

This page and its content was produced by the Newspapers in Education department of The News & Observer April 26, 2001



SCHOOL to career

focus on job as
Lineman

Future job opportunities

The electric utility business grows along with a region's communities and businesses. In North Carolina, growth is taking place statewide. As the structure of the industry itself is gradually changing to allow utilities to offer more services than ever before, the need for experienced linemen to maintain distributions systems is expected to grow.

Where/how to get training

At CP&L there is no substitute for learning while doing. Through on-the-job training (OJT), linemen are given opportunities to learn new skills and apply them under the close supervision of experienced linemen. OJT is based on strict guidelines covering specific skills, and progress reports are used to track employee development.

In addition to hands-on learning, linemen receive classroom instruction at every level—from trainee to management. Classroom instruction is conducted at the Lineman Training Center in New Hill, N.C.

CP&L linemen are also encouraged to obtain a two-year degree in Electric Lineman Technology through the company's partnership with the N.C. Community College System and Nash Community College. CP&L's Education Assistance program generally reimburses all tuition costs.

Courses taught at the New Hill facility make up a significant portion of the credits necessary for the degree. As with any associate's degree, credits can be applied toward pursuit of a bachelor's (four-year) degree or other higher education.

CP&L linemen are trained on state-of-the-art technology. Service vehicles are equipped with laptop computers, and because most linemen work independently or in small teams, e-mail, radio and cellular phones keep linemen in touch with co-workers and customers.

With advances in technology emerging daily, the world will continue to become a faster and more efficient place—but only if there is a reliable power supply. And where there is a need for reliable power, there is a need for linemen.



and benefits packages, CP&L linemen receive ongoing training and have the chance for a fulfilling career with a growing company.

A career in line and service can be both



CP&L linemen work outdoors to install and repair electric service for residential, industrial and commercial customers throughout the service territory—the city to the countryside. Linemen are on the front lines daily to ensure that customers have power.

Through extensive training, CP&L linemen learn to construct, maintain and operate the company's underground and overhead power distribution system. They identify and correct conditions that could disrupt electric service.

Line work can be physically demanding and often requires long hours in extreme temperatures and adverse weather conditions—especially during restoration efforts following storms and hurricanes. While the work is challenging, the benefits make this a rewarding career choice with opportunities for personal development.

In addition to competitive financial compensation

challenging and rewarding. Obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent and having a desire to learn and train for a career with CP&L can help you secure a future as a CP&L lineman.

Technology is important to success as a lineman and so is the ability to work well with others. Linemen have a great deal of one-on-one contact with customers and need good people skills. They are often the first to offer assistance to people in need of help—which is also one of the greatest rewards of their jobs.

What you wear



Linemen wear work clothes that can stand up to the rigors of their job. Most employers provide their staff with uniforms.

Profiles

ROBERT BROOKS

Robert Brooks is approaching his second year as 3rd class lineman with CP&L. At 26, Brooks works on a line crew that serves the Cary, N.C., area. He was hired as a trainee and was first assigned to work as part of an underground crew. After completing the necessary training and putting in the required hours he advanced to the next level.

Brooks first learned about careers in line and service while working as meter reader for Griffin Management—a company that does contract work for CP&L.

Brooks said he credits much of his success as a lineman to the skills learned from his four years of service in the U.S. Navy. "I'm very disciplined and pay attention to detail," said Brooks. "I prepare my clothes at night and usually arrive at work an hour early to check my e-mail and do other things around the office."

One of the first to arrive at the operation center, he helps make sure the service vehicles are running and properly stocked for the day. Brooks also enjoys working closely with other linemen. "I don't think I've ever had a problem getting someone to help me—even on small things," Brooks said. "If you're real good with people, this is the job for you."

Brooks said he considers linemen work personally fulfilling and hopes to work on with CP&L crews that aid other power suppliers during disasters. "I would really like to be a part of CP&L's efforts to help other utilities when they have outages in their service territories," Brooks said. "There's nothing like being the person to turn the breaker back on after a storm."



MARK WHITFIELD

Mark Whitfield knew he wanted to be a lineman from an early age. "My father was a lineman for over 20 years," said Whitfield. "Once my dad's company had family day, and I got to ride around and see what he did. It had a great impression on me, and I was hooked." Whitfield works as a 2nd class lineman with CP&L. At 27, he is approaching his third year in line and service with the company and currently works on an overhead crew based out of North Raleigh.

Whitfield spent the first of his professional days as a lineman with a Virginia-based utility. Before joining the CP&L staff, he left linemen work to pursue a career as a quality control inspector. "I tried the 'behind the desk' job for five or six years and that was about all I could stand," Whitfield said.

A former semi-pro football player, Whitfield likes the fact that his job keeps him outdoors and physically fit. Whitfield also likes the opportunity to help others, especially after working areas hit hardest by Hurricane Floyd. "People are so dependent upon electricity," said Whitfield. "You could see the look of 'help me' in their eyes. It was a good feeling to get the power back on and to help them get starting rebuilding their lives." Whitfield also plans to take advantage of the opportunity to earn a degree in Electric Lineman Technology. "There are definitely opportunities to advance in this company," said Whitfield.



Want to know more?

For more information about the education or training program please contact:

CP&L
Corporate Employment
P.O. Box 1551
Raleigh, NC 27602-1551
Website www.cpl.com

For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4-FEDAID

Skills required Communication skills, discipline, detail oriented.

Jobs in this field

Groundman/Trainee:

You are the new person in the crew, learning tools, equipment and materials from other linemen, an aide for the crew.

Apprentice/Third Class Lineman:

You learn to climb poles, use ropes and rigging, work in the aerial lift "bucket" for line maintenance and repair, dig trenches for underground line, and how substations work.

2nd Class Lineman:

You work on technical aspects of line distribution systems, including the equipment on poles and for underground operations, as well as substations.

1st Class Lineman:

You have a full understanding of the operating system, including transmission and distribution systems. You teach other linemen who have not advanced this far, and you can be a line crew leader, responsible for other linemen, paperwork and administrative duties.

Senior Lineman:

You may be responsible for multiple line crews, coordinating when and where they work.
Lineman earnings can range from \$26,000 at entry level through \$60,000 for senior linemen. Linemen are paid for overtime and holidays. All earnings are paid commensurate with experience and skill proficiency.

- Any hands-on type classes (example: shop).
- Science classes that build a foundation for understanding how electricity works.
- Extracurricular activities that promote self discipline, physical fitness, and leadership.
- Computer technology.

Classes recommended

If you would like to make a statement about your business's commitment to education, call Mary Moxin at 829-4870 or email mmoxin@newsobserver.com to find out how you can sponsor a School to Career Page. There are more than 100 job titles available. For information about Newspapers in Education, call Jean House 829-8921 or Anita Stack 829-4811.

This educational partnership sponsored by:



CP&L
A Progress Energy Company

"School to Career" pages will be archived online on the bizednetwork.org