

Pole-Top Safety

By Lori Froehlich-Schwab

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

An example of the focus on safety is pole-top and bucket rescue. KPUD conducts this training every July. The purpose of this training 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 and rescue Bill, everyone's favorite rescue dummy. He is secured at the top of the pole representing the victim, a fellow lineman. KPUD's tree crew simulates this same accident, with the rescue dummy instead 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 Bill from the lineman on the pole, stabilizes him and begins first aid/CPR. EMTs 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 conjunction, the practice of bucket-rescue also is conducted. All crews are required to familiarize themselves with the various bucket trucks and their controls to extend the bucket. This is important in case any employee is in a situation that calls for their assistance in an emergency.

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. Keeping this knowledge current could mean the difference between life and death for KPUD crews. 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, KPUD Lineman Bernie Predeek ties the rescue line in position on the pole to lower Bill, the rescue dummy.

Below, Linemen Ed Lexa and Rob Rising are all smiles while rescuing Bill.

