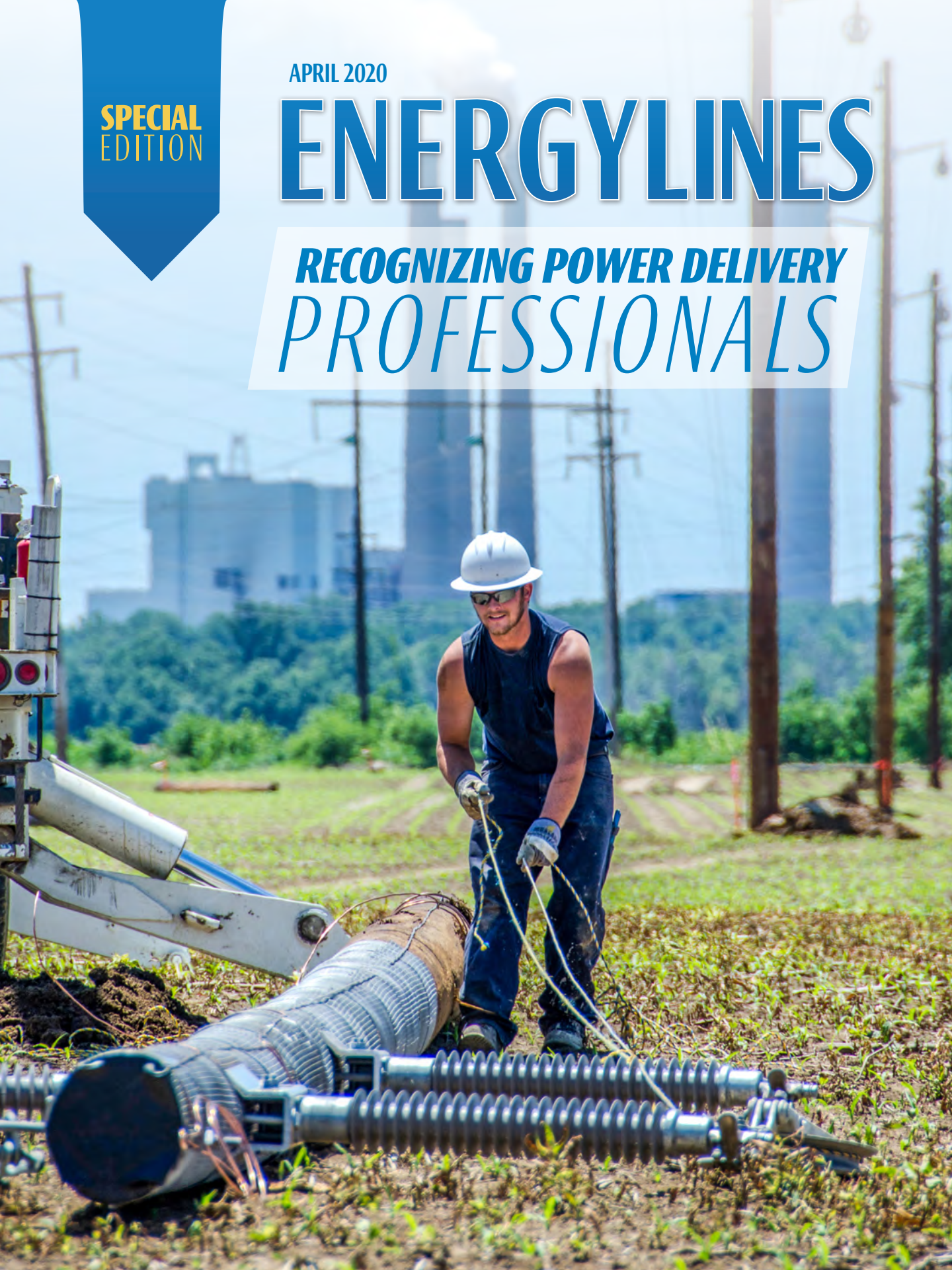
SPECIAL EDITION

APRIL 2020

ENERGYLINES

RECOGNIZING POWER DELIVERY PROFESSIONALS



SPECIAL EDITION

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FIRST RESPONDER

THE POWER DELIVERY PROFESSIONALS THAT PROVIDE TOTAL RESILIENCY

When the clouds take on an eerie yellow-green cast and the local weather sirens start to scream, it's a sign for most of us to take cover. However, there's a special group of professionals who react to those same signals by loading up their trucks and heading for the storm.

Since 9/11, the first responders of our communities have received much-deserved recognition for the work they do to keep us safe. Co-op leaders have worked to make sure another group of first responders also get the appreciation they deserve for their own tireless efforts to serve and protect our communities.

Every April, our industry honors the men and women who keep the electric grid operating reliably. They are the individuals who rush in to restore service when a storm, an accident, or even a ravenous squirrel damages powerlines or substations.

"Power delivery employees,

including lineworkers, leave birthday parties and wake up in the middle of the night when everyone's sleeping," explains Brady Mann, manager of delivery services for Hoosier Energy. "They just answer the call to get the power back on whenever it comes. They make sure the power from our generating plants reaches the wall outlets in homes and businesses. And they're the only group of folks in our co-ops who actively work with 12,000 volts or more in their hands."

Mann adds that most of the power network is outdoors and completely exposed. "It takes a lot of courage to climb a pole while the wind's whipping around you and the rain is pouring down," he says. It can also take a physical toll. "As lineworkers get older, they struggle, particularly with their knees and shoulders. They spend a lot of time working with their arms over their head."

These days, power providers are being held to a higher standard by a society that expects technology to never break down. A generation ago, members tolerated outages lasting hours, but today's consumers may panic when the power blinks off for a few seconds.

"That brief outage could lead to 15 or 20 clocks or the Wi-Fi being reset, and that gets frustrating for people," says Mann. "Restoring the power is not a simple process."

However, it's a process lineworkers embrace as service to their neighbors and communities. When disasters strike elsewhere in the nation, lineworkers are invariably among the first volunteers to respond.

While we think about lineworkers most when outages occur, that hardly means they're idle the other 99.9 percent of the time. "For years, we focused on reliability, which was how well the system performed within its designed parameters," explains Mann. "Obviously, there are situations that go beyond those parameters, such as tornados.

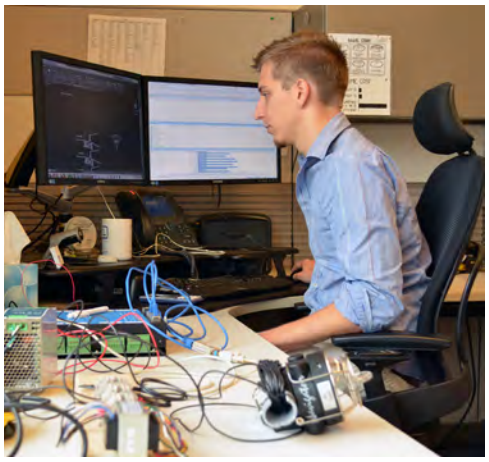
"Today we're focused on what we call total resiliency, which is a way to measure how the system performs outside typical design parameters and improves upon that. It may still break, but at least it will put up a good fight."

With a substantial percentage of lineworkers approaching retirement age, programs like the Hoosier

HE photos

ON THE LINE: Line Specialist Cory Berg trains on live lines during a HEATS rubber-gloving school at the Franklin Training Center.

GRID GURUS: Meter relay technicians are the minds making the grid work behind the line. From left are Brian Blythe, Craig Townsend (retired) and Mark Rice.



HE photos

THOSE WHO DESIGN AND BUILD THE GRID

Power delivery professionals at Hoosier Energy, like Communications Engineer Lance Simpson, left, designs communications and control systems for grid operators. Line Specialist Tyler Manship works to connect components at a substation. Together, these employees work to keep grid resiliency at the forefront of power delivery.

CLIMBING SCHOOL: Daniel Corthell of JCREMC tests gear during a climbing school at the Franklin Training Center. This training helps co-op line specialists learn how to properly adjust climbing equipment so they climb comfortably. Apprentices learn how to transition over different obstacles on the pole using their primary fall restraint, and then their secondary restraint.

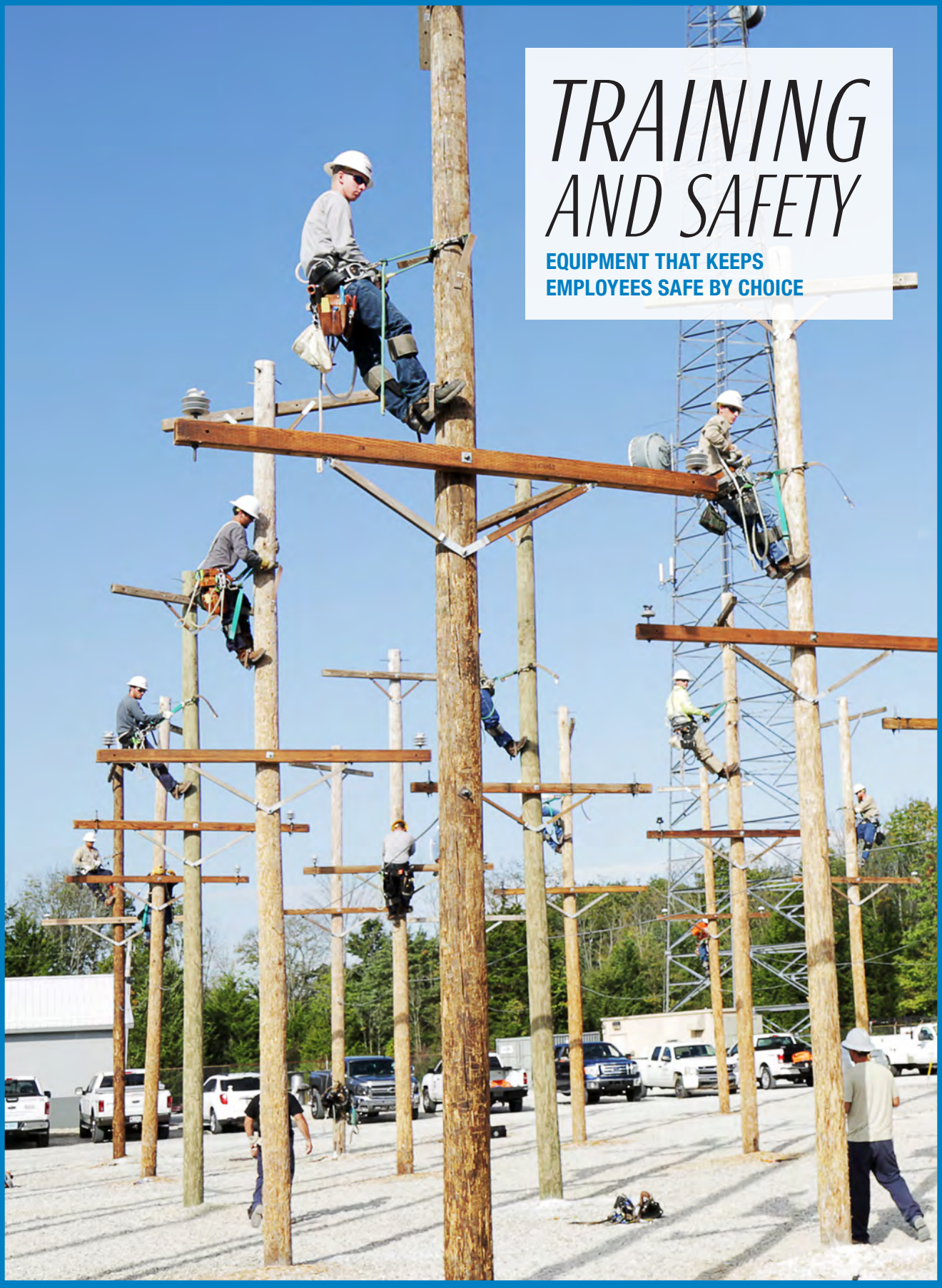
Energy Apprenticeship, Training and Safety program (HEATS) is helping train the next generation of the workforce.

It takes four years for an apprentice to become a journeyman. Learning how to work on energized lines, troubleshoot problems and come up with solutions and learn how to safely climb 55-foot wooden poles demands plenty of hands-on training.

While the work can be arduous, veteran lineworkers will tell you it's also satisfying. Co-ops properly train these employees to be safe by choice. EL

ON THE COVER

Hoosier Energy Line Specialist DJ Wright attaches equipment to a power pole before it is put in place in Pike County.



TRAINING AND SAFETY

EQUIPMENT THAT KEEPS EMPLOYEES SAFE BY CHOICE

BUCKET TRUCK TRAINING

Training through the HEATS program helps line specialists stay up-to-date when working with this equipment.

LINE SPECIALIST SAFETY IMPROVEMENT

HOW BUCKET TRUCKS HELP SAVE LIVES

Hoosier Energy Manager of Delivery Services Brady Mann says the level of safety for lineworkers has increased exponentially during his career. Former lineman and author Alan Drew agrees. Drew credits the mechanical evolution of the work, particularly one highly visible tool. "In my opinion, bucket trucks, which came along in the early 1960s, were the biggest actual improvement. Fiberglass booms provided a degree of insulation in case lineworkers accidentally touched a hot wire … there would be a path to ground as if they were on poles." Advances like bucket trucks have made "linemen's work a whole lot easier, safer and more productive," he adds. EL

SAFE BY CHOICE

The gear line specialists use to work safe on the job

Every April, those who work to maintain the grid are recognized for their commitment to safety and reliability. Hoosier Energy line specialists complete ongoing training to work safe while on the job.

While an experienced line specialist can scramble up a pole and make it look as easy as climbing a ladder, in practice, the technique is something learned through repetition. It takes a degree of coordination and muscle memory that comes only with practice. The advice given to apprentices training how to climb poles is to climb comfortable.

If you know a line specialist, take a moment this month to let them know you appreciate their commitment to keeping the grid reliable. EL

LINE SPECIALIST GEAR

SAFETY EQUIPMENT USED

1 INSULATED HARD HAT

Protects the head from falling items when on the job.

2 RUBBER GLOVES

These are OSHA-certified voltage protection gloves.

3 BODY HARNESS

Used when aerial work is performed.

4 ROPES, PULLEYS

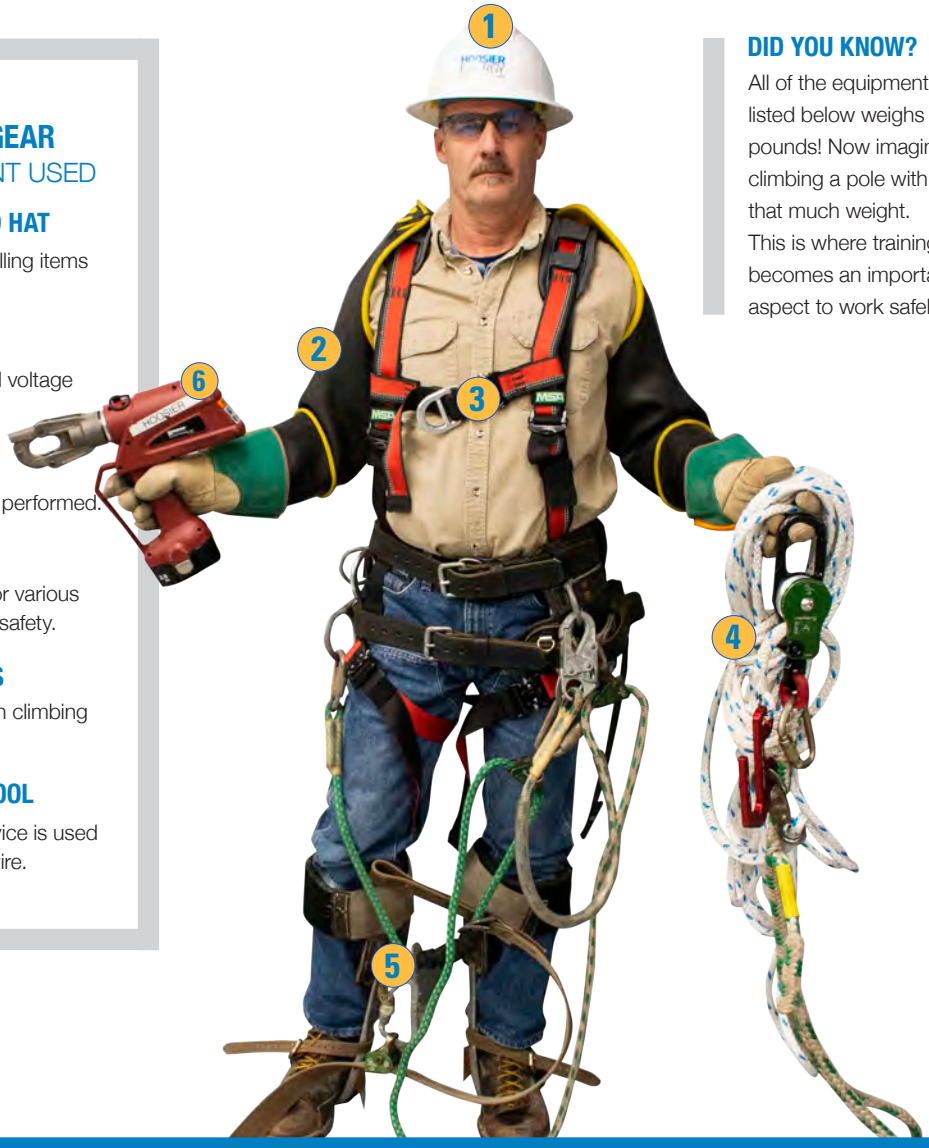
This equipment is used for various needs including climbing safety.

5 CLIMBING SPIKES

Used for added grip when climbing wooden poles.

6 COMPRESSION TOOL

This battery-powered device is used to safely join conductor wire.



DID YOU KNOW?

All of the equipment listed below weighs 40 pounds! Now imagine climbing a pole with that much weight. This is where training becomes an important aspect to work safely.