

# Hi-Lites

## Electrical Safety Advocate Cody Conrady to Speak at TCEC's Farmers and First Responders Luncheon in December

Farming equipment has become more massive and technologically advanced over time. While these welcome improvements help farmers cover more ground in less time, taller equipment and longer extensions can bring added challenges around power lines.

As farmers prepare to enter the fields, Safe Electricity urges everyone working in the agricultural field to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.

### Cody Conrady's story

Before you think it could never happen to you, consider electrical accident survivor Cody Conrady's experience. He shares what happened to him in an effort to help increase power line awareness:

It was Cody Conrady's next-to-last day as an assistant manager for an ag fertilizer company. They were understaffed that day, and Cody jumped in the truck to get ahead of the sprayer. Once the sprayer was in position, he hopped out to fill the tank with fertilizer.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

To safely provide our member-owners with reliable electric service, superior customer service, and practical energy solutions, all at reasonable prices.

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Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

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Fax: 618-244-1496  
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855-385-9902

#### Mt. Vernon

#### Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### Salem

#### Office Hours

Tuesday - Thursday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
(Closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.)

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What happened next changed everything, since he and his coworker inside the cab were unaware that the sprayer boom had either made contact or gotten too close to a power line.

7,400 volts of electricity traveled through the boom and electrified the equipment and ground where Cody was standing. Unfortunately, the unyielding stray voltage considered Cody's body as part of its electrical path to ground.

In the minutes and hours that followed, Cody was brought back to life, rushed to a local hospital, and then transferred via medevac to a Level 1 trauma center. That was the starting point to a very long and arduous road to recovery that included many surgeries, rehabilitation, and prosthetics fittings.

Cody's advice to others when working near power lines, "pay attention a little more. Keep an eye on your surroundings. Just take an extra second to look at things, to see how your situation is going to unfold," Conrady advises.

Now days, he drives by fields buzzing with activity during active farm seasons and wonders if others see what he sees — if they realize the potential dangers of getting too close to power lines.

### **Follow the 10-foot distance rule**

To stay safe around overhead power lines, follow safe work practices at all times to help prevent serious and even deadly accidents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line, but to the full 360 degrees around it. Not only can electricity change paths if direct contact is made, it can also happen when someone or something gets too close to a power line, and the current jumps, also known as arcing.

### **Other precautions**

In addition to the 10-foot rule, take these steps to help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out

of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to deenergize the power.

- If it is not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Hop away with feet together as far as you can.
- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 9-1-1 and do not approach the scene. Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.
- Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.
- When working around power lines, always use a spotter, who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low, never try to move it; instead, contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.

"Even though this season is a busy time filled with stress and tight deadlines, take time for safety, including electrical safety," says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. "It could save your life or the lives of others." For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

*Cody Conrady will be the guest speaker for this year's Farmer's and First Responders Luncheon on December 8th, 2021. We hope that you will join us! More information will be in the next issue of the Hi-Lites, Facebook, Twitter, and on [www.tricountycoop.com](http://www.tricountycoop.com).*

# Pole testing - what is it & why are we doing it?

by Brad Grubb, Director of Operations

As is the case with most electric utilities in our region, Tri-County Electric Cooperative is virtually dependent on the use of wooden poles. Even though the poles we utilize are initially treated to resist decay, over time all wooden poles start to decay and ultimately will need to be replaced. The decay rate varies greatly depending upon soil type, moisture levels, temperatures, and the type of wood the pole is derived from.

The objective of our Pole Inspection Program is to determine if a pole is still useful and safe. We currently employ Osmose Utility Services as a contractor to perform our pole inspections.

Our inspection process involves a visual inspection of each pole looking for woodpecker holes, significant cracks, signs of termite and carpenter ant activity, or any other defect with the pole that could result in a pole failure and/or rejection. They will then complete a sound and bore test of the pole, where they will bore the pole below the ground line at an angle on two different sides, determine the presence and size of any decayed pockets and sound the pole above ground line with a hammer looking for the decayed pocket to extend above the ground line.

The majority of decay in a wood pole occurs in the first 18 inches below the ground line. The integrity and strength of a pole is compromised when the shell wall of the pole is less than two inches. That is when it is recommended the pole be replaced. While a visual inspection is valuable

and essential in evaluating the overall condition of a pole, any internal decay below the ground line would go undetected if not for our pole inspection program.

Our objective is to inspect poles once every 8 years, and identify those poles that have significant decay and are in need of being replaced prior to the pole failing due to the lack of pole strength.

This year, we inspected 8,490 poles and 115 of them failed. In 2020 we inspected 8,201 poles and 642 of them failed. The failed poles are replaced on a yearly basis through the Pole Replacement Program. Generally, our goal is to get all rejected poles replaced with new ones in the same year that they fail the inspection process. This is a huge undertaking and commitment for a cooperative our size.

By continuing our Pole Inspection/Pole Replacement Program, we have extended the useful life of our wooden poles, reduced maintenance costs, and help increase the reliability and safety of our electric system for all our members. Remember, all initiatives we embark on always have our members' best interests in mind.



# Taco Pasta Salad

## Ingredients

- ½ lb ground beef
- ½ lb rotini pasta
- 2 Tablespoons Taco seasoning
- ½ sweet pepper, yellow, chopped
- ¼ small onion, diced
- ½ pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup cheddar, shredded
- ½ head iceberg lettuce, shredded
- ½ cup French dressing
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1 1/2 cup nacho cheese Doritos™

## Instructions

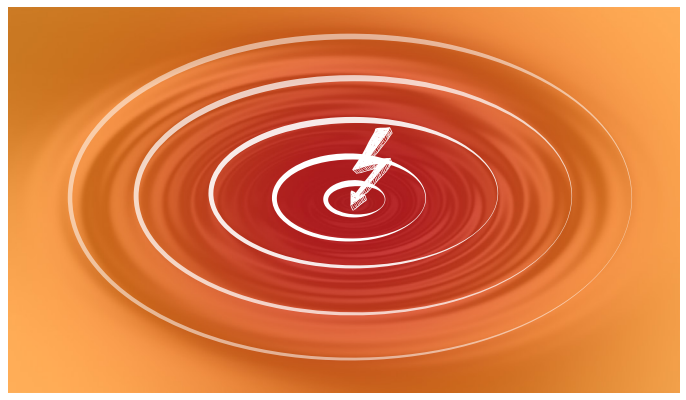
1. Cook beef in a pan over medium high heat. Once meat starts to brown, add in the taco seasoning. Once cooked, drain excess grease and set aside.

2. Meanwhile, in a pot, cook the rotini according to package directions. When pasta is cooked, drain and run cool water over it to cool.

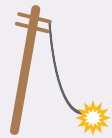
3. In a large bowl, add together all ingredients and mix until well combined.  
Serve immediately.

*You can make this dish ahead of time but do not mix the Doritos™ with the pasta salad until you are ready to serve.*

# STEP POTENTIAL



## What you need to know:



A downed line does **NOT** have to be arcing or sparking to be energized — and dangerous.



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



The **danger** exists **beyond** the point where the downed line is making direct contact with a vehicle or the ground.

**Electricity can flow 360° around it.**

### What is step potential?

If a person connects **two different points** of this gradually decreasing voltage by **walking away, stepping out of a vehicle, or touching the vehicle and ground at the same time** — electricity flows through the individual (path to ground).



### Stay safe.

If you're in a car accident that involves downed lines, **stay in the car**. If you come upon a scene with a downed line, stay far away and **call 911** to have the utility notified.



Learn more at

 Safe  
Electricity.org

The Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, September 6th, 2021 in observance of Labor Day. Have a happy and safe holiday!