Life on the line

Every year, we take the time to thank our extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. Twenty-three line personnel maintain 2,200 miles of energized line across the cooperative's service territory in all or parts of Christian, Cumberland, Effingham, Fayette, Macon, Montgomery, Moultrie, Sangamon and Shelby Counties.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Shelby Electric Cooperative running smoothly. On April 10, 2017, we want to honor all lineworkers who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time—day or night, weekday or weekend—if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you have seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member who is out of power.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing to help when a neighboring cooperative, in state or out of state, is in need after a major weather outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers—both locally and around the world—that light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do! Use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support on April 10 for Cooperative Lineman Appreciation Day.

Our lineworkers are fearless, committed and critical to our success. We say THANK YOU to our line personnel:

**Manager of Operations**
Terry Oldham

**Construction Superintendent**
Brian Chevalier

**Metering Foreman**
Dave White

**Foremen**
Matt Clark
Steve Darnell
Brad Wright

**Linemen**
Cary Bryson
Nick Dunaway
Thad France
Jerry Johnston
Roger Jones
Blake Knearem
Jake Kull
Andy McDonald
Adam Schrock
Jamie Sharp
Nick Sloan
Blake Summers

**Apprentice Linemen**
Dalton Brown
Nick Ray

**Forestry Line Foreman**
Kevin Carlen

**Forestry Apprentice**
Luke Morse

**Fleet Manager**
Craig Atteberry
Linemen are often seen wearing hard hats and work outside. Inside employees don’t wear hard hats but when asked what they do at the cooperative, often state, “I wear many hats.” The same can be said for Debbie Carlen who recently retired from Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) after 23 years of dedicated service.

Debbie was born in Illinois and at a young age moved to Terre Haute, Indiana for several years. When she was a freshman in high school, her family returned to Illinois and planted roots in Shelbyville. Before her employment with SEC, Debbie worked for First Trust Bank of Shelbyville, now called Busey Bank.

Debbie started at the cooperative in 1994 working in the mailroom. Her duties included sorting mail, address changes, answering phones and assisting members at the front counter, and helping out in various departments as needed. After five years, Debbie moved to the engineering department as the Engineering Assistant and maintained that role for the next 18 years.

Over the course of her 23-year career at SEC, she’s seen a lot of change. “I would have to say technology was the biggest change I’ve seen at the cooperative. Computers—specifically our metering system and the ability to read and remotely control the meters has really improved our work efficiencies. Plus, it gives the member tools they can use as well,” said Carlen.

Debbie was also active in many cooperative employee community ventures. She assisted with cookies for the troops, Christmas cards for the troops and also collected old cell phones that could be recycled and given to our military service personnel. She also participated on the cooperative’s Relay for Life team and that triggered one of her fondest memories. “One of my most memorable moments was seeing my boss, Jim Matlock, dressed up as a woman and stomping grapes to help out the SEC Relay for Life team. He was a real trooper,” chuckled Carlen.

Debbie and her husband, Kevin, have a daughter and son, Kim of Portland, Oregon and Martin of New Douglas, Illinois. They have three grandchildren.

When asked what she will miss most about her career at Shelby Electric Cooperative she responded, “All of my co-workers here at the co-op have been a great bunch of people to work with. We are like a big family, so I know I will most definitely miss them. But obviously not enough to cancel my retirement plans!”

What does retirement hold for Debbie? Many hats! Even though her favorite racer Jeff Gordon has retired she will continue to be a NASCAR fan and will spend time at local dirt tracks in Macon, Brownstown and Charleston to watch Midgets, Late Models and Modifieds. Kevin and Debbie have two large gardens they spend ample time in as well. “I enjoy racing but I love spending time with my family so I plan on visiting my grandkids as much as I can and also watch my great nieces showing their cattle at shows. My sisters will also see that I have very little down time,” explained Carlen.

Debbie Carlen poses with her crew. Pictured left to right: Chief Operating Officer Jim Matlock, Engineering Assistant Carlen, and Staking Engineers Brian Bunton and John Miller.

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

Shelbyelectric.coop debuted a new look in March. The new design gives members access to all aspects of the cooperative and what it has to offer. Cooperative alerts, access to reviewing and paying your bill, quick links to the cooperative’s social media outlets, access to the real-time outage map, and much more can be found on the cooperative’s landing page. Also, be sure to check out the new “Outage Center” packed with useful information.

“We hope our members enjoy the new design and functionality of our website. It is also mobile responsive to allow the site to be used over all devices in a clean fresh look,” said President/CEO Josh Shallenberger. “We will continue to add and make improvements to our online presence, so check out shelbyelectric.coop.”
Getting Real with Marla & Outdoor Projects

It is the time of year for tackling outdoor projects such as cleaning the deck or patio, lawn furniture and vehicles. Don’t let April showers, standing water and outdoor projects that require using electrical equipment become a shocking experience. Common electrical items used outdoors include wet-dry vacuums, pressure washers, air compressors, leaf blowers, hedge and grass trimmers, tools, radios and even electric grills.

Inspect the cords and plugs on any equipment before using; look for fraying, cracks or any signs of damage. It is also important to plug cords into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs monitor the flow of electricity in a circuit. Any fault or irregularity in the circuit trips the circuit off, preventing electric shock. GFCIs were first introduced in the 1970s and are a standard requirement in new construction of all outdoor electrical outlets and in areas near water sources. However, many of us have homes, garages, sheds and barns built prior to this standard. In that case, it is wise to make use of portable GFCIs (see graphic). Portable GFCIs are specialized extension cords designed for safety in dangerous conditions. However, common sense should prevail. For utmost safety, delay outdoor tasks requiring electricity if it is raining or damp outside.

SafeElectricity.org recommends that receptacle and portable GFCIs be tested regularly. Test and reset buttons are on the units for this purpose.

Pressure washers and wet/dry vacuums are two examples of items that pair electricity and water. Activities involving their use require special care. Safe Electricity and one such product’s safety instructions recommend users:

- Always test the GFCI prior to use.
- Read and follow the appliance’s safety instructions.
- If an extension cord must be used, keep the cord’s connection point out of any standing water and use a heavy duty extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- Use only three-prong, grounding-type cord plugs.
- Check all cords for damage.
- Do not handle plug or appliance with wet hands.
- Unplug item from outlet when not in use.

Spring into your outdoor projects safely by remembering that electricity and water do not mix. It is well worth the time to take special care to keep you and your loved ones safe. Visit SafeElectricity.org for more information involving safety with electricity.

~ Marla Eversole
Member Services

Cooperative offices will be closed on Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday.