

# ENERGYLINES



Safety Fair  
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## MEROM SAFETY WEEK

Merom Generating  
Station had a week  
focused on safety.  
Find out what  
employees learned.  
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Health fair  
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## Members tour generation facility

Hoosier Energy provided facility tours for members from Bartholomew County REMC and Decatur County REMC that included industrial customers, Board Members and employees.

The group of 29 began at the Bartholomew County REMC office and headed to Bloomington to visit Hoosier Energy's headquarters. The next stop was Hoosier Energy's 1,070 MW Merom Generating Station in Sullivan County where the group learned about plant operations and environmental controls in place. The group then traveled to a regional coal mining operation before returning to Bartholomew County REMC.

Attendees said that the information learned at each location was valuable in helping them understand how different aspects of the energy industry work together to provide reliable energy. [EL](#)



HE photo

## Turtle Creek watershed receives grant

The Turtle Creek Watershed has received a grant for \$30,000. This is the second installment for the watershed from the West Central Indiana Watershed Alliance (WCIWA), along with the Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Funds are available to farmers in the Turtle Creek watershed, an area of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, for cost-share on cover crops and other best management practices. Cost-

share rates for cover crops are \$35 per acre with a maximum of 300 acres per participant.

The WCIWA covers the watersheds for Turtle Creek, Turman Creek, Busseron Creek and Kelley Bayou.

The WCIWA is a coalition of interested parties dedicated to promoting and implementing best management practices in the watersheds of west-central Indiana while educating the general public about environmental stewardship. [EL](#)



## New class of linemen begin apprentice training program

It was the first day of school for 11 member cooperative linemen. At Hoosier Energy Headquarters, the linemen received information about the Hoosier Energy Apprentice and Training and Safety program. Instructors from Hoosier Energy detailed the commitment required to complete the four-year 8,000-hour program.

"These four years will fly by and before you know it, if you take this program seriously, you will be a journeyman/lineman," said Safety and Training Instructor Dave Helton. [EL](#)

# ENERGYLINES

EnergyLines is published monthly by  
Hoosier Energy's Communication Department.

## ON THE COVER

The Merom Generating Station's safety week reminded employees the importance of safety at home and work.



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**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, right, presented an award to Hoosier Energy for the positive impact it has had on state tourism during the last 45 years. Hoosier Energy Manager of Economic Development and Key Accounts Harold Gutzwiller accepted the award.

# Hoosier Energy honored for Festival Guide impact

## Tourism groups recognize G&T for 45 years of support


Hoosier Energy's commitment to community is evident in many ways. One of them is a small guidebook that has carried a long-lasting impact throughout the state.

In 1972, Hoosier Energy put together a festival guide as a community service to its electric cooperative membership. Since then, families and visitors across the state have been turning the pages of what became the Indiana Festival Guide to discover a celebration somewhere along the highways and byways of the state. From melons and strawberries to covered bridges or popcorn, thousands of community festivals are listed in the guide.

In a ceremony Aug. 18 at the Indiana State Fair, the Indiana Office of Tourism Development and Indiana State Festivals Association honored Hoosier Energy for the positive

impact such a simple concept has had on state tourism for the last 45 years.

"Hoosier Energy's roadmap to Indiana's festivals and celebrations has grown to become a one-of-a-kind publication nationwide that is the envy of festival planners in other states and the most sought-after tourism publication in Indiana," said Larry Bemis, president of the Indiana State Festivals Association as Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch presented the award to Harold Gutzwiller, Manager of Economic Development and Key Accounts for Hoosier Energy.

"Hoosier Energy started the festival guide as a community service to their membership in 1972 and it quickly spread statewide," Bemis added. "All of us in the travel and tourism industry owe a debt of thanks to the foresight of Hoosier Energy." 



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MID-YEAR REPORT

# Business expansion helping cooperatives enrich communities

The economic development team has had a busy first half of the year – working with members to bring jobs, investment and load growth to member territories. Member systems brought in 21 projects totaling \$164 million in investment and 8 MW of load growth for 12 Hoosier Energy members.

New development was most prevalent in the agricultural and tier-one automotive sectors. Manager of Economic Development and Key Accounts at Hoosier Energy, Harold Gutzwiller has been involved in helping these sectors develop in Indiana for the past decade.

“While auto sales are slightly lower than last year’s record sales volume, there is still strong demand for light vehicles – cars, SUVs and trucks. Agriculturally, the market has trended toward what our territory is strongest in producing: chickens, turkeys and eggs,” said Gutzwiller.

Due to the growth in the automotive part supplier sector GECOM Corporation, an automotive parts manufacturer for seven automotive companies, is expanding their facilities. Served by Decatur County REMC, this \$26 million expansion project will bring 750 kWh in load and 30 jobs.

## 2017 project activity

- New projects
- ★ Expansion projects



The transportation infrastructure of the I-74 corridor helped GECOM with their decision to expand operations in Greensburg, Indiana.

Growth in the agriculture sector has been steady as well.

Micronutrients, an agribusiness that produces animal feed additives, expanded operations in New Castle, Indiana. The company built a new manufacturing plant and warehouse to increase production of their product that helps improve the stability of pre-mix and feed for animals.

This \$30 million project, served by Henry County REMC, brought 50 jobs and 1,250 Kwh in load growth.

Projects like these are helping provide jobs and investment in the rural communities served by Hoosier Energy member cooperatives. [EL](#)

## Seminar offers educational resources to help community leaders

Hoosier Energy recently hosted an economic development seminar at the Indianapolis Zoo for nearly 60 economic development officials and other community leaders from areas served by member cooperatives. The annual event brings together experts to provide additional resources and insights on real issues confronting rural areas.

Economic Development Coordinator

Christy Langley organized this year’s event, which included insights from Elaine Bedel, President of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). Bedel discussed the governor’s commitment to grow Indiana as a magnet for jobs. She also provided an overview of state resources available for small businesses through the IEDC.

Nathan Ohle, Executive Director of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, kicked off the morning session emphasizing the advantages of taking a regional approach to a long-term economic development strategy. “Creating a culture where everyone feels welcome is a big part of the process,” he said. “Then tell your story – who you are as a region.” [EL](#)

## COVER STORY



# MEROM SAFETY WEEK

## Safety All-Stars recognized as week-long event focuses on culture of safety

Employee engagement was strong as the Merom Generating Station recently completed a week of safety awareness in August. Throughout the week more than 160 employees attended events including: health and safety fairs and a keynote speech from Tony Crow – a power plant operator from Texas who lost his eyesight during a hunting accident.

To kick-off the week, employees headed to the Skills Improvement Center for an update on safety efforts at the plant. Plant Manager Karl Back addressed employees noting that safety is an important goal.

“Safety and environmental compliance are key components of the work we are doing here at the station,” said Back.

Employees who complete safety require-

ments and apply what was learned are recognized as “Safety All-Stars.”

“The 30 Safety All-Stars recognized went above and beyond their day-to-day activities to make the plant safer for everyone. From writing a safety work order to reporting a near miss, these employees chose to improve their work environment,” said Safety Awareness Team Leader and Process Engineer Justin Rice.

The challenges faced to improve processes at the station require all employee participation. Many of these challenges are >>

*“Safety and environmental compliance are key components of the work we are doing here at the station.”*

**Karl Back,**  
Merom Generating  
Station Plant Manager

*“The 30 Safety All-Stars recognized went above and beyond their day-to-day activities to make the plant safer for everyone.”*

**Justin Rice**  
Safety Awareness Team Leader  
and Process Engineer



being identified and resolved through the job briefing process. This process focuses on communication and hazard recognition.

Power Production Engineer Chad Cornelius spoke about Programs Rules and Procedures (PRP) and explained to employees improvements taking place.

"We are working to improve the standardization of the job briefing process across all areas of the station. With your help we can implement the improvements needed," said Cornelius.

The PRP and Working Safe teams are constantly reviewing station processes. What they have found is it is crucial to take the time to stop and talk about how to safely approach a job and the hazards that might exist.

"We work with big tools, heavy equipment and controlled hazards on the job site. We want everyone to be engaged and to follow these steps to stay Safe by Choice," said Cornelius. [EL](#)

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER – TONY CROW

# IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

In the blink of an eye, just about anything can go wrong in a power plant, or life for that matter. Tony Crow, keynote speaker for Merom safety week, knows full well how true that is.

As plant workers filed in for safety week to hear the keynote speaker, he and his wife, Cheryl, walked into the training room blending easily into the crowded lunchtime event. The man with the sunglasses and New York Yankees cap moved effortlessly, holding onto his wife's arm, smiling broadly.

But one thing in particular stood out - a bright orange shirt. He sat down near the corner deep in thought, cocking his head, all the while listening as Cheryl chatted with a few people.

His talk began simply enough.

"It's a lot better for us to smile than it is to frown and whole lot better to laugh than to cry."

Tony knew safety. He had worked in one of the safest power plants in the United States – Texas Utilities Electric

Co. in Mount Pleasant, Texas. As a plant operator he knew full well that life at work wasn't only about him or how well he performed his job. He knew whatever he did, others depended upon him. He followed every safety procedure at work, wearing all the PPE - safety glasses, hearing protection, work boots and clothing.

He even survived one of the scariest power plant accidents in U.S. history when a 600-foot concrete stack collapsed 50 feet from where he stood. He stood inches from the rubble that claimed the life of a guy inside the stack.

The accident shook him up, but also left him with a feeling of invincibility. "If that stack didn't hit me, I thought I'm good to go."



## Employees gain safety solutions during fair

A steady flow of employees attended Merom Generating Station's safety fair as part of the plant's safety week. A wide-range of vendors were on site to showcase safety products. Plant Manager Karl Back said high employee turnout was due to employees committed to safety.

Employees were greeted by a representative from MG Grundman and Sons, a custom footwear provider based in Vincennes, who emphasized the importance of appropriate footwear including insoles, cushioning and tread.

Indiana Conservation Officer Matt Landis, shown at left, spoke about boating safety. On display was a variety of life preservers to show the proper vest to use in different situations.

The work done at the station often requires the use of harnesses. That is why 3M Fall Protection was on site to show how to inspect harnesses before use.

Attendees watched safety tool demonstrations as well as how to use ladders safely in a variety of situations. [EL](#)



This self-described good 'ol boy from Winnsboro, Texas, grew up idolizing Mickey Mantle and remains a lifelong Yankees fan. He learned to hunt early in life and the passion remains despite a tragic accident nearly 15 years ago that blinded him for life.

On February 14, 2003, he and his 17-year-old son Landon were headed to West Texas to do some bird hunting when his son noticed other hunters wearing bright orange shirts and caps. Tony laughed and said: "They must be city slicker bird hunters son; they're wearing orange."

The next afternoon the two went out for one last hunt. Tony's khaki shirt and cap blended in perfectly as he stood behind a mesquite tree along an abandoned fence row, perfect for flushing out a covey of quail. A dog pointed to the prey, distracting Tony, who forgot to communicate to his son that he was heading up the same fence row. The quail flew up and headed back toward Tony. Landon, thinking his dad was farther away, fired.

In an instant, their lives changed. Tony awoke in a Dallas hospital room, muttering about an orange shirt and cap. His wife asked the doctor one question.



HE photo

**SAFETY STORY:** Tony Crow, blinded by a hunting accident, told employees at the Merom Generating Station his story of the value of safety at home and work.

"Doc, if Tony would have had safety glasses on, would it have blinded him?"

Long pause. "No ma'am Mrs. Crow, it wouldn't," was the reply.

"I was 46 years old and I was never, ever going to see again. I went from uncorrected 20/20 vision to lights out. You cannot imagine how I wanted to open my eyes and look my son in the face and say, 'It's going to be ok son. We're going to walk through this together.'"

While in the hospital, the nurse told him more than 70 people were in the waiting room.

And that's when he realized something. "It's not just about me." INJAM. The acronym is his mantra and the name of his non-profit that assists high school seniors who have overcome physical, mental or emotional disabilities. He lives those words every day, refusing to feel sorry for himself.

Once discharged, the phone kept ringing in the middle of the night. They were power plant people. "I made everyone of those tough guys cry. And I knew again, it's not just about me."

As his story winds down, the simplicity of his challenge to be safe at work and at home took hold on the now somber crowd.

- Communicate
- Train
- Lead
- Wear your PPE, at home and at work

He smiled again and said: "Remember, It's not just about me. It's not just about you. Watch out for one another."

At that, he and his wife walked to the back of the room. Plant workers stood in line to shake his hand or just say thanks. He visited with each one as if each was a friend for life. He stayed until the last person had left, many with an orange shirt in their hands. [E](#)

## Fair provides tips to keep employees healthy

This year's Health Fair at Merom brought a packed house. Employees continually trickled through the doors of the training center lining up to attend each of the stations at the health fair.

Employees were welcomed by Debbie Easter, purchasing agent at Merom Generating Station, and began their Health Fair journey learning about sleep apnea and the dangers of not treating it. Along the journey were stations highlighting different employee health benefits.

"The Health Fair is a tool to introduce our

employees to companies that provide a health benefit to them that they may not know about or haven't had the opportunity to visit," said Easter.

During the Health Fair, employees learned about ergonomics and stretches that can be done to help ease tension on different body parts related to people standing, sitting or working in unnatural positions. After learning about ergonomics, employees watched as a physical therapist demonstrated five exercises to help alleviate lower back pain. [E](#)





## In awe of the solar eclipse

On August 21 the total solar eclipse brought co-op employees out to view the spectacular celestial event. If you missed it, you will have to wait until April 8, 2024 for the next total eclipse.