



PUD employee Bobby Koffler prepares to perform a rescue drill at the top of a pine tree. His "victim" is Joe, a 180-pound dummy.

Annual Rescue Training

PUD programs and training keep linemen and tree trimmers safe while on the job

By Lori 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 tragedies, utility companies focus on their 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 PUD's safety program.

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.

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," everyone's favorite 180-pound dummy. He is secured at the top of the pole to represent the victim, a fellow lineman.

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

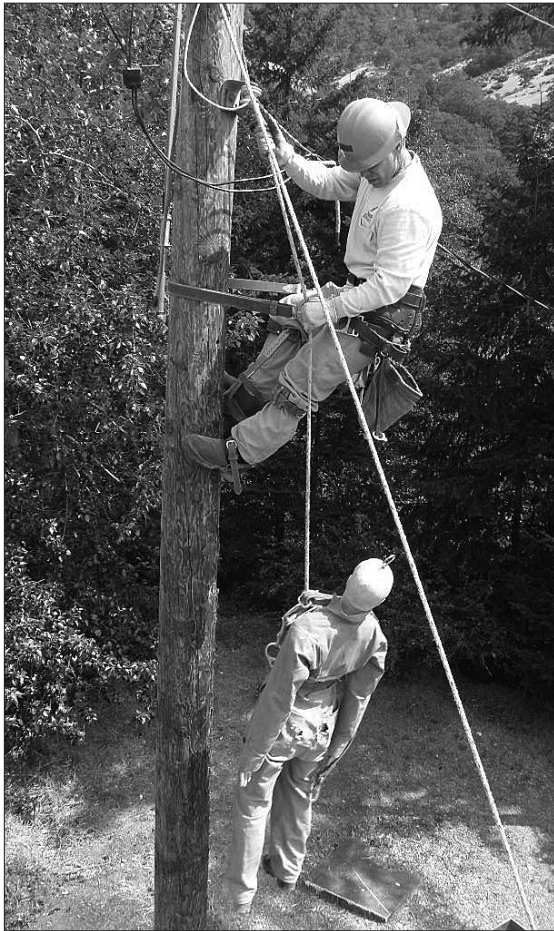
The victim may need rescue due to heart attack, electrical shock, heat stroke, injury or equipment failure. A second man on the ground positions himself to receive Joe from the lineman on the pole, stabilize him and begin first aid/CPR.

Emergency medical technicians from Skyline Hospital are instrumental in providing refresher CPR training to the crews, as well as use of the automatic 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.

This annual 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.

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, Todd Niva lowers Joe to the groundmen waiting below; Bill Richardson gives the thumbs up to his groundmen after completing the pole-top rescue; Jeff Speelman reaches up with the hot stick to de-energize the cutout on the pole so he can safely rescue Joe; Groundmen Mike Purdy and Keith Lilly operate the hand line to the line-man, which is how they receive the hot stick as well as lower Joe.