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LINEMAN APPRECIATION MONTH



THE **POWER** BEHIND YOUR **POWER**

YOU'VE likely noticed Southeast Electric Cooperative crews out and about, working on powerlines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineman's job is tough — but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions.

This month we celebrate Lineman's Appreciation Day on April 11. Here are some interesting facts about electric linemen:


- The equipment and tools that a lineman carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds.

That's the same as carrying six gallons of water.

- Linemen are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall.
- Lineman is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.
- To become a journeyman lineman, it takes more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years).
- Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric linemen. Southeast Electric Cooperative has six linemen and one groundsman who are responsible for keeping power flowing

24/7, 365 days a year. They maintain 1,712 miles of power lines across six counties.

- Linemen must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done. That's why the lineman's family is also dedicated to service.

The next time you see a lineman, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, linemen are the power behind your power. 

Remembering George Herbert "Herb" Kerr

HERB Kerr was a lifelong lineman for Southeast Electric Cooperative. Robin Kuntz had the privilege of working with him for more than three decades. Below are some of the memories she shared during Herb's memorial service on February 7, 2022.



Herb Kerr

"Herb was an athlete. Herb's athletic abilities served him well as a lineman. To give you an idea, we have around 30,000 poles on our system, and Herb climbed his fair share of them because there were no bucket trucks when he began his career.

"Herb was careful. He was a man of few words, but he was actually very contemplative. Whenever he spoke, people listened. There were no cellphones back then, and I was terrified of dispatching on the radio. I feared I would say something wrong when relaying important information between the trucks. I mentioned this insecurity to Herb one time, and he reassured me by saying, 'I don't care if you have to repeat something 20 plus times to make sure everyone understands one another. Safety is our number one concern.' Herb always had our backs.

"Herb was always prepared. The man lived on coffee and Kippered Snacks (which were basically canned sardines). These were as essential as the gear he always carried in his truck in case of an outage.

"Herb was observant. He was always scanning the powerlines looking for potential problems. I was always asking where people lived. Herb and I were headed to a trouble call down by Albion. As we neared our destination, I pointed out to Herb what I thought were several deer lying down. As we approached the 'wildlife,' Herb started to snicker. It was a bunch of turkeys standing up! Fast forward a couple of weeks to a return trip from a staking project over by Camp Crook. We were driving down the Tie Creek Road, and I spotted a big bird 'running' along my side of the road up ahead. I wasn't about to be ribbed again by Herb if I was wrong. As we approached, Herb glanced over and said, 'Do you see what I see?' I said, 'I'm not saying a word!' We drove for about half a mile alongside an emu!

"Herb was an educator. In 2006, early April, we suffered an ice storm and lost nearly 200 poles. Rule number one: NEVER-NEVER comment on the beautiful frost! Herb did NOT appreciate frost on powerlines! Herb had to do his job and teach us what to do because we were all in new positions, but he led by example.

"Herb was a dedicated servant. His steadfast character was tested to the max on May Day, 2008. It was our perfect storm. People everywhere were without power, but no one could see any problems due to the blizzard conditions. We couldn't roll out trucks until the roads were opened. The



George Herbert "Herb" Kerr, December 1947 to January 2022.

bombshell dropped when a member from Alzada called and reported 80 poles down, then another called in reporting that he could see NO poles standing on the Tie Creek Road. When the county road crew got the Mill Iron Road open, Herb took a drive and reported that Mill Iron looked like it did in the 40's. When I asked what he meant, he said, "There's nothing there!" We lost almost 1,900 poles when all was said and done. Herb soon went from supervising four linemen to almost 100 linemen and contractors. He was modest and never took credit, always saying it was a "team effort."

"Herb was respected by his colleagues and his customers. During the May Day storm, several high school students built crossarms for the crews, and some of those students later did school-to-work with us under Herb's guidance, attended line school and now work as linemen. Herb encouraged the next generation.

"Herb was an amazing man, mentor and dear friend."