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For Immediate Release

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Central Lincoln Apprentice Brings Home Trophy in Lineman Competition Memorial Event Honors Washington Lineman Killed On the Job

Central Lincoln Apprentice Lineman Rod “Ticker” Ekelund of Toledo was honored for his skill in the “Underground Mystery Event” at the 2010 Andrew York Memorial Lineman Rodeo in Wenatchee, Washington. The Underground Mystery Event in this competition required switching and repairing failed high-voltage underground wire safely with skill and strength. Ekelund beat 28 apprentice linemen from Washington, Oregon, Missouri, and Canada.

“We are very proud of Rod earning a place on the winner’s stand,” said Central Lincoln’s general manager Paul Davies. “This would not have happened without a great deal of work, attention to detail, and without support and training from our crews. It’s important to our customers that we have linemen who work safely, quickly, and accurately, and Rod’s award strongly reflects those qualities.”

Ekelund is a “sixth-step” lineman apprentice, meaning he has moved from ground work to safely working with progressively greater voltages in progressively more complex overhead and underground installations. There are seven steps of apprenticeship that apprentice linemen must reach, and they must complete 500 hours of classwork and pass several tests, in order to become linemen.

The purpose of linemen rodeos is to offer linemen opportunities to competitively sharpen their skills and to earn hours of work-related training in an industry in which workers must be highly-skilled and constantly vigilant, as electric power ranks as one of the top ten most dangerous career fields in the United States.

The Wenatchee lineman competition is held in honor of Andrew York, a lineman who died on the job after being hit by a drunk driver in 2000. This year, 16 teams and 30 apprentices competed in safety, work practice, and skill competitions.

Ekelund, a 12 year veteran with Central Lincoln, lives in Toledo.

The Central Lincoln People’s Utility District is Oregon’s fourth-largest electric utility, serving some 700 square miles and more than 80,000 people in portions of Douglas, Coos, Lane, and Lincoln counties. Central Lincoln is not-for-profit, and is publicly-owned; it was created in 1940 by voters to serve the public.

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