

JUNE–JULY 2025

SAVE THE DATE

July 8

**Engineering Economics
for Utility Projects**

Webinar

July 8–10

Supervisor/Foreman School

Pleasanton, Karnes EC

July 19

Texas Lineman's Rodeo

Seguin, Nolte Island Park

July 22–24

Supervisor/Foreman School

McGregor, Heart of Texas EC

July 29–Aug. 1

**Introduction to System
Operator/Dispatch School**

La Grange, Fayette EC

Aug. 12

Applications of Fiberglass Arms

Webinar

Sept. 15–19

Digger Operator School

Kaufman, Trinity Valley EC

Sept. 15–19

Hotline 2 School

Kaufman, Trinity Valley EC

TEC works to add schools to the 2025 [calendar](#) as registrations close when the maximum number of students is reached. Waiting lists are available. Click on the desired school for details.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY

Gloves | Grounds | Cover Up



A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION
FROM TEC LOSS CONTROL

The Earnest Instructor

Loss Control schools are deadly serious when it comes to breaches

At first glance, it appeared to be a typical hotline school, one of eight on the TEC Loss Control calendar for 2025. The five-day schools provide apprentices with the hands-on training essential for becoming lineworkers with the skills to navigate the hazards of three-phase construction and outage recovery.

Suddenly, for two student crews, training came to a screeching halt that spring day.

“What in the [expletive] are y’all doing?” hollered the TEC instructor.

His anger—and disappointment—in what he saw was serious. Dead serious.

“I immediately stopped the job,” he said. “Made them turn off the trucks where they could hear me, and I pretty much gave them a pretty good reprimand, to put it nicely.”

They were stringing new wire to do a conversion—a common job for co-op crews. The hotline school teaches them exactly how to do it. And these students failed to work safely.

“We simulate, we act like each one of those poles is energized. They had the old, existing wire still energized and spread, and they were pulling new wire approximately three spans in. But they were pulling it by hand. They had it laying on the cross arms. And when they were dragging the wire from span to span, they had it laying on their shoulders. No insulated gloves. The guys did not have any PPE on. They were not grounded.

“Had that wire slid down that arm and got into a phase, in real life, it would have killed them.

“That really bothered me, that these guys were upwards of their third and fourth years of apprenticeship, that they should know better.

“They never thought about the hazards, which were discussed in the tailboards. We know right from wrong, but we’re not doing it.”

The veteran instructor is passionate about his job,



about safety in a profession that can be horrifically unforgiving. Thus, the emotional outburst.

“I know every one of these young men. And I told them, ‘Y’all were supposed to go to my funeral, not me go to yours.’

“You know, I’m sorry I ruffled your feathers for a moment, but maybe you’ll remember that the rest of your life or the rest of the time you’re in this industry.”

And so it goes for the instructors in the Loss Control program, which conducts 59 schools around the state for employees of co-ops, municipals and contractors.

“It’s a way of life, I guess, is what I’m trying to say.

“I never want to get that phone call that something’s happened to one of them.”

The Departure of Safety Sages

Three cogs in the Texas safety community—between them more than 133 years of experience—retired this spring, leaving in their wake a wealth of knowledge that reached colleagues and neighboring co-ops on the darkest of nights and statewide peers in calmer conversations at TEC Loss Control Conferences.



Scott Ferguson, Sam Houston EC

“I’ve had several positions in my career,” said Ferguson, who retired May 30 after more than 43 years at the co-op. “Training and safety is where I think I made the most difference and had the greatest achievements.”

Among those was the establishment of a training field that includes a classroom setting and has grown to include transformer labs and regulator and recloser demos.

“Scott has spent his career furthering our dedication to our co-op brothers and sisters,” said Doug Turk, general manager and CEO at Sam Houston EC. “There is no higher calling in this business than that of improving our service to our membership by making every job safer through training and collaboration.”

Ferguson was honored with the TEC Ray Pantel Award in 2010, the TEC Unsung Hero Award in 2015 and the National Utility Training and Safety Education Association’s Herman C. Potthast Award in 2019.



Jeff Harvey, Fort Belknap EC

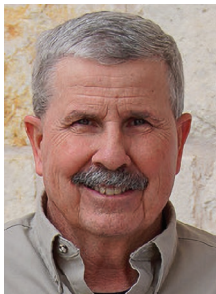
When the manager of safety and training retired April 30 after more than 43 years, he completed a common co-op trajectory: groundman to lineworker to construction foreman to upper management.

“One of the things I’m most proud of is having been able to be a part of the development of a safety program and to have it be fully supported by our CEO, Kendall Montgomery, and our board of directors,” Harvey said.

Harvey’s son works at a West Texas co-op.

“When I was a young lineman, I would hear his voice in my head, ‘Wear your rubbers. It’s not dead until it’s grounded. Don’t forget your hard hat,’” said Justin Harvey, line superintendent at Lyntegar EC.

That guidance sounds just like his safety manager, Montgomery said. “Jeff’s handshake is strong, his word is true and his heart is made of pure gold,” he said.



Danny Nixon, Lighthouse EC

Nixon’s legacy also lives on in his family. Even as the operations manager stepped away March 28 after a 47-year career, the **Nixon name** continues in the South Plains.

Son Scott is a lineworker at South Plains EC, and grandson Camden is a lineworker at Lyntegar EC.

“Everybody in this room had an impact on me,” Danny said at his retirement party. “I was privileged, I was honored and I was blessed to work with you guys—24/7 sometimes.”

TEC UPDATE

2026 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 2026 are eligible to apply if they are children of electric cooperative, 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 at tknipstein@texas-ec.org.

2026 Loss Control School Registration

Registration opens Oct. 15 for 2026 TEC Loss Control schools. The 2026 school calendar will be available mid-August on the [Events Calendar](#) page of the TEC website.

Lifesaving Award and 24/7 Good Samaritan Award Nominations

TEC will begin accepting 2025 Lifesaving and Good Samaritan Award nominations July 1. Complete your organization’s nominations and return to tknipstein@texas-ec.org by Dec. 1. The nomination forms are located on the [Loss Control](#) page of the TEC website. These awards will be presented at the 2026 TEC Loss Control Conference, March 17–20 in San Marcos.

Emergency Contact List

The [TEC Emergency Contact List](#) is updated as needed and is located on the TEC website. Organizations are asked to review their information regularly and email tknipstein@texas-ec.org with any changes.

Hurricane Season Forecast

Researchers at Colorado and North Carolina state universities forecast 12–17 named storms, between six and nine hurricanes, and as many as four major hurricanes this Atlantic hurricane season, which runs June 1–Nov. 30.

Over the past 30 years, the average season has included 15 named storms, six hurricanes (sustained winds of at least 74 mph) and three major hurricanes (111 mph winds).

Co-ops have been communicating with members about preparations through bill inserts, social media and *Texas Co-op Power*.

STAFF

Martin Bevins, VP, Comm. & Member Services (512) 486-6249, mbevins@texas-ec.org
Curtis Whitt, CLCP, Loss Control 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
Chad McNeely, CLCP, Loss Control Specialist (512) 948-8804, cmcneely@texas-ec.org

Chris Muennink, Loss Control Specialist (737) 215-7449, cmuennink@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

David Slimp, Loss Control Specialist (940) 393-5542, dslimp@texas-ec.org
Ronnie Wiggins, CLCP, Loss Control Specialist (512) 709-1177, rwiggins@texas-ec.org
Tom Widlowski, Editor (512) 486-6246, twidlowski@texas-ec.org