



POWER-GRAM

**April
2022**

Clondcroft

575-682-2521

Alto

575-336-4550

Carrizozo

575-648-2352

www.ocec-inc.com

LOBBY HOURS

8 AM - 4 PM

Monday - Friday

**TO REPORT AN
OUTAGE, CALL
1-800-548-4660**

**FOR BALANCE
INFORMATION
OR TO PAY YOUR
BILL, CALL
1-844-846-2695**



A Monthly Newsletter for Members of

**OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Left: Photo by Matt Torrez

The Power Behind Your Power

You've likely noticed OCEC's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough—but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 11, I thought I'd share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours, outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know that to become a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience, and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, OCEC's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Here at OCEC we have 17 lineworkers that are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain 2824 miles of power lines across four counties. In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire. Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away. Line crews now use laptops, tablets, drones and other technologies to map outages, survey damage and troubleshoot problems.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. Please join us as we recognize them on April 11.

#ThankALineworker

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

When streaming content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25-30% less energy than standard equipment

Source: Department of Energy



Chavez Recognized for Safety on the Job

Matt Chavez was awarded the 2022 Long Rope Safety Award for both OCEC and among participating co-ops across New Mexico. Chavez was recognized by his peers as a leader in safety at the March Safety Meeting.

The Long Rope Safety award is dedicated to line crew members in New Mexico. The objective is to recognize a person who is a leader in safety and believes safety on the job is a priority.

Nominations for this award included the following comments from his co-workers: Matt is a hard worker and great leader who begins each job with a safety briefing. He never takes shortcuts and always reminds everyone to use the appropriate PPE. He ensures that the entire crew participates in the job briefing and delivers instructions very effectively so all involved understand the task at hand. Matt is task-driven and keeps safety as the priority over speed in completing his work. His knowledge of the job and constant observation of safety rules are traits that have been instilled in all those he works with. His dedication to safety, calm demeanor and firm leadership are skills that his peers try to emulate.

OCEC employees, management and board of trustees congratulate Matt for a job well done!

Vegetation Management Update

Crews working to trim trees and vegetation in rights-of-way are currently in the following areas and are expected to remain there for the next few weeks

- Mescalero to Apache Summit
- Palmer Loop
- East of Mayhill

OCEC reminds members that you may see vehicles, ATVs and crew members from Rogers Tree Service cutting trees near existing power lines. Vehicles will be marked with their company name and an OCEC contractor placard.

Operations on Alert with High Winds



As winds begin to pick up, red-flag warnings will be issued and OCEC will put into effect fire prevention procedures. Reclosers will be set to non-reclose so breakers operate and lines stay open at the first sign of a fault to help reduce the risk of a fire being started by electrical equipment.

This precautionary measure will rely more heavily on line patrol by operations personnel and less on automated equipment, but does come with some consequences – outages may last longer and more members could be affected. OCEC asks everyone to be patient when the longer outages occur, but hope you understand that the benefits of the extra patrol time far outweigh the risks.

April Employment Anniversary

Lee-Ann Connor—Engineering/Oper. Asst.—11 years

Blanca Parker—Accounts Payable Clerk—1 year



**For account balance or
to pay by phone, call toll free,
1-844-846-2695**