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Orcas Power & Light Cooperative

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OPALCO Line Crew Trains in Pole-Top Rescue

OPALCO's line crew is one of the best-trained in the region. In addition to the statewide three-year apprentice program requirements, OPALCO apprentices are required to spend their first year as a groundman, before beginning formal training, and all OPALCO operations staff attend monthly safety meetings and training sessions. Last month, the OPALCO line crew trained in pole-top rescue, practicing a hurt man lower. "We run through this training every year," said General Foreman Steve Eyler, "so they're prepared – just in case someone has a medical emergency while working on the poles." OPALCO contracts with Electrical Safety Consultants International (ESCI) to administer its safety program, which also includes topics such as First Aid/CPR, Personal Protection Equipment, Fall Protection, Stress Management, Confined Space/Vault Rescue and Winter Driving.

OPALCO is a member-owned cooperative electrical utility serving more than 11,000 members on 20 islands in San Juan County. OPALCO provides electricity that is 97% greenhouse-gas free and is predominately generated by hydro-electric plants. OPALCO was founded in 1937 to bring electricity to rural islanders.

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Photo captions:

1. Journeyman Lineman Brian Swanson clears the hazard in preparation for a pole top rescue exercise.
2. Journeyman Lineman Steve Dengler gets ready to lower the "hurt man" dummy during a pole top rescue exercise

Please credit Steve Eyler on the photos.