

Annual PUD Rescue Training

Programs and training keep PUD crew members safe while on the job



Bernie Predeek slowly lowers Joe—a 180-pound dummy—to the ground, using his hands for a brake as necessary.

By Lori Froehlich

The utility industry loses linemen and utility workers every year due to job-related injuries and accidents. Most linemen know a co-worker or fellow tradesman who has been injured or killed on the job. To prevent these tragedies, utility companies focus their resources on safety programs and employee training.

Klickitat PUD is no exception. Fundamental policies and procedures, monthly meetings and annual refresher training sessions are vital to the safety of PUD employees.

One example of the focus on safety is the pole-top and bucket rescue. Klickitat PUD conducts this training every July. The purpose is to practice the quick and safe removal of a victim from a power pole.

“Joe,” everyone’s favorite 180-pound dummy, is belted to a power pole to represent the victim: a fellow lineman who may need rescue due to heart attack, electrical shock, heat stroke, injury or equipment failure.

Linemen are required to first assess the situation and call for help. Next, they climb the pole, use the hot stick to de-energize the power by opening the cutout and then proceed to rescue Joe. A second man on the ground positions himself to receive Joe from the lineman on the pole, stabilize him and begin first aid/CPR.

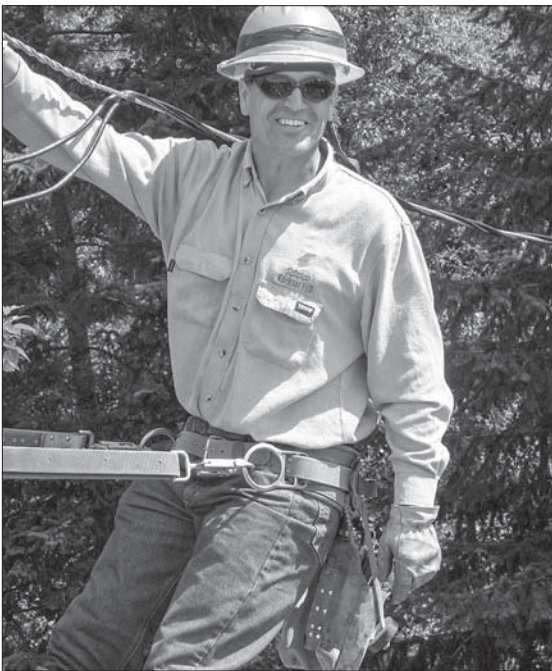
KPUD’s tree trimmers simulate this same scenario, with the victim being placed in a tree for recovery.

Emergency medical technicians from Skyline Hospital have been instrumental in providing refresher CPR training to the crews, as well as use of the automated external defibrillator, a device that shocks the heart back into rhythm.

Crews also practice bucket rescue during safety training. All crew members are required to familiarize themselves with the various bucket trucks and their controls to extend the bucket. Each truck has different controls, so this is important training in case any employees are in an emergency situation that calls for their assistance.

This annual training enables KPUD employees to be ready for any situation while they are on the job, and better serve the public.

Keeping their knowledge current could mean the difference between life and death for a KPUD worker. 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. ■



Clockwise from top left, Bill Richardson gives the thumbs up after his climb. Todd Niva secures Joe before he unbelts him. Jeff Speelman opens the cutout on the transformer to ensure power is disconnected before he continues up the pole to rescue Joe. Martin Taylor is all smiles after successfully rescuing Joe for another year.