Doswell, VA



North Carolina Association of Electric Systems (NCAMES)
May 19-21, 2026
Dallas Park, 1303 Dallas
Cherryville Hwy, Dallas, NC



Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) Rodeo, Conference & Expo
May 11-14, 2026
Loon Mountain Resort
Lincoln, NH



LADWP, IBEW Local 18 Lineman Rodeo
May 16th 2026
11760 Truesdale Street
Sun Valley CA

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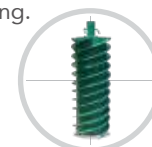
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Tennessee Valley Lineman Rodeo
June 5-6, 2026
Florence, AL



Utah Lineman's Rodeo
June 13, 2026
3000 Lester St.
West Valley City, UT



Lone Star Lineman's Rodeo
June 19, 2026
7801 I-40 East, Amarillo, TX



NSUJL Benefit Lineman's Rodeo (includes Climbing for Lost Linemen Ceremony)
June 26-27, 2026
City View Park
700 S. Poplar St.
Hazleton, PA



Texas Lineman's Rodeo
July 16-18, 2026
Nolte Island, Seguin, TX



Montana Lineman's Rodeo
July 17-18, 2026
Butte Vigilante Saddle Club Rodeo Grounds
6354 Albany Avenue
Butte, MT



Pacific Northwest Lineman's Rodeo
July 25, 2026
PGE Lineman Substation
3490 W Powell Loop
Gresham, OR



Minnesota Lineworker Rodeo
September 15, 2026
MMUA Training Center
1004 Michigan Rd.
Marshall, MN



Annual International Lineman's Rodeo & Expo
October 14-17, 2026
Overland Park, KS
(competition at Ag Hall of Fame Bonner Springs, KS)

Events with Dates To Be Determined (TBD) — Check powerlineman.com/ events for updates:

- Mile High Lineman Rodeo (Denver, CO area)
- PG&E West Coast Lineman's Rodeo (Livermore, CA)
- ENMAX Rodeo & Safety Expo (Alberta, Canada)
- IMEA (Indiana Municipal Electric Association) / Whisky City Lineman Rodeo (Lawrenceburg, IN)
- Indiana Electric Cooperatives
- Kentucky Lineman's Rodeo (Paducah, KY)
- Nebraska Lineworker's Rodeo (Grand Island, NE)



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Grandpa Closes Down The Pony

By Alan Hill

I read an article two issues ago in *Powerlineman*® magazine called "Things I learned." It was written by a high liner (Joe Rosenfeld) and was recalling that no good ever came from twenty-something high-liners with a pocket full of money getting off early.

I was a lineman for forty years, twenty with the power company that Byron, (Powerlineman.com owner) worked at, and twenty years with the local union out of Denver working for contractors. After reading the article, I started remembering some of my experiences along the way that

related. Next thing you know, there were tons of crazy memories popping out of my brain. I thought I could write a feature article every issue and never run out of material that would make you laugh your ass off or, perhaps you might remember your own stories. So, after thinking about five minutes to remember situations I was involved in, I came up with eight different stories. I can only imagine how many stories I could come up with if I put in more than five minutes of thought. I had a hard time picking out the first article out of my recollections but realized they're all good!



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I was working for a local contractor out of IBEW local 111 in Denver pushing an overhead crew. It was in the winter and the midwest was experiencing a hard-core ice storm. We were waiting for the call to head East and when it came, and we headed out. Two days later, we ended up in a little town of 45,000 in southeast Missouri. We pulled into town in the middle of the night and the OH lines were shredded from the ice storm. We ended up working there about 30 days straight, 16-hour days 7 days a week. We slept in our trucks for three nights while working long days.

We slowly started to get the power on those first three days but there was nowhere to stay as the locals had all the motels occupied. One of our foremen discovered a small college town thirty miles away that had power so we gobbled up twelve rooms and had a place to stay the rest of the month. This town was on the Mississippi river and pretty cool. Problem was we couldn't check anything out working 16+ hour days 7 days a week. We had about 8 crews from Denver working this little town. So, after two weeks, on a Saturday morning, the head honcho from the power company came by my crew and said we were all doing an outstanding job and wanted to know if we wanted to knock off at 5:00 pm and get out and basically "tear it up" for a night. He also said he personally knew the police chief in town and there wouldn't be any trouble. Well, we took a vote and unanimously voted: HELL YES! So, I was taking in about twelve grand a week and so was everyone else. One, out of two reasons to get in trouble. Now, we are getting off at



Overhead lines were shredded from the ice storm.

5pm on a Saturday night instead of 10:30 pm, reason #2 for a perfect storm.

So, six or eight of us got cleaned up at our motel in the little college town and headed downtown on the Mississippi for some dinner. The rest of the guys chose to stay at the motel, eat, drink,




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and play poker. Downtown was hopping, and we ate dinner while taking in all the hot women cruising around. We got tipped off by the waiter that there was a killer strip joint across the river in Illinois and that a van left downtown every half hour to take you there. After a while, we went outside to wait for the van and low and behold, the "Pony Van" showed up. The name of the strip joint was the "The Pony" the doors on the large van opened up and there was the rest of the lineman from the motel, still in their work clothes, headed across the river to the strip joint. That was a crazy ride with twenty drunk linemen with pockets full of money, heading to a strip joint.

We got there and it was crazy. We took over one of the many stages and started to have fun. All the foreman and lineman were sitting around the stage and the apprentices were keeping us loaded up with dollar bills. After a while we all split up and moved around as it was a huge place. I must have hit the ATM ten times at \$350.

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I was single so the married guys were hitting me up for cash so their old ladies wouldn't see where the ATM was. So, I got caught up in the VIP dances in the back until very late in the night or should I say early in the morning.

They closed at 4:00 am and set us up with the Pony van back across the Mississippi to our motel. Got back at 5am just in time to wake up and be at breakfast at 6:00 am. Didn't take long for the word to get around that grandpa closed down the strip joint. Of course I was the oldest of anyone.

I sat breakfast adding up all my ATM receipts and it was over \$3500. but when you made \$12,000 a week, it was all worth it!

We worked another two weeks there, 16-hour days, and it was a Saturday morning and rumor was they were going to release us to go home on Monday or Tuesday. Well, here come the head honcho to the job once again on Saturday morning. Smiling, he said, "Want to get off at 5:00 pm again? I didn't even hesitate and said, "Hell Yes!" So, everyone got back to the motel and started drinking and playing poker. I'm not a poker player so I said, "Anyone want to go downtown for dinner?" Everyone



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but my apprentice from Alaska said, "Hell no." So we headed downtown for dinner.

I must have said ten times that evening, "I'm not going to that strip joint." Later that evening the band came out and things got hopping. Unfortunately, my apprentice got really drunk, talking to all the women, so I sent him back to the motel in a taxi. I was about to get lucky with a hot chick when her girlfriend started ralphing under the table so that was the end of that story.

I headed out of the bar to catch a taxi back to the motel and what do you think pulled up? Yup, The Pony Van getting ready to head across the river to the strip joint, so I jumped in and started adventure #2. I walked into the strip joint and all the women, who I spoiled two weeks earlier, recognized me and I got the VIP treatment—I must say all night... and morning. They really kicked me out this time only at 5:00 am instead of 4:00 am when they closed. They gave me a t-shirt and some beads and put me on the Pony Van back to the hotel across the river.

Of course, all the crews were in the parking lot waiting to go to breakfast when the Pony Van dropped me off. I gave the keys to the pickup to my lineman, and he drove the rest of the day. I made it through the 16-hour day and really slept good that night.

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Web: www.calhoun.edu

Calhoun Community College has sponsored a Pre-Apprentice Lineworker program for over 15 years in Decatur, AL. Calhoun Community College accepts 100 students into this program each year! Calhoun currently offers five, seven-week courses per year. Our students gain employment with local municipalities and with regional contractors. Calhoun takes great pride in providing local students the opportunity to have choices for local or travel-based employment.

Students completing Calhoun's program gain a CDL, TVPPA climbing certificates, OSHA 10, CPR, Flagger and Confined Space Awareness Training, as well as extensive training on powerline construction and repair. The program is advised by local utility companies, contractors, and federal agencies such as the Tennessee Valley Authority. This combination of rich experience and guidance allows Calhoun to recruit, train, and promote qualified pre-apprentice linemen throughout the year.

For more information about Calhoun Community College's Pre-Apprentice Lineworker program please visit our website at www.calhoun.edu/lineworker or call 256.306.2928

East Mississippi Community College
Scooba Campus
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(662) 476-5000

Golden Triangle Campus
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Contact: **Lion Central 662.243.1920**
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Web: www.eastms.edu

East Mississippi Community College offers a 16-week Utility Lineworker Technology program on the college's Golden Triangle and Scooba campuses. Graduates receive certification in pole climbing, CPR and first aid, forklift operation, and OSHA 10-hour safety training. Students also receive instruction needed to earn a Class A CDL, or commercial driver's license.

The program prepares students for entry level work at a utility company, a co-op or a contractor in the utility construction or excavation fields. Students learn the fundamentals of electricity, AC/DC circuits, mathematics, and Rural Utilities Specifications. Students also learn to operate a bucket truck and how to safely climb and frame a power pole. Instruction also includes night exercises on power restoration in the aftermath of a storm.



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Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State)

Wadena Campus

405 Colfax Ave SW

Wadena MN 56482

Phone: (877) 450-3322

Web: minnesota.edu

M State's Electrical Line Worker Technology program is well regarded across the region for its experienced instructors, strong curriculum, and excellent training facilities on our Wadena campus. Students can pursue a 68-credit Associate of Applied Science degree or a 36-credit diploma, both combining classroom learning with extensive hands-on practice at our 90-acre indoor and outdoor training site. Graduates are prepared to enter the field right away or to advance their studies at a four-year university.

Coursework covers every phase of power line construction and maintenance. With guidance from an advisory board of industry representatives, our program ensures students gain the skills and knowledge employers value, including electrical math, national electrical safety codes, overhead and underground distribution systems, conductor applications, overvoltage and overcurrent protection, and guying and pole grounding. Students build valuable hands-on practical experience in - installing electrical structures and systems, interpreting trade specifications and drawings, climbing techniques and aerial rescue, and applying safety codes and professional safety practices.

For more information, visit the Electrical Line Worker Technology program page at minnesota.edu.

Tulsa Welding School (Dallas Metro Campus)

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The Backbone of Electrification: Why Lineworkers Matter More Than Ever. As electrification reshapes how we live, work, and move, one essential workforce remains largely unseen yet absolutely indispensable: electrical lineworkers.

From powering homes and hospitals to enabling electric vehicles, renewable energy integration, and a modernized grid, lineworkers are the backbone of America's energy infrastructure. Every advancement in electrification depends on their expertise, resilience, and commitment to safety. As our reliance on electricity grows, so does the urgency to invest in the people who build, maintain, and protect the systems that keep our communities running.

The demand for skilled electrical power-line installers and repairers is rising alongside the expansion of the nation's electrical grid. At the same time, much of the current workforce is nearing retirement, creating a critical gap between infrastructure needs and available talent. Closing that gap requires more than awareness, it requires intentional training,

industry alignment, and clear pathways into the profession. That's where education plays a pivotal role.

Recognizing both the importance of this profession and the opportunity to prepare the next generation of skilled workers, Tulsa Welding School offers an Electrical Lineworker program designed to meet the evolving needs of the energy and utility sectors. The 15-week program focuses on real-world utility power distribution, construction, maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair, grounding students in the technical skills, safety standards, and situational awareness required in the field.

Lineworkers don't just maintain infrastructure. They restore power after storms, support economic growth, enable innovation, and keep communities connected. As electrification accelerates, investing in this workforce isn't optional, it's essential.

At Tulsa Welding School, we believe preparing students for these careers is about more than filling jobs. It's about strengthening communities, supporting national infrastructure, and honoring the critical role lineworkers play in powering the future.

The grid may be expanding, but it's the people behind it who make progress possible.

Western Texas College
 6200 College Avenue
 Snyder TX 79549
 (325) 573-8511
wtc.edu/lineworker

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to work hard. Students train side by side with experienced industry professionals, gaining hands-on know-how that mirrors the demands of the field. From day one, the focus is simple: real skills, real equipment, and real expectations.

Unlike many programs, Western Texas College (WTC) students train for their CDL in actual bucket trucks, preparing them to safely operate equipment and move trucks around the yard before they ever report to a jobsite. When graduates step onto the job on their first day, they're not seeing the work for the first time; they're ready to go to work.

Western Texas College's rural roots matter. Many students come from farms, ranches, and small communities where hard work isn't optional; it's a way of life. That mindset carries into the program, where safety, precision, and doing the job the right way are emphasized every step of the way.

Students develop in-demand skills, including: Stringing and maintaining electrical wire, Setting poles and towers, Installing and maintaining insulators, Assembling and erecting substations, Installing and repairing traffic and rail signals, and Performing professional tree trimming and line clearance.

Through a strong partnership with Big Country Electrical Cooperative in Snyder, Texas, Western Texas College designed and built a dedicated classroom and outdoor training yard adjacent to the co-op's facility. The result is a learning environment that feels like the workplace, because it is.

Western Texas College offers a one-year Electrical Lineworker Certificate for students who complete program requirements, providing a direct pathway into the utility industry.

If you're looking for a program that values hands-on training, industry standards, and workforce-ready graduates, learn more at wtc.edu/lineworker or visit Western Texas College at 6200 College Avenue in Snyder, Texas.

Wytheville Community College
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Wytheville Community College (WCC) in Wytheville, Virginia, offers an affordable, fourteen-week training program for Power Line Workers. Part of Virginia's FastForward training program, WCC prepares students for this high-demand, high-paying job.

FastForward is a short-term workforce training program run by Virginia's Community Colleges and is based on the needs of local and regional employers. WCC's Power Line Training Instructors are expert veterans from the field and help students earn credentials using curriculum from the National Center for Construction Education and Research.

Since WCC's Power Line Worker Training program's inception in 2017, 361 students have completed the program and received the training and certifications necessary to become successful power line workers.

For more information about the program, contact Perry Hughes, Wytheville Community College Vice-President of Workforce and Occupational Programs, at (276) 223-4757.

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