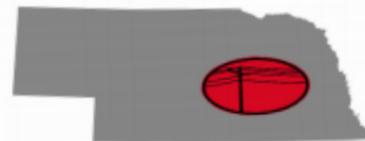

POLK COUNTY RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

‘The Livewire’



“Committed to enhancing the lives of our customers by providing safe, reliable and economical energy through excellence in customer service and innovation”

March 2022

Roberts completes MIP Select

By Wade Rahn

Last fall, Andy Roberts, PCRPPD Line Foreman, attended and completed an intensive two-week program in electric utility management at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program (MIP) Select is a series of workshops offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin. The program guides participants through all facets of the electric utility industry.

MIP Select participants go through two consecutive five-day sessions designed to challenge and educate participants in new, innovative management techniques and a better understanding of what consumers want and how to ensure they get it. Also, by covering the unique principles that govern the operations of electric coops and public power districts, the program helps utilities enhance the core of the organizations.

With the class being delivered in two weeks, Roberts commented, “It was pretty fast-paced and at times felt like we were drinking from a firehose. Overall the topics were good, some better than others, though.” Andy went on, saying, “The class covered so much. When I show up to work, I know what to do for my position, but outside of that, many aspects were foreign to me. This class has given me

a much better understanding of all the District deals with. This class will be very valuable should I have the opportunity to be promoted in the future, but it has also helped in my overall understanding of how PCRPPD operates.”

As part of the class, a group project must be completed. The class was divided into small groups and given a choice of topics to collaborate on and present their findings. Andy stated, “Our group project was about a self-healing grid. We had to present all the different aspects of making it work, do a financial analysis and show the benefits of doing the project. Our group was pretty diverse in the job duties we all did back home. We had linemen, IT people, and someone who worked with the finances. At the conclusion, everyone in the group had to present a portion of the project, just like we would do if we were presenting something to the board.”

Roberts also commented on the networking opportunities and relationships built with his other classmates. “There were people from all over the country in our class of about 35 people. I learned a lot just from talking to people all over and having all sorts of different positions. I am still in touch with most of them weekly to get ideas and opinions.”

Roberts closed with these final thoughts on attending the MIP Select



Andy Roberts

class by saying, “This class really gave me the sense of responsibility that people have in the company to ensure we can operate the system reliably and efficiently, which bottom line affects the rates. It was a good class.”

Andy attending this class is just another example of PCRPPD strengthening our District. Educating our employees allows us to operate more efficiently, offer better customer experiences, and prepare us for the future. Barb Fowler, PCRPPD General Manager, remarked, “Growth of our teammates is a priority. Continued learning and skills development are essential, especially as our industry evolves. We invest in them, and they in turn, better the team. It’s that simple.”

Watt Matters

By Barb Fowler - General Manager

**Note* - Watt Matters will be a periodic column written by the General Manager in future publications covering different topics related to PCRPPD*

History matters. Since Polk County RPPD was formed in 1935, our directors have demonstrated a long history of service to the District.

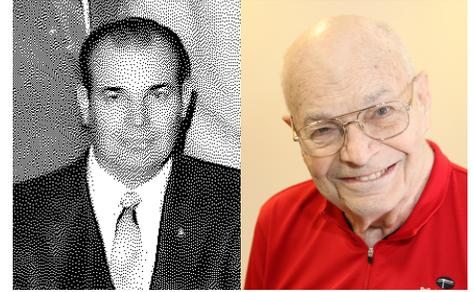
Gary Allison, Gresham, Subdistrict 2, has served on the Polk County RPPD board for 47 years. That equals 564 board meetings. That's a lot of history. And education, decisions, and experiences.

Gary's grand-dad, George Bond, was one of PCRPPD's charter directors. He told Gary of how he went out into the rural community to sign up people for electric service, but they were reluctant. Some were skeptical, and others did not have the \$3 sign-up fee. Eventually, with the passing of President Roosevelt's Rural Electrification Administration (that's why some call us the REA), PCRPPD was formed during a meeting at Swede Home. In the beginning, two men dug utility pole holes by hand, up to three a day. It wasn't long until a homeowner bought an electric washing machine.

The wives started talking, and the spread of rural electricity in Polk County snowballed.

When Gary's uncle, Raymond Bond, passed away after serving on the Board, MG Lindburg visited Gary out in the field one day and asked if he'd be willing to serve. Gary immediately became passionate about rural electrification, especially the electrification of irrigation. Gary's grand-dad was one of the first to dig a well in Polk County, and Gary has since diligently worked to help other farmers realize its value to the operation, even making multiple trips to Ohio to bring back John Deere engines. "Electric wells help so many people to this day. With increasing technology, it's getting even easier. You can do just about anything you want. You don't have to have electricity, but it makes it so much easier," said Gary.

Regulation is the biggest challenge Gary thinks the electric industry faces today. "The things we have to do and



**Gary Allison - (L) Photo from 1981
(R) Photo from 2021**

keep track of, there's a lot. Sometimes I leave the meeting thinking we didn't talk about electric wires, poles, or trucks," he added.

Gary fondly speaks of the relationships he has formed over the many years with fellow directors, saying he has been fortunate to have so many mentors and friends. When asked what he thinks sets Polk County RPPD apart from other power districts, Gary quickly replies, "Our employees, no doubt about it. And service. We've got the best group. You can't beat us."

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MARCH 20-26

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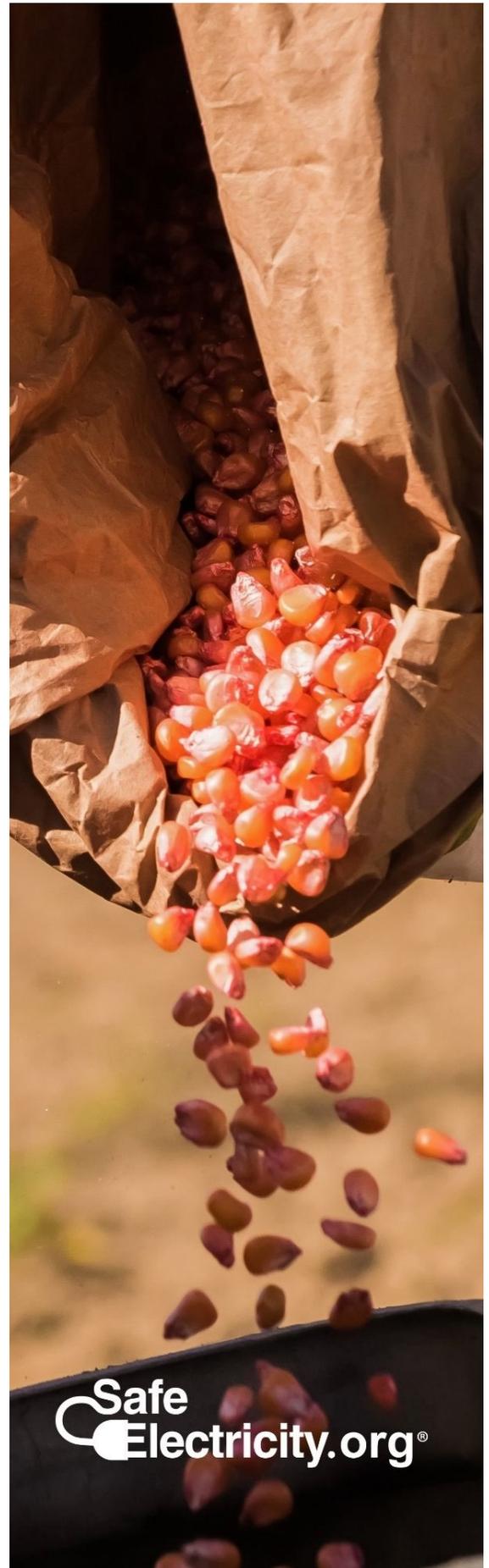
Whether you've been through 30 planting seasons or three, be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. You and anyone working or doing business on your farm should know and follow electrical safety precautions to avoid potential hazards.

When near power lines, poles and other utility equipment:

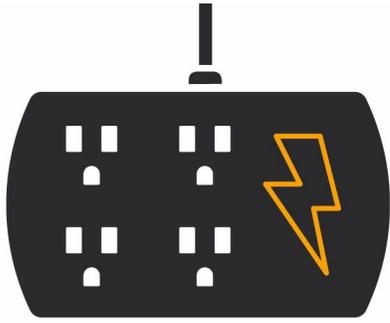
- Maintain a 10-foot clearance in all directions.
- Realize that electricity can arc/"jump" when equipment is too close.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting.
- Designate preplanned routes that avoid potential hazards.
- When approaching or in the field, use a spotter and deploy flags.
- Before exiting the cab, look up to ensure proper clearance of all equipment.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting before moving loads.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Contact your electric utility if you think a pole or line may have been damaged.

If your equipment does come in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not exit the cab. Instead, call 9-1-1 and wait until utility workers say it is safe to exit.

If you are in imminent danger (e.g., equipment is on fire) and need to exit the cab, make a solid, clean jump out of the cab and hop with both feet together as far away as you can.



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SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



REMEMBER:

Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.

POLK COUNTY RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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