

POWERLINEMAN MAGAZINE

WINTER 2025

THE ONLY MAGAZINE FOR LINEMEN

VOL 24 • ISSUE 1

international LINEMAN'S RODEO

Incredulous
Powerlineman Spotlight
Nightmares

A Family Affair
at the International
Lineman's Rodeo

2025 Fallen Linemen: A
Tribute to Their Sacrifice

2026 Buyer's Guide

Two Analogies to
Explain Power Factor



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The International Lineman's Rodeo just keeps getting bigger and better every year. This marked my 27th time attending, and I'm still blown away by what it takes to pull off an event of this scale—with a record 1,234 competitors, including 290 journeyman teams and 364 apprentices from across the U.S., Canada, and ten

other countries, all vying head-to-head on the same day. Every event—from hurt-man rescues and crossarm changeouts to live-line demos—was executed, timed, and judged in a whirlwind of just hours. No wonder the 41st annual Rodeo drew over 5,300 verified attendees to Bonner Springs, Kansas, for the competi-

tions, expo hall packed with 198 exhibiting companies, and that electric buzz of camaraderie. You see them everywhere: at the registration desk signing people in, out on the field making sure everything runs like clockwork. It's a massive operation, and somehow, they make it look easy. Shoutout to this year's champions, too—like the Sturgeon Electric/IBEW Local 47 crew sweeping the contractor division, and JEA's journeyman team taking top honors in the municipality category. The ILR always comes through and that BBQ hits the spot!

I hope you enjoy your magazine!

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Incredulous

By John Parker

I remember an unusual storm event. The first odd thing was that we'd been called to stop work, go on home and get packed up for an ice storm in Oklahoma. Usually we'd finish up our day, pack up that evening, then convoy in the morning. I was thinking, "Wow, this one must be bad!" Then they told us that the ice storm was *coming*. It hadn't even arrived yet. I was skeptical, somebody has got their wires crossed! We did as we were told of course, and soon that familiar feeling of adventure had set in. We were looking forward to getting the power on and putting some serious money in our pocket.

We met up with our group of about seven crews at a truck stop on IH-35, south of Georgetown. From there, we headed on up, took the loop around Dallas and by

Their mistake was obvious – the engineers shot a straight line distance, but failed to provide for sag. Incredible!

sundown we were crossing the border. I had kept a keen eye out for evidence of foul weather but saw no sign of trouble. I was a bit relieved that maybe we'd just spend the night and roll on back home tomorrow – ice storms can be a bitch. It was a short time later that I could see the blue flashes off in the distance. We took an exit ramp. The ramp was covered in thick ice, the highway north was closed. We were in it.

As the sun rose, we were still trying to get to the local cooperative. We had been navigating the backroads in the night, having crossed downed transmission lines, countless ice-covered distribution poles, and several quiet, ice bound villages. We did arrive at the office around noon. They got us lined out and we began to replace poles and wire. Three days later, a freezing fog brought down most of the poles that we'd struggled hard to get set.

About a week after that, the rumor was that we'd be pulling five highway crossings tomorrow. There had been five main feeders brought down by the storm! As

it was growing dark, I went to meet up with my General Foreman, a mentor of mine named Pops. While I waited for my GF to arrive, I saw a company pickup nearby, parked next to a 40' pole. So, I walked over to talk. He was an engineer and had been taking notes. It was obvious to me that the deadend for the crossing, a 65' pole, would need to be a double deadend to accommodate for the change in elevation. "Did you want my crew to cut you a double deadend?" The man was probably exhausted but was a little rude with his reply. I then asked if he would like for us to pull out the needed wire for the crossing, get it ready for tomorrow (1/0 ACSR). He got really heated and replied that his engineers would see to that and "You linemen just need to do as your told!" "Yessir," I replied, and went on to meet up with my GF, who had just pulled up. Looking across the busy highway in the twilight, Pops and I discussed our plan.

The next morning before the sun rose, our crews were onsite. After our tailboard with the cooperative lead, the crews were taken to their individual crossing areas. The crossings were miles apart. My bunch was composed of my GF and two crews. Our plan was that I would remain on the east side of the crossing with my pickup, the rest of the gang would pull the four wires across the interstate highway (four lanes northbound, four lanes southbound and the 100 foot median) which still had a little ice remaining. Two buckets on the far side would then catch the wire off in shoes. The engineers had the wire pulled off and

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ready. Once the police had stopped traffic, they would give us the word to move.

To prepare, we fastened the evener ropes to the wire ends using 1/0 preformed deadends. I would put each length of rope in an 'evener,' a dolly and wye ball attached to my grill guard, which, once the line had crossed the road and was dinged off on the far side, I would then begin to back my truck up to pull the wire up to near sag. Two outside phases in one dolly, center phase and neutral in the other. The buckets would then make their way across the road and put the final tension on the lines.

It seemed like it took hours to get the traffic stopped, but finally we got the word to "GO!" My General Foreman, Pops, let out a yell and all the guys began to holler as they took off running with the four wires, two men to a wire! I kept pace with the wire ends with the evener ropes, making sure they had plenty of slack, but enough tension to keep the wire off

the ground. It was a long run for those guys, but soon I could make out the two buckets going up to hang off the wire.

Pops radioed to let me know to start the pull, so I slowly began to back up. It seemed like I backed up quite a bit, but soon I could see the wire lift off the ground about mid-span, swaying slowly back and forth. I could see that Pops had his plumb bob out, checking his pole for rake. I kept on moving back, the line was getting taught. Just as Pops radioed me to hold the pull, it started snowing hard. I lost sight of the buckets as they were racking up.

I set the brake and put the truck in park. I looked up at the structure on my side of the highway, 300' away. Though it was snowing hard, I could tell that something didn't seem right. I got out of the truck and walked towards the structure. I could see that the swivel and the preform were about five feet short of the cross-arm! I ran back to the truck, I was a little rattled

as I radioed Pops, letting him know that the pull was five feet short. I then recalled with some relief, that the local engineers had been responsible getting the wire cut to proper lengths. It turned out that all five wire pulls across the interstate were five feet short! We don't put splices over a highway, so I wondered what this electric company would do. Their mistake was obvious – the engineers shot a straight-line distance but failed to provide for sag. Incredible!

I knew that the engineer who had been short tempered with me that night was very likely more than a little overwhelmed by the vast destruction of infrastructure. That man didn't know that I and my crew had been in situations like this many times before. Word to the wise therefore, when you see a lineman in an icy catastrophe, unshaven, coveralls covered in mud and creosote, just know that you can rest easy. He'll know what to do.

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Powerlineman Spotlight

In this issue of *Powerlineman Magazine* we have Will Robinson..
To see more stories go to powerlinemanmag.com.

How did you get into linework?

Right after high school I joined the U.S. Navy, I was stationed on the U.S.S. Dubuque LPD8 in Sasebo, Japan where I was a OS operations specialist, basically a radar tech, so after the military, the only jobs that went with what I did was air traffic control and that just seemed too boring to me so I started putting out job applications everywhere; UPS, gas companies, Walmart, (where I worked for about 6 months), and thank God I got no call backs on the other thousand applications I filled out. My neighbor at the time said go apply at Edison. In the mid 90's, Edison was hiring temporary meter readers and that's how I got my start in the electrical industry. Then the day came that changed my life forever. There was a storm, and crews were working around the clock, they asked us meter readers to go out and watch the trucks for the crews. I didn't understand what I was doing or looking at, but it sparked my interest and that was the first time I ever had double time on a check, I was hooked.

What year did you join the Navy and when did you hire on to Edison?

I joined the Navy in 1993, the same year I graduated high school (Etiwanda) in Fontana. I got out of the navy in April 1996 and got hired with Edison September 1996, I topped out as a journeyman in 2004. And by the way, I started rodeoing in 2010. I take that back, I did compete a few times as an apprentice in 2001 and 2002 but, as a Journeyman, I was privileged to be on the team with Ramon Garcia and Jacob Lybbert and in 2016 and 2019 we won the International Lineman's Rodeo in Kansas City



What was your apprenticeship like? What was the hardest part for you?

The apprenticeship was actually fun for me I was in Covina with a lot of old linemen who showed me some cool tricks of the trade. I don't think I had any doubt that I would be a Journeyman. It didn't feel like I was working. Every day was exciting to me, and I picked up the work fairly quickly. Oh, there was one hiccup and that was theory. When we got into vectors and some of the ohms law equations I had to get a tutor. Math is not my strongest quality, but rule of thumb gets me by.

What do you like most about being a lineman?

Every day is exciting and truly doesn't feel like I'm working a majority of the time. When it's raining windy and cold, all at the same time, I sometimes question: Why am I out here? I have enough sick time to not be out here. I like coming out when people have no power and know I have the skills to restore what is broken and the joy people get when their lights come on. I like line work so much, I do it for fun. I've been rodeoing for 15 years so, basically doing line work for fun, on my own time. I love that I work in the field and not locked in an office. I wish they went back to bookies; paperwork gives me a migraine.

Over a number of years, we have seen your name in the winner's circle for quite a few lineman rodeos. What does it take to get there?

For me, first of all, I'm having fun! I think when it's no longer fun I probably won't rodeo anymore. And a lot of practice! When we practice a lot, it shows and



when we don't, it also shows. But there have been times where I can anticipate what Jake is going to do, or, Ramon will do what I need before I know I need it! When we're in the zone, something magical happens and I truly think we can't be beat, although we are in a competition with 100's of other's, we are only competing against ourselves. At least that's what I think, but like all athletes, I believe father time is slowing me down. Sometimes my brain says let's go, and my body says hold on, wait a minute. I have been truly blessed to have good health and to meet some of the most amazing people in this journey of linework and rodeo competitions Ramon and Jake or my brothers not just rodeo partners so that makes it fun. I enjoy the process. The practicing the anticipation before a rodeo the award ceremony. Win or lose, no, I can't lie, a it's a little more fun if we win.

Is there anything you would like to say to the younger generation of linemen coming into the trade?

So, I would say to the younger generation, "It's not about the money. If you do something you love, you will never work a day of your life! Learn all you can from everyone you work with. I got some of my best tricks from broke d!@k linemen. Never stop learning and adjusting to new ways of doing things. I've been a lineman 21 years and I'm still willing to try something new. Save your money and spend time with your family. I'm so thankful that God blessed me with an understanding wife who has allowed me to work more hours than I should and travel the country rodeoing. If I could do it over, I would've invested more time at home. You can always get more money but the time with my wife Yeshica and daughter Simone, and my sons LJ, Konrad, and Reeze is priceless."



P.S. I would like to thank God. With Him, all things are possible. And I.B.E.W Local 47 for supporting us over the years rodeoing across the country and Edison for keeping me employed for 30 years.



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Nightmares

By Bruce Masse

The life of a lineman, in my experience, unfortunately isn't always smooth sailing. We never want to be traumatized, but it still happens. Electrical arcs and explosions stay with a person; when trying to have a sound sleep our minds may often drift into those memories. When I was young, and learning to work on poles and towers, dreams of falling would wake me up. It wasn't until I did a bungee jump that they went away. I think I was curious about

what it felt like, once I'd experienced it, the nightmares ceased.

While working with electrical laboratories testing electrical grounding and ultra-high voltage corridors I was exposed to many visual situations, not only uncontrolled ones. Studying the arc effects and gamma ray radiation created by events can lead to better clothing and eye protection for linemen. Utilities and manufacturers have improved designs dramatically which helps to make our

lives safer, however, due to our work with first responders, there can be very tense situations to control electrical damages to people and things.

In the '80s I was involved with setting up trauma counseling protocols for our utility. It is hard for companies to acknowledge that linemen and the people around them need support after events, as Taylor Swift's song *Shake it Off* doesn't quite do it. Although linemen are brave, courageous and capable of handling their dangerous



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lives extremely well, PTSD in the line trade (and with most emergency responders) is very prevalent.

Depending on how close you have been to the action, and how you deal with stress and your mental health, this will determine your rest and restoration cycles. In my opinion, and from my training, I have seen the correlation between rest and recuperation and accident frequencies. Storm restoration strategies try to balance the risks between longer hours and physical exposures. Accidents don't happen as much when linemen are at a higher level of focus but occur more often when they reach a level of fatigue or reduced concentration.

Decompression after situations, storms or tragedies takes time and skill. Relaxation and laughter are the best medicine, which is part of our lineman-coping mechanisms. In the early years of linework, alcohol played a huge role in the culture, and earning good money helped. Today many things are similar, except we have healthier methods of playing to help cope.

Our minds may never fully forget things we have heard, or smelled or seen, but in time, with rest and relaxation, we can accept them and let things go.

I found later in my career that enjoying the views, people, and solving challenges is more satisfying than focusing on the negative stuff. Creating, mentoring and improving situations to keep things fun or easier helps. Giving back pays big dividends. Save the nightmares for Halloween. I wish you all a peaceful sleep; Lord knows you deserve it.



Google® 'Slim the Lineman' book to find out more. The book is way better than the movie!

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2025 International Lineman's Rodeo Results

Precision, teamwork, and skill take center stage at the annual **International Lineman's Rodeo**, where the industries finest compete to showcase their expertise. Below, we present the standout performances from Hurtman, Pole Climb, and Overall, celebrating the teams and individuals who earned their place at the top!

Journeyman Best of The Best

- 1st Dan Jameson, Enoc Verdin, Joe Maynes, 12:19.39, Sturgeon/IBEW Local 47
- 2nd Toby Claude, Jason Lusty, Brian Wheeler, 12:25.15, Rocky Mountain Power/Local 47
- 3rd Tyler Manick, Joshua Buckner, Tyler Nickols, 13:03.44, Duke Energy
- 4th Miles Bell, Jordan Henderson, Heath Burrell, 13:06.97, Duke Energy

- 5th Francisco Flores, Dustin Curry, Brandon Dance, 13:12.78 PG&E

Journeyman Pole Climb

- 1st Jason Henley, Robert Michaud, Matthew Danielson, 01:17.55 Eversource
- 2nd Jason Novak, Clayton Gulley, Austin Lewis, 01:18.56 Ameren Illinois
- 3rd Dan Jameson, Enoc Verdin, Joe Maynes, 01:20.69, Sturgeon/IBEW Local 47
- 4th Toby Claude, Jason Lusty, Brian Wheeler, 01:22.69, Rocky Mountain Power/Local 47

- 5th Clay Thompson, Dillon Selman, Joseph Webster, 01:29.67 Xcel Energy

Journeyman Hurtman

- 1st Collin Ward, Austin Lewis, Brandon Carter, 01:09.96 Jackson EMC
- 2nd Toby Claude, Jason Lusty, Brian Wheeler, 01:13.27, Rocky Mountain Power/Local 47
- 3rd Dillon Welborn, Chase Dunahoo, Robert Morris, 01:14.94 Habersham EMC

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The winners: Sturgeon/IBEW Local #47, Enoc Verdin, Jr., Joe Maynes, and Dan Jameson.

- 4th Austin Cunningham, Clayton Patterson, Jeremy McBrayer, 01:21.91 Cobb EMC
- 5th Jason Novak, Clayton Gulley, Austin Lewis, 01:23.81 Ameren Illinois

Apprentice Best of Best

- 1st Hunter Walton, 15:43.00, Flint Energies
- 2nd Dennis Spars, 23:08.06, PG&E
- 3rd Austin Prendez, 24:32.38, PG&E

- 4th Harry Ruiz, 18:50.45, Walton EMC
- 5th Evan Pierre, 23:39.62, LADWP

Apprentice Pole Climb

- 1st Jack Fletcher, 00:35.40, IBEW Local 42
- 2nd Drake Hirst, 00:37.53, (PG&E)
- 3rd Jake Colombo, 00:38.97, APS / IBEW 387
- 4th Calvin Edson, 00:39.75, Eversource
- 5th Jakob Weder, 00:41.39, Ameren Illinois

Apprentice Hurtman

- 1st Jack Fletcher, 00:52.78, IBEW Local 42
- 2nd Zachary Calhoun, 01:01.78, Entergy
- 3rd Chris Williams, 01:02.40, Hydro One Canada
- 4th Hunter Walton, 01:06.81, Flint Energies
- 5th Dan Rourke, 01:06.84, Hydro One Canada

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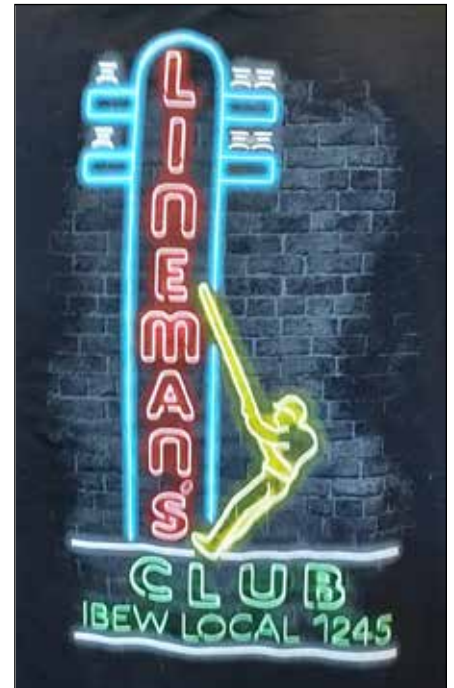


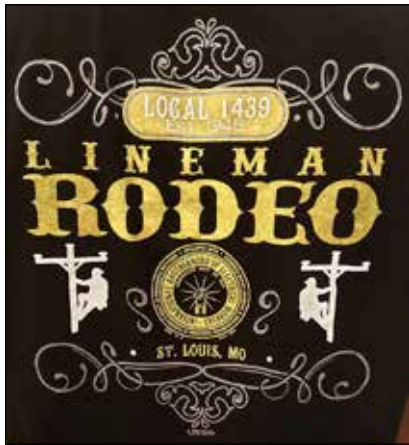
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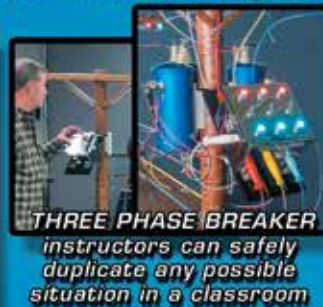
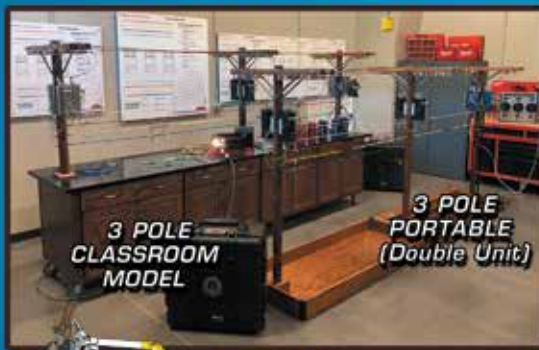
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A Family Affair at the International Lineman's Rodeo

By Byron Dunn

The Kesler Lineman Legacy. Every year, the International Lineman's Rodeo brings together the best linemen from across the globe to showcase their skills. It's a place where strangers become friends, and stories of hard work and dedication light up the bar. Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure of meeting countless linemen at the ILR, but this year, one story stood

out—a family trio: Jim Kesler, the seasoned “old Boomer,” and his two Journeyman children, Jinger and Justin. I'd crossed paths with Jim, Jinger, and Justin at previous rodeos, but it wasn't until this year's event that I connected the dots. They weren't just individual competitors—they were a family, competing side by side as a lineman team. The realization hit me: this was a legacy in action!



The Keslers' story stands out as a reminder that the trade is more than just a job. It's a way of life, a craft that binds generations.



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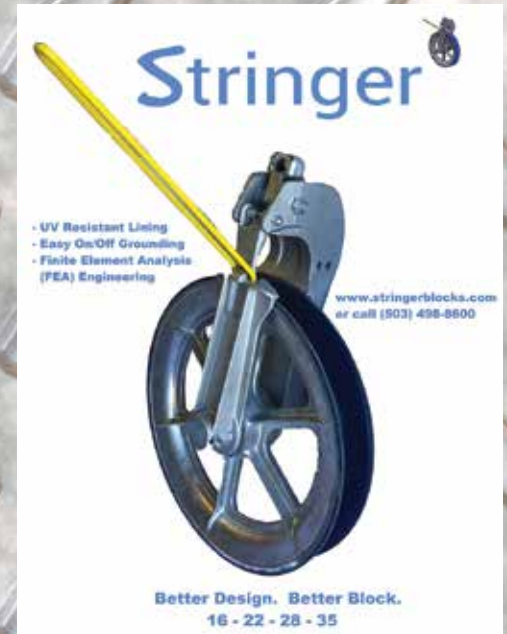
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2025 Fallen Linemen: A Tribute to Their Sacrifice



PowerLineman Magazine® solemnly honors the linemen who tragically lost their lives in 2025 while serving their communities and keeping the power flowing. The following list of fatalities was compiled from data provided by three dedicated nonprofit organizations: the Fallen Lineman Organization, the LineLife Foundation, and the National Sisterhood United for Journeymen Linemen. These groups tirelessly support

the lineman community and preserve the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We remember and honor the linemen listed below.

Each name represents a life dedicated to the vital, often dangerous work of maintaining our nation's electrical infrastructure. Their courage and commitment will not be forgotten. PowerLineman extends its deepest condolences to the families,

friends, and colleagues of these fallen heroes. We encourage our readers to support the nonprofit organizations that advocate for linemen and their families, ensuring their legacies endure.



We acknowledge Line Brother's Keeper for their commitment in coming to the aid of injured linemen and their families.

- | | | | | |
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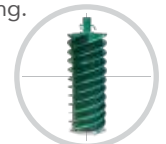
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The advertisement features a large image of a white and orange tracked utility vehicle with a long boom and bucket, positioned on a set of overhead power lines against a clear blue sky. The 'LINEWISE' logo is prominently displayed at the top in a stylized, orange and white font. Below the image, the text 'INSPIRED, TESTED, AND TRUSTED BY LINeworkERS' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom of the image, the phone number '254-757-1177' and the website 'line-wise.com' are listed. A row of social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube is located at the very bottom.



Two Analogies to Explain Power Factor

By Walt Slade

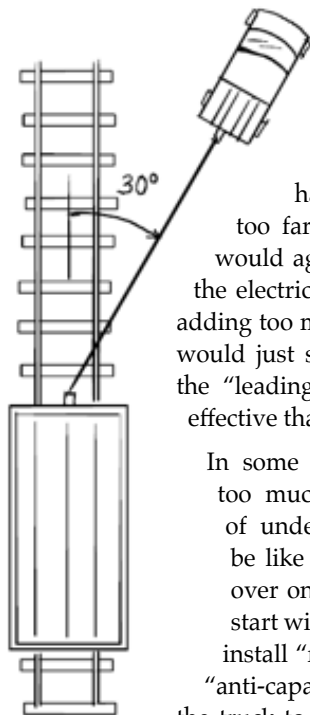
We all know that electric power is complicated. That's one reason it's so interesting. On the other hand, some electrical things do make some intuitive sense. Let's see if we can bring some intuitive understanding to this complicated term: "Power Factor." A statement like this can make sense: "this line has a terrible power factor of 30% leading."

Analogy #1: "Pulling a Railcar"

Let's say there's a railroad car on level ground. You want to move it to another spot. You've got your pickup and a strap. Let's say there's an obstacle in the way, so you can only pull at an angle as shown below. And let's say you've put 1,000 lbs. of tension on the strap.

This will get the RR car moving, but it's not the most effective angle for pulling. Of course, if there was a way to straddle the rails, it would be more effective to pull straight, in-line with the tracks.

We know from force vectors that when the truck is pulling at 30 degrees away from in-line, the force component that is in-line with the tracks will be $(1,000 \text{ lbs.}) \times \cosine(30 \text{ deg}) = 1,000 \times 0.87 = 870 \text{ lbs.}$ That is, the RR car will only feel 870 lbs. working toward forward motion. The strap has 1000 lbs. of ten-



sion and is pulling with that amount of force on RR car's coupling, but part of this force goes to a useless sideways component. We could make up a term and say there is an 87% "Pull Factor."

Funny enough, the same math works in the AC power world. If a feeder has 1,000 kVA flowing, but the amps are lagging the volts by 30 degrees, the effective power will be 870 kW and we'd say that's a Power Factor of 87%. ($\% \text{ Power Factor} = 100 \times \text{kW} / \text{kVA}$. $100 \times 870 / 1000 = 87$)

To correct the situation in the electrical world, capacitors can be installed. This has the effect of swinging the amps in-line with the volts, making the feeder more effective in sending power down the line. That would be like moving the truck onto the tracks so that all the strap tension would go into pulling the RR car.

In the truck analogy – what happens if you swing the truck too far to the left? Then the force would again become less effective. In the electrical world, that would be like adding too many capacitors to a feeder. It would just swing the Power Factor into the "leading" area, which again is less effective than 100% Power Factor.

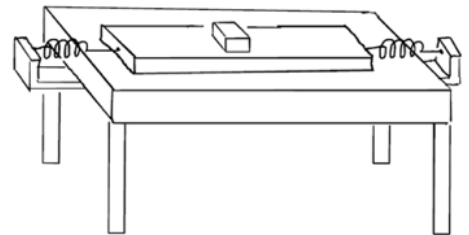
In some cases, a feeder already has too much capacitance due to miles of underground cable. That would be like the truck, pulling from way over on the left side of the tracks to start with. In this case, it's possible to install "reactors," which are basically "anti-capacitors." That's like moving the truck to the right, closer in-line with

the tracks (another term for a reactor is an "inductor").

As we all know, AC amps and volts are sine waves. When there is a phase angle of zero degrees between them, we call that a 100% Power Factor. By the way, in the electrical world, we use "phasors" to represent the magnitude and phase angle of volts and amps. A phasor corresponds to the magnitude and angle of force, called a "vector."

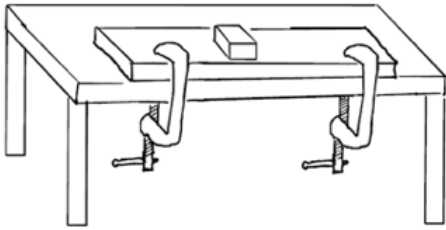
Analogy #2: "The Sanding Table"

Now for an analogy that helps explain the dynamics or "moving parts" of Power Factor. Let's say you want to use a sandpaper block to smooth a board. There are two different work tables. The first one has the board clamped down tightly. You can run the sandpaper block back and forth very efficiently, smoothing the board.



The second table has this weird setup. The board is resting on the table-top and there's a spring attached to each end. As you run the sandpaper block back and forth, the board slides back and forth somewhat.

As you slide the block to the left, the board slides with it until the right-hand spring holds it back enough so your sandpaper block starts sanding. When you run the



block back to the right, the board slides with it until the left-hand spring holds it back.

This would be a really inefficient way to get the sanding done.

In the electrical world, 100% Power Factor is like the first table. No wasted motion or energy. Every bit of your motion goes into sanding. It's very efficient.

But for the second table, the sanding motion lags behind the motion of the block. From a physics point of view, you're losing energy from the unnecessary friction of the board sliding back and forth on the table. You don't lose energy in the springs because whatever energy it takes to stretch a spring, you get that back when you reverse the direction. As long as you move the sanding block far enough back and forth, you'll get the sanding done, but there will be a lot of wasted motion.

Electric power is similar. For example, in the extreme case, if there was a feeder

with zero Power Factor, as with a long, unloaded cable circuit, then there would be current flowing into the cable capacitance, but there would be no net energy flowing. If you had an exotic meter that could show power flow for each millisecond,

Hopefully these analogies

take some of the mystery out of Power Factor so that when your engineer says, "This line has a terrible power factor of 30% leading", you can casually say, "Maybe we should install some reactors."

you would see the kW's from the source pulsate back and forth, going positive (into the cable), then negative, (back out of the cable), but on average there's no net energy going anywhere, except for

the losses in the supply wire due to the current flow. (Normal power meters are really showing the average over time and they would show zero power for this case)

Back to the table with springs: A Power Factor of zero would be the case where you just move the sanding block back and forth a short distance and the board slides back and forth with it, with zero work getting done.

Hopefully these analogies take some of the mystery out of Power Factor so that when your engineer says, "This line has a terrible power factor of 30% leading," you can casually say, "Maybe we should install some reactors."

By the way, I heard of a case in the Colorado mountains where a contractor decided to move a RR car "just a few feet" with his truck. The RR car was carrying a substation transformer. He quickly learned about the physics of slope, momentum, centripetal force (and liability) when the railcar got away from him and hit the first curve!

Walt Slade is a Sales Engineer with the KD Johnson rep firm in Colorado. walt_slade@kdjinc.com He's happy to take comments, questions and corrections on this article.

An advertisement for Burlington Safety Laboratory Inc. The top left features the company logo, which is a blue square containing a white icon of a hand holding a pencil. To the right of the logo, the company name "Burlington Safety Laboratory Inc." is written in blue. Below the logo and name, there are three pairs of gloves: black, yellow, and red. At the bottom left, there is a circular logo for ASTM. In the center, there is text that reads "State-of-the-Art Testing Labs", "New Product Inventory", "On-Site Testing", and "Wide Variety in Lineman Tools". At the bottom right, there is a circular logo for NAIL. On the right side of the advertisement, there is a blue box with the text "CONTACT US" and three locations: "Burlington, NJ (800)220-2120", "Pleasanton, CA (888)817-1412", and "Westminster, CA (800)296-2803". Below the contact information is a QR code and the website address "www.burlingtonsafety.com". The background of the right side of the advertisement shows a power line tower in a field.

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