

# New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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## From the General Manager/CEO



# Lineworker Appreciation Day

By Mark Morrison

IF YOU were asked to associate an image or a person with New Enterprise REC, I bet you would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power



40 FEET UP: This is the view our lineworkers see when they are 40 feet in the air.


lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community

are truly what sets them apart. That is why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

Our cooperative lineworkers here at New Enterprise REC are also serving others around the state cooperative network. Over the years, our lineworkers have answered the call from electric cooperatives when heavy weather put their members out of service and damaged their distribution systems. Our line crews have traveled as far as Sussex, N.J., to aid restoration efforts at Sussex REC. It is humbling that our crews volunteer to work in the worst weather and repair the heaviest damage to help others. Our lineworkers are also active in our statewide Job Training & Safety program, by volunteering to serve as instructors at cooperative line training schools, teaching the next generation to be the best in their craft, once again volunteering to be away from their homes and families, simply to help others.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent New Enterprise REC, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, I hope you will join me in thanking them for their exceptional service. I also hope you will remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep. 

# #ThankALineworker

By Brawna Sell

MANY TIMES, we don't think twice about how electricity gets to our homes and businesses. We wake up to the alarm clock, get a hot shower and push the garage door opener without even a thought about the people who make all this possible.

Rural electric cooperative lineworkers are on the job days and sometimes even nights and weekends to provide "light" to their consumer-members. The job of a lineworker is not easy. They must be willing to work in all weather conditions at all hours of the day or night. Sometimes, they must be willing to work days and nights straight. New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are willing to do whatever it takes to keep the power on or to get the lights back on. They form a solid team with one job in mind: to deliver safe, reliable electricity to the members. Each weekday morning, they climb into their trucks and head out to build or maintain electric services and lines.

In a split second, the day's to-do list can be interrupted due to an outage. It

may be as simple as a squirrel getting in a transformer or it may be a major snow storm with high winds.

Whether under the blistering heat or in below-zero temperatures, line crews are insulated from head to toe for safety purposes. Below is a list of the personal protective equipment they wear each day:

- ▶ Hard hats protect the head from falling objects and bumps, and also provide protection in the event of an electrical contact.
- ▶ Thick rubber gloves are worn to insulate the hands and fingers from live electrical circuits. This allows the lineworkers to repair lines without disconnecting your power.
- ▶ Rubber sleeves are worn along with the rubber gloves. The sleeves cover their upper arms and shoulders to prevent accidental contact with those parts of the body while working out of a bucket truck around energized wires.
- ▶ Leather protectors are put over the rubber gloves to safeguard the gloves from punctures.
- ▶ Special flame-retardant (FR) shirts are

a shield against flames, flash fires and electric arcs. Long-sleeved shirts are worn in hot weather as well as cold.

- ▶ A climbing belt securely supports the lineworker's weight when climbing poles. This belt holds tools and supplies to free hands when necessary.
- ▶ Trousers are also FR, made from 100% natural fibers. These special trousers protect the lineworkers from fire or sparks.
- ▶ Safety glasses are worn to shield the eyes from debris, flying objects and other hazards.
- ▶ Safety straps are used to wrap around the pole for support and safety while a lineworker climbs up the pole.
- ▶ Hooks are used for climbing poles when a bucket truck can't be used or more assistance is needed.

All this equipment is worn each day so the lineworkers can go home safely, the way they came to work. Safety is a high priority for our line crews — their safety and yours. One wrong move can cost a limb or a life. Whether our line crews are working on daily



jobs or in emergency mode, they are responsible for their safety and their coworkers' safety.

So, the next time the power goes out, try to remember the lineworkers who are working in the rain, ice, snow, or scorching heat to restore power to all of our homes and businesses. ☀

## Fun facts about electric co-op lineworkers

Below are a few fun facts about electric co-op lineworkers.

- ▶ Lineworkers (\*including job categories for lineman, grounds-man and tree-man) make up the largest single category of jobs at the typical distribution co-op.
- ▶ There are about 18,000 full-time lineworkers in the rural electric program, making up nearly one-third of all rural electric distribution co-op employees.
- ▶ The average age of a co-op lineworker is 43.
- ▶ Co-op lineworkers make up about 16% of all lineworkers in the U.S. Electric co-ops serve vast service areas across three-quarters of the U.S. and own 42% of the nation's distribution lines, distributing electricity to more than 42 million people.
- ▶ Co-op lineworkers maintain 2,566,917 miles of distribution line for 850 distribution systems across the United States.

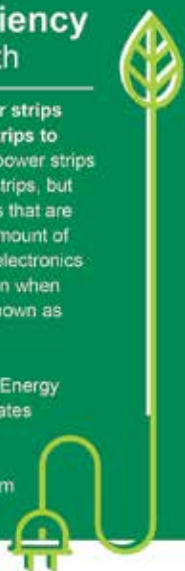
(Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: [www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)



## Be alert and stay safe in work zones

It might be a pickup with flashing lights parked on the road, a bucket truck with cones around it as a tree is trimmed, or maybe several trucks and trailers with barricades and lanes closed as a crew of lineworkers replace a utility pole. Whatever the case, sometimes New Enterprise REC must put trucks and personnel in roadways to make repairs or install new equipment to keep power on at your home and business. Workers in these situations are already facing the hazards of dealing with high voltage, and they increase their risk when establishing a work zone in the roadway. No matter how big the work zone, it requires drivers to pay attention to avoid a crash.

**“There are actions that drivers must take when approaching a work zone to keep not only our employees safe but also themselves,” says Mike Shawley, outside operations manager. The National Work Zone Safety Information Clearing House has developed a list of tips to help drivers stay safe in work zones:**

- ▶ Never use a cellphone or text while driving.
- ▶ Stay alert; expect the unexpected.
- ▶ Slow down.
- ▶ Don't tailgate.
- ▶ Pay attention to the signs.
- ▶ Obey the flaggers.
- ▶ Be patient and stay calm.
- ▶ Know the road rules for work zones.

**“Keeping a safe distance between your car and our employees and equipment, driving the posted work zone speed limit, and using your four-way flashers when stopping or traveling slowly can help reduce accidents in work zones,” Shawley adds.**

**Bear in mind that many states have also drastically increased the fines and or jail time for traffic violations in work zones.**

**Remember: Knowing safety is not enough. Practice it!**



# Bedford County Dairy Princess

By Ella Gable, *Summer Intern*

**BROOKE GOCHNOUR** was crowned as the 2020-21 Bedford County Dairy Princess in June 2020. She is the daughter of New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative consumer-members, Justin and Shelby Gochnour of New Enterprise.

Brooke has worked on her family's farm, Jus-Den Farm, since her family purchased it in 2016.



**PRINCESS:** Brooke Gochnour is the 2020-21 Bedford County Dairy Princess.

She is a high school senior at Northern Bedford County High School and is involved in varsity football cheerleading, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), and National Honor Society. She is also president of Northern Bedford's FFA (Future Farmers of America). She plans to attend Allegany College of Maryland to pursue a two-year business degree and eventually take over her family farm.

As a Dairy Princess, Brooke gets to travel, meet new people and receive incentives as well as community service credits.

"My favorite part is talking to different consumers about their opinion on the dairy industry and showing

them dairy is good for you, not bad for you," she says.

Brooke has been around the dairy industry for so long that she is the perfect person to teach young children and adults about the industry. Brooke has done many things for and with the community. Visiting the farmers is another important part of being Dairy Princess.

"I can tell it means a lot to them and it surprises them," Brooke notes.

At Northern Bedford High School, the FFA chapter does an activity called "Fall Fest." In a normal year, the Northern Bedford County second-graders would come to the high school for a hayride, face painting, a petting zoo and to learn different lessons taught by the high school FFA. Many of the lessons have been taught by Brooke. A very active FFA member, Brooke currently holds the office of president of the Northern Bedford County High School FFA chapter. She helps organize club activities and is always available to lend a helping hand. She especially enjoys horticulture and agriculture classes.

Brooke was one of 11 students in Pennsylvania to receive the FFA Keystone Degree. Only 3 to 4% of the more than 7,000 Pennsylvania FFA members qualify each year for this degree. Recipients of the Keystone Degree are the top members of the Pennsylvania FFA Association. These FFA members are chosen through extensive records of supervised agricultural experiences submitted by the applicant. Applicants must also meet several other requirements, including academic record. Applications are reviewed by a local committee. Receiving the Keystone Degree is a major accomplishment in the FFA program.

Brooke's family farm is a huge part of her life and who she is. She started growing her own herd of cows in 2017 when she purchased her cow, Rosey, from a neighbor. Her friends and family would describe her as hardworking,



**PROMOTION:** One of the main goals of Dairy Princess Brooke Gochnour is to promote the dairy industry.

fun loving, and easygoing. Her dad often calls her "Partner." She spends every day working with him and always has fun. Agriculture is a huge part of our community.

"I love the farm and the cows," she says when asked why she wants to farm. "I just love it, in general, it kinda grew on me."

When Brooke is not working, she likes to go horseback riding with her horse, Millie, during the warm months. Millie is an Appaloosa and is very energetic. Her family also owns two other horses, Candy and DJ. During the colder months, Brooke also loves to snowmobile with friends and family.

A big step in a teenager's life is getting a driver's license and purchasing their first vehicle. Brooke's first vehicle is a cherry red Ford truck that she named Rugged Justice. She is a country girl inside and out and is an amazing Dairy Princess. You can see more of what Brooke does on the Facebook page "Cows & Crowns."

The deadline has passed for the 2021-22 Dairy Princess contest, but if you know a girl who would like to run for this title in the future, go online to [padairy.org](http://padairy.org) for more information. 🌞