

JUNE–JULY 2022

SAVE THE DATE

June 7–8

Basic Electricity School

Van Alstyne, Grayson–Collin EC

June 21

Interconnection of Battery and Solar Systems

Webinar

June 21–24

Metering School

Seguin, city of Seguin

July 11–15

Workshop: Staking Technician Training—Phase II

Georgetown, TEC Training Facility

July 14–16

Texas Lineman's Rodeo Weekend

Seguin, Nolte Island Park

July 19

NESC Sneak Peek

Webinar

Aug. 9

The Do's and Don'ts of Easement Acquisition

Webinar

Aug. 15–19

30-Hour OSHA**Compliance Course**

San Angelo, Concho Valley EC

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY

Gloves | Grounds | Cover Up

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Use the [TEC Safety and Loss Control discussion list](#) on the TEC member website to share and gather information.



Texas Electric Cooperatives
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION
FROM TEC LOSS CONTROL

‘Never Quit Learning’

How TEC instructors increase their knowledge of the industry and improve their teaching skills

Not once in his 25 years at Guadalupe Valley EC—most as a lineworker—did Wesley Caldwell figure he'd be glued to a computer. Yet there he was in late March, sequestered in an Abilene hotel meeting room with his noticeably restless fellow TEC Loss Control instructors, learning new PowerPoint techniques.

“Never thought I would be doing it the way we are now,” said Caldwell, a regional supervisor. “Still not very skilled but getting better every day.”

So goes the story of TEC's trainers undergoing their own training.

“We're always trying to update our programs to offer state-of-the-art programs,” said Caldwell, who with his eight fellow instructors will conduct 59 schools and 820 safety meetings across the state in 2022, reaching thousands of utility employees.

Also among their tasks: adding to their knowledge of the industry and improving their own presentation skills. That includes PowerPoint.

“You saw guys that are—I mean, there's probably 7-year-old kids that are better computer literate than we are—but nobody quit learning,” Caldwell said. “Never quit learning.”

Danny Williams, the Loss Control manager, insists on that. The program's workbooks get updated annually, and he and his colleagues update their PowerPoint presentations, an essential tool in their training, almost every time they use them.

“I learn something new at every school I teach that I can add to the next school that will enhance student training,” said Williams, who has been an instructor for 37 years, 22 with TEC. “We never want to be satisfied where we are. We can always improve.”

That requires a lot of listening, a lot of reading. Caldwell said it's not unusual for him to learn of new equipment during a safety meeting at an organization. And just like that, the trainer becomes the student.

“I may spend an hour or two hours after my meeting talking to them, learning about it,” Caldwell said. Back in his hotel room, he visits the manufacturer's website to learn more.

In January, Loss Control specialist David Nance



Wesley Caldwell, left, a TEC instructor for more than five years, teaches pole climbing to a San Bernard EC lineworker.

was recertified as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration instructor. His 30-Hour OSHA Compliance Course provides an in-depth look at industry standards, including policies and procedures regarding safety and health. That's just one part of his instructional regimen.

“I'm trying to instill in the younger guys that, hey, you can do this job. You can retire with all your fingers and toes. You can go home every day to your family, and you can be safe,” Nance said. “Just follow the rules.”

He agrees with Caldwell and Williams that it's imperative TEC's instructors stay on top of an ever-evolving industry. “It's a living program,” Nance said. “Because the whole job changes all the time.”

Lineworkers are regularly on call or restoring power after hours. While no longer on a pole or in a bucket himself, Caldwell notes that his phone still rings at all hours and on weekends when folks he has

'Never Quit Learning' continued from Page 1

instructed want to touch base about an issue.

"We don't ever stop," Caldwell said. "Our industry is more like a calling. They're our brothers."

Thus, the TEC specialists regularly get feedback like this:

"Just want to thank you for all the knowledge you passed down to us newer guys. My career makes a lot more sense."

"That information I learned at this class will save my life and keep me safe."

Sandy Geroux, the PowerPoint instructor in Abilene, marveled at the focus and determination among the Loss Control specialists during their daylong training, even if they occasionally needed to get up and walk around the room because, at heart, they are not desk jockeys. In just one day in their midst, Geroux picked up on the passion that drives the program.

"They are very proud of the fact that every one of them has been a lineman for many years. They know what they're talking about and know that their knowledge can help others," she said. "For them, it's not just another day on the job. It's another opportunity to help their colleagues within the TEC community stay safe and go home to their families each night."

For Williams and his colleagues, that zeal is simply necessary for their work.

"These are linemen learning a trade to make a living, and what we teach can keep them alive," he said.



Sandy Geroux helps clarify a PowerPoint matter for Danny Williams, TEC's Loss Control manager.

Summer Perils

Outdoor workers need to pay particular attention this time of year to dangers lurking below and from on high: snakes, heat stress and the sun's cancer-causing UV rays.

Snakes: Tread and reach carefully around rocks, fallen limbs and leaf litter, and in tall grassy and brushy areas. The **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** has a wealth of information about snakes and snake safety.

Heat stress: Heatstroke, when the body becomes unable to control its temperature, is the most serious heat-related illness. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information.

UV rays: Protecting oneself from the sun's harmful rays to minimize the risk of skin cancer should be a year-round practice, especially for outdoor workers. Click [here](#) to learn more.

TEC UPDATE

NRECA Safety Summit

Electric cooperatives will come together to share ideas on how best to reduce the risk of on-the-job injuries at NRECA's **Safety Leadership Summit**, set for Aug. 17-19 in Austin at the JW Marriott.

Hundreds of co-op CEOs and operations managers, safety directors and supervisors have attended past conferences, and co-ops are encouraged to send crew leads or other employees with potential to be safety champions.

"So much in safety is about influencing behaviors, and that's what makes it so challenging," said Bud Branham, NRECA's director of safety. "We are always looking for ways to help improve safety culture and reduce risks in the workplace."

2023 TEC Loss Control Scholarship Applications

The **TEC Loss Control Scholarship** program supports students in the cooperative and electric utility industry family. High school seniors in the class of 2023 are eligible to apply if they are children of electric cooperative, electric municipal or contractor employees who participate in TEC's Loss Control program, such as organizational safety meetings, schools or the Loss Control Conference. Scholarship applications will be available this fall on TEC's website. For more information, email [Tami Knipstein](mailto:Tami.Knipstein).

2023 TEC Loss Control School Registration

Registration opens Sept. 1 for 2023 TEC Loss Control schools. The 2023 school calendar will be available on the **Event Calendar** page of the TEC website Aug. 1.

That's Jimmy!



TEC's Wesley Caldwell, right, and Cody Jones of Tri-County EC, left, bumped into actor Jefferson White in a Weatherford hotel lobby in April. White plays Jimmy Hurdstrom, a ranch hand with a troubled background, on the TV drama *Yellowstone*. Caldwell was at Tri-County EC in Azle to conduct training.

STAFF

Martin Bevins, VP, Comm. & Member Services
(512) 486-6249, mbevins@texas-ec.org

Danny Williams, Loss Control Manager
(512) 413-0509, dwilliams@texas-ec.org

Curtis Whitt, CLCP, LC Assistant Manager
(512) 694-0232, cwhitt@texas-ec.org

Wesley Caldwell, LC Regional Supervisor
(512) 942-9351, wcaldwell@texas-ec.org

Phillip Henricks, CLCP, LC Regional Supervisor
(806) 438-0067, phenricks@texas-ec.org

Tami Knipstein, LC Program Coordinator
(512) 486-6271, tknipstein@texas-ec.org

Jay Esquivel, Loss Control Specialist
(737) 738-4474, jesquivel@texas-ec.org

Mike Finnell, Loss Control Specialist
(512) 942-9673, mfinnell@texas-ec.org

David Nance, CLCP, Loss Control Specialist
(512) 804-6748, dnance@texas-ec.org

Devery Rosenquist, Loss Control Specialist
(325) 668-8626, drosenquist@texas-ec.org

Ronnie Wiggins, CLCP, Loss Control Specialist
(512) 709-1177, rwiggins@texas-ec.org

Tom Widowski, Editor
(512) 486-6246, twidowski@texas-ec.org