Safety Takes Center Stage

Hundreds of electric utility industry professionals will have an opportunity to network and discover the latest safety and employee solutions at the 74th annual TEC Loss Control Conference & Exhibit Show. The conference is March 10–13 at the Embassy Suites in Frisco.

Mike Williams, TEC president and CEO, will provide an industry update, and Danny Williams, TEC Loss Control manager, will address what’s in store for the program and the safety specialists on staff.

The conference also will feature sessions on:
- Snake safety awareness.
- Active listening skills.
- Drones.
- NRECA’s Commitment to Zero campaign.
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- Broadband concerns.
- Commercial driver’s license training requirements.
- Financial and retirement planning.

Participants can visit with 55 vendors at the exhibition show, which will showcase the latest equipment and services in the electric industry.

The conference’s annual golf tournament and auction of donated items are the primary fundraisers for TEC Loss Control Scholarships. The tournament and auction contributed $50,050 to the scholarship fund in 2019, when TEC awarded 72 $750 Loss Control Scholarships.

Organizations and individuals will be honored for outstanding safety records, and Lifesaving and Good Samaritan awards will go to employees who changed lives in their communities.

Register for the conference on the TEC Event Calendar.
Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse in Effect

The federal Commercial Driver’s License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse went into effect Jan. 6. The clearinghouse is a secure online database instituted by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration intended to prevent CDL holders who have committed drug or alcohol violations from job-hopping—making it harder to hire those drivers.

FMCSA, employers, state driver licensing agencies and law enforcement officials can use the database to identify—in real time—CDL drivers who have violated federal drug and alcohol testing program requirements. The goal is to improve safety on the nation’s roads.

FMCSA’s clearinghouse website contains important resources, including user brochures and instructional aids with step-by-step registration instructions for all users. The agency also offers an online fact sheet and FAQ with helpful guidelines and information.

CO-OP PEOPLE

AWARDS
Scott Ferguson, Sam Houston EC’s manager of operations, won the 2019 Herman C. Potthast Award in September. The National Utility Training and Safety Education Association bestows the award each year to a job training and safety instructor in memory of Potthast, who demonstrated dedication, leadership and cooperation in this field.

LINEMAN’S RODEO
Apprentice lineworkers from Texas stole the show at the International Lineman’s Rodeo in October in Kansas, taking seven of the top 10 places in the cooperative division. Darren Donhauser of Pedernales EC was the champ out of 53 co-op apprentices. He also finished third overall out of 321 apprentices. Caleb Brodock of PEC finished third in the co-op apprentice division, followed by Michael Guajardo of Bluebonnet EC in fourth, Garrit Afman of PEC in fifth, Justin Albarado of Bandera EC in sixth, Neil Dodson of PEC in seventh and Evan Bradfield of PEC in eighth.

RETIEMENTS
Eric “Ric” Newton, operations manager for Navasota Valley EC’s Mart office, retired Jan. 2 after 41 years as a lineman and manager. In addition to helping with TEC Loss Control schools, he was an active participant in the Loss Control Conference for many years.

Randal Williams, manager of safety and loss control, retired Dec. 2 after 40 years of service at Concho Valley EC. He supported the Loss Control program over the years.

TEC UPDATE

TEC Family Loses Special Member

Gordon Leslie Williams of Gatesville, son of Danny Williams, TEC’s Loss Control manager, died Dec. 28. He was 56.

Gordon was born in Brady, where he later worked for MHMR. He also worked at Goodwill in Abilene for several years before joining his father on the road. For 15 years, Gordon and Danny traveled the state as Danny conducted job training and safety schools for TEC.

“Gordon loved going on the road with me,” Danny said.

“During the years Gordon traveled with me, he touched a lot of lives and made so many friends in the co-op world. He was a very special person.”

Gordon was a gifted child with Down syndrome. He loved hunting, bowling and riding his four-wheeler. He is survived by his parents, Danny and Diane Williams, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Scholarship Auction Items Needed

The scholarship auction at the TEC Loss Control Conference is the primary fundraiser for the TEC Loss Control Scholarship program. Your donations of auction items and purchases give kids a helping hand toward paying college expenses.

Bring an item (or two) to donate and then plan to participate in the lively bidding. The scholarship auction raised $44,700 in 2019, when TEC Loss Control awarded 72 $750 scholarships to high school seniors.

Enter Photo Challenge

The TEC Loss Control Photo Challenge is open to all employees of electric cooperatives, municipal electric utilities and contractors who participate in the TEC Loss Control program. Photos will be judged by popular vote at the Loss Control Conference in March, and winners will be announced on the final day. The top three finishers will be recognized at the close of the conference.

Theme: Abnormal Electrical Distribution System Hazards

Entry deadline: Feb. 14

Photo limit: Three per person

How to enter: Email high-resolution digital images to tknipstein@texas-ec.org.