

SHELBY News

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Season's Greetings

From the Directors and Employees of Shelby Electric Cooperative, Shelby Energy Company and PWR-net Wireless Broadband Internet.



Linemen from Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) participated in the 19th annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) on Friday, Sept. 30. This year 16 teams participated in the competition. The rodeo gives linemen the opportunity to showcase their skills in front of family, friends and fellow linemen. It's a chance to

network and show their pride in the special skill sets that keep our lights on.

The Lineman's Safety Rodeo is held on the Chuck West Lineman Training Grounds at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield. The college also offers an associate's degree and a certificate in Electrical Distribution Lineman, the majority of which is coordinated by the AIEC. Courses are designed for new and existing electric line personnel to improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Each year at the rodeo, teams of linemen from Illinois electric cooperatives participate in competitive events using skills that focus

on agility, speed and accuracy. While these skills are part of the judging criteria, above all, the linemen are judged on safe work practices.

SEC's team of Brian Chevalier, Jamie Sharp and Matt Clark placed first in the Team Hurt Man Rescue competition. Chevalier also took first place honors in the Individual Hurt Man Rescue event. Apprentice Linemen Dalton Brown and Nick Ray placed third and fourth in the

Continued on 16b ▶



Pictured left to right: Apprentice Linemen Dalton Brown and Nick Ray participate in the Lineman's Safety Rodeo for the first time, placing third and fourth in the Individual Apprentice Hurt Man Rescue.



Shelby Electric Cooperative team consisting of (pictured left to right) Construction Superintendent Brian Chevalier, Lineman Jamie Sharp and Foreman Matt Clark pose for a picture before participating in the Mystery Event at the 19th Annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo held in Springfield, Ill. They placed first in the Team Hurt Man Rescue. Chevalier also placed first in the Individual Hurt Man Rescue.

Safety Rodeo continued from 16a

Individual Apprentice Hurt Man Rescue.

“We have regular safety and training meetings as our linemen’s safety is the highest priority we place on our guys. The Lineman’s Safety Rodeo is a good place to hone skills and work on techniques,” said SEC’s Manager of Operations Terry Oldham.

Line personnel competed in five team events and three individual events. Team events included Hurt Man Rescue, Egg Climb (linemen climb a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouth), H-Structure Obstacle Course and two Mystery Events. Individual linemen and apprentices competed in the Egg Climb, Hurt Man Rescue and

H-Structure Obstacle Course. Scores for each event use a 100-point scale and are based upon completion time and proper execution of the task including safe work practices. Deductions were made to a team or individual’s overall performance score due to such things as slipping when climbing poles, dropping tools or executing inappropriate procedures or methods.

Overall, the cooperative team placed eighth out of 16 teams. Congratulations to our linemen on their team and individual efforts.



Brian Chevalier moves into position to participate in the team Mystery Event.

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Office Hours:
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Offices Closed

Your cooperative offices will be closed on December 23 and 26 to celebrate Christmas. Offices will also be closed on January 2 to celebrate New Year's Day.



The face of Shelby Energy Company retires

Professional sports teams are called franchises. The same can be said of companies like McDonalds or Starbucks. They are divisions of a larger company that are privately owned. For example, the Chicago Bears are a franchise of the National Football League (NFL).

In the NFL, a team can retain a free agent by placing a franchise tag on them, thus they are promoted as the “face of the franchise.”

While Shelby Energy Company isn't privately owned and it is definitely not an NFL team, Office Manager Janet Orr could be considered the face of Shelby Energy Company. Janet probably isn't a household name to many of you who are reading this article; but to the 2,000 Shelby Energy customers, she is the first person you encounter when visiting their office and the person you talk to when calling in. She was there when the company started in April, 1994 and after 22 years of dedicated service, Janet said goodbye as she retired in November.

You might think 22 years of service in one industry is quite an accomplishment; but for Janet, this was the start of a second career in the propane industry. She came to Shelby Energy after 28 years at Thermogas, giving her 50 years experience in the propane field.

“When Shelbyville Thermogas was purchased by nationally-owned Ferrellgas, several people lost their jobs. I was fortunate when the opportunity to work for the newly formed LP gas subsidiary of Shelby Electric Cooperative became available,” explained Janet. “Steve Shoaff and the late Wayne Bunch, who I worked with at Thermogas, were also a part of the newly formed Shelby Energy Company.”

Working as a customer service representative, then transitioning to



Janet Orr retired in November.

The original Shelby Energy Company crew, pictured left to right, Steve Shoaff, Janet Orr and the late Wayne Bunch. ▼



office manager for Shelby Energy, Janet saw a lot of changes over the course of her 22-year career. “Our first customer was Harold Abel of rural Windsor, which quickly turned into 500 customers and currently there are approximately 2,000 propane users. In 2014, we upgraded the accounting software. In order to reduce “clutter” from a 20-year-old program, I chose to manually input all the customers and tank files. That was probably the biggest challenge I faced during my time here. We have recently become mobile ready, taking the manual component of writing tickets by hand to automatically printing them with laptops synced to a central computer,” said Janet. “We also started selling Generac whole-house generators and acquired a local oil company, providing bulk oil supplies to homes, farms and businesses.”

Growing up in Taylorville, where she still lives today, Janet pretty much learned the trade on the job. “I didn't have any formal college education after high school. I learned as I went and enjoyed the challenges along the way. I guess you could say I'm self-taught and I'm very appreciative of the opportunities this job

afforded me,” noted Janet.

Janet isn't quite sure yet what she will do in retirement. Although she hinted catching up on Grey's Anatomy is in the plans, she made it clear she would not become a couch potato. She wants to spend time traveling and visiting family. Janet, who is widowed, was married to Larry “Ace” Orr for 48 years and has two daughters and five grandchildren.

“I will miss the work because I really enjoyed what I was doing and I will miss all the great people I worked with and met on my 50-year journey. What I will probably miss most of all are the great customers I was able to serve while employed by Shelby Energy Company,” concluded Janet.

As an avid Cub fan, she was excited to head into retirement with the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series!

Your cooperative family and friends wish you good health and best wishes. Congratulations on your retirement, Janet!

REAL LIFE  REAL POWER

Getting Real with Marla ~ Extension cords

This is the season for stringing up lights, plugging in space heaters and heated livestock/pet waterers. If you are like me, this means searching for an extension cord (or three) to make it all possible. It sounds simple – plug in just one more extension cord and voila! Clark Griswold Christmas lights! However, Shelby Electric Cooperative wants to remind our members to use extension cords safely.

Did you know that extension cords can be linked to approximately 4,000 visits to emergency rooms annually? Additionally, every year, more than 3,300 residential fires begin with extension cords. To keep from being included in those statistics, make sure you understand that extension cords have limits.

Extension cords are designed for *temporary* use, not as a permanent solution for areas needing electrical hard-wiring. When an extension cord is used, it needs to first be carefully inspected. Check the coating around the wires to see if it has become brittle, cracked, frayed or been chewed on by animals.

Not all extension cords are created equal. Before purchasing or using an extension cord, check its rating for the intended use. Cords will be rated for indoor or outdoor use and also by power needs. Use light-duty extension cords *only* for

indoor lights and small appliances. Heavy-duty extension cords are needed for high wattage use. For example, a 1500 watt space heater will draw about 12.5 amps. A cord is rated according to the amount of electrical current it can conduct safely. Make note that the smaller the gauge number is, the larger the conductor diameter will be. For example, a 12-gauge wire is thicker than a 14-gauge wire. Also, consider the electrical needs of other items that may be plugged into the same outlet as the extension cord.

Extension cord safety also includes:

- **Never** removing the third prong

- Pulling on the plug, not the cord, to remove it from an outlet
- **Never** covering, stapling or nailing an extension cord
- Using cords with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) in outdoor areas or any locations where there could be moisture
- Using cords that have been tested by an independent agency, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Don't let a worn or misused extension cord create a dangerous situation. Plug into safety for you and your loved ones.

~Marla Eversole
Member Services



DANGER! Outlet Overload

Every year, U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated **25,900 home electrical fires**. These fires cause an estimated **280 deaths, 1,125 injuries** and **\$1.1 billion in property loss**.

Thirty-nine percent of home electrical fires involve outlets and receptacles, and other electrical wiring.

To ensure safety, you should only use about 80 percent of the available current for each electrical outlet in your home.

Are you overloading outlets?
Use this formula to find out.

WATTAGE/VOLTS=AMPS

Example:

Let's say you are using 2,000 watts of power (for one outlet). Divide the watts by the volts in your home (typically 120), and you come up with 16.6 amps of current being used. With a 20 amp electrical outlet, you are using about 80 percent of the available current.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, Home & Garden



REMINDER: December 31, 2016 is the application deadline for the seven Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarships. Visit www.shelbyelectric.coop and click on the "Our Community" tab for more information or call us toll-free at 1-800-677-2612.