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THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

Family Affair: Coss Boys Follow In Their Dad's Footsteps

Linemen have a special bond that is often referred to as a brotherhood, but for these four men, it is all in the family! It all started in 2000, when Kevin Coss was looking for a new career path to support his family. He remembered his old wrestling coach from high school was in charge of the Power Line Program at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, South Dakota and thought he should look into that program. He decided to attend the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program at MTI and in May of 2001, Kevin graduated and began his journey of becoming a lineman at Wheat Belt Public Power that same month. Kevin stated "it was one of the best decisions I could have made. Getting to help people and doing something different every day is very rewarding to me."

Fast forward a few years, Kevin and his wife DeeAnn are raising their family of three sons (Tate, Cole, and Ty) and daughter (Natalie) in Oshkosh, Nebraska. When their oldest son Tate graduated high school in 2017, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and attend MTI in Mitchell and become a lineman. He graduated in May of 2018 and began his career as a lineman at Southwest Public Power District in Palisade, Nebraska. Tate stated, "I wanted to become a

lineman because it was a field that would be outdoors doing something different every day." He married his wife Nicole in May of 2022, and they are expecting their first child in June of this year. Nicole is currently majoring in nursing at Mid Plains Community College in North Platte. In their spare time, Tate and Nicole enjoy camping and Tate loves cooking up things on the grill.

A few more years go by and Cole graduates high school in 2021. It wasn't hard for him to decide to keep the tradition going and attend Mitchell Tech (formally MTI). When asked what made him decide to pursue becoming a lineman, Cole said "seeing my dad going to work and enjoying what he did, made me feel like being a lineman would be a good career for me also. It was something I knew that I would be able to help people and that is worth it to me." He graduated from the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program in May of 2022



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Normal power line **Lines weighed down by ice** **Top line melted after bottom line**

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

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Understanding Power Outages

While your utility does everything it can to reduce the possibility of outages to your home or business, they do occur. There are a variety of reasons power outages can occur, including severe storms causing mass destruction, tree limbs coming into contact with power lines, vehicles crashing into utility poles, and animals such as squirrels causing short circuits while climbing electrical equipment.



Whatever the reason, rest assured your utility is working as fast as it can to get your power restored quickly and safely. While each utility has its own system for restoring power during an outage, many of the following steps will be similar from utility to utility.

The number one focus of your utility will be public safety. This means crews will clear lines and equipment that could pose safety hazards to the public. Next, it will turn its attention to power generation facilities that generate the actual electricity that powers your home or business. After that come transmission line and substation equipment repairs. Then, your utility will focus on feeder lines that can serve one to 3,000 customers, tap lines that provide power to 20 to 30 homes or businesses, and then connections to individual customers.

During this process, utilities will generally first make repairs to facilities that are critical to public health and safe-

ty—like hospitals, police and fire stations, water treatment plants, and communication systems. How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas.

Whether long or short, it pays to know what to do when the power goes out so you can keep your family safe. Safe Electricity suggests you:

- Call your electric utility immediately to report the outage.
- Use safe alternative food preparations. A barbecue grill is an excellent way to prepare food. Always grill outside.
- Have a storm kit (with items like flashlights, battery-operated radio, batteries, and first-aid supplies) prepared for use during power outages.
- Turn off electrical appliances and unplug major electronics, including computers and televisions. Power sometimes



comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still plugged in and on. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes and then turn on other appliances and equipment—one at a time.

For more information visit SafeElectricity.org.



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Family Affair cont'd from 12-A

and was hired on at Northwest Public Power District in Hay Springs, Nebraska that same month. Cole has always enjoyed hunting and fishing and loves living in an area where he can continue to do that on his days off.

It doesn't stop there.....Ty will graduate from Garden County High School in May of 2023! I'm sure you can all guess what his plans are. You are correct! Ty plans to attend the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program at Mitchell Tech! Ty stated the reason he wanted to become a lineman was, "it is short schooling so you can get right to work.....and it runs in the family." Ty also enjoys hunting and fishing like his older brother.

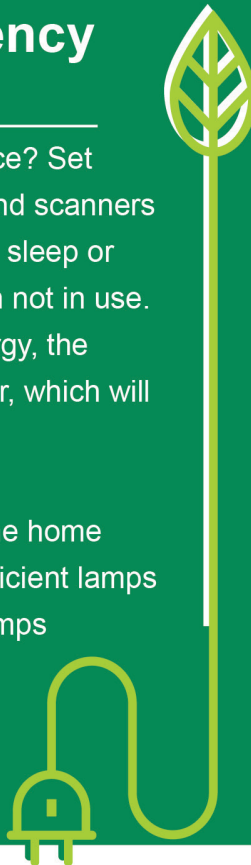
As much as Natalie respects her father and brothers' choice in careers, her heart is in healthcare. Her dream is to become a nurse when she is out of school. Natalie is currently an eighth grader at Garden County Schools and enjoys playing volleyball, basketball, and track!

"I've never told my boys what career path to pursue, but if they can find something they enjoy, life will be much better. I guess they saw how much I appreciated my career, so they chose to follow," Kevin said. "I really worry about their safety, but they hired on with some great companies and love what they do. I really couldn't be more proud to have them in the occupation!"

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



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