

Pole-Top Rescue Training Saves Lives

By Lori K. Froehlich

The utility industry loses linemen every year due to job-related injuries and accidents. Most linemen know a co-worker who has been injured or killed on the job.

To prevent these scenarios, electric utilities focus on safety programs and employee training. Klickitat PUD is no exception. When it comes to the PUD's safety program, fundamental policies and procedures, monthly meetings and annual refresher training sessions are vital.

An example of safety training is pole-top and bucket rescue. KPUD conducts this annual training in July. The purpose of this training is to practice the quick and safe removal of a victim from a power pole. The linemen are required to first assess the situation and call for help. Next, they climb the pole and rescue "Joe," everyone's favorite rescue dummy. He is secured at the top of the pole representing the victim, a fellow lineman.

KPUD's tree-trimming crew simulates this same accident, with the victim being placed in a tree for recovery.

The victim may need rescue due to heart attack, electrical shock, heat stroke, injury or equipment failure. A second man on the ground positions himself to receive Joe from the lineman on the pole, stabilizes him, and begins first aid and CPR.

Emergency medical technicians from Skyline Hospital have been instrumental in providing refresher training to the crews for CPR and use of an automatic external defibrillator, a device used to shock the heart back into rhythm.

In addition to pole-top rescue, KPUD crews practice of bucket rescue. All crews are required to familiarize themselves with the various bucket trucks and the controls to extend the bucket. This is important in case any employee is in a situation that calls for their assistance in an emergency.

Proper training enables KPUD employees to be ready for any situation that could occur while they are on the job and allows them to better serve the public. Keeping this knowledge current could mean the difference between life and death.

If safety procedures are followed and personal safety is never sacrificed for productivity, all employees can go home safely at the end of each work day. ■



Above, Lineman Ethan Wanous of the Klickitat PUD's Goldendale crew works to secure Joe, the rescue dummy, during pole-top rescue training. Below, Martin Taylor of the KPUD construction crew gives Joe a reassuring smile during his training exercise.

