

# A LINEMAN'S GEAR

## KYLE KASPER

**Job:** Fourth-year apprentice lineman for Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

**Age:** 27

**Family:** Wife, Laurie Kasper, and their 2-year-old son, Kaden

**Pre-gear weight:** 164.5 pounds

**Fully geared-up weight:** 210.5 pounds

**On climbing poles:** "It hasn't bothered me yet."

**HARD HAT:** Linemen are as tough and hardheaded as they come, but you'll never catch 'em bareheaded: A hard hat provides insulated protection against electrical hazards and protects the head from blows and falling objects.

**INSULATED GLOVES:** Insulated rubber gloves—these are tested to 30,000 volts—provide protection against electric shock and burn. They are worn inside leather gloves, or gauntlets, that protect the rubber against cuts, abrasions and punctures.

### EQUIPMENT BELT:

Think of it as the lineman's suitcase, with clips, loops and D rings providing ways to carry virtually every tool he might need—whether it's on the ground, on a pole or in a bucket truck.

### CLIMBERS:

Contoured leg shanks—Kasper's are made of aluminum—hold gaffs securely in place on linemen's boots. Climbers are strapped on just below the knee, with Velcro pads providing comfort and support.

**GAFFS:** Razor-sharp steel points—think cowboy spurs—that are strapped to boots for climbing poles. Only the tips dig into the wood, helping linemen climb more safely and efficiently.

**PULLEY BLOCK:** Linemen can't carry everything up a pole, and the pulley block—the signature component of the hand line—is used to raise and lower heavy equipment.

**DITTY BAG:** This canvas bag hangs from the equipment belt and literally holds the nuts and bolts (and connectors, wire, etc.) that linemen need at the ready for any number of jobs.

**SAFETY STRAP:** When a lineman reaches the top of a pole, he unhooks one end of his safety strap from his equipment belt, loops the strap around the pole, and rehooks the strap to his belt. Having "buckled off," he can now safely work with both hands free.

**NUMEROUS TOOLS** are attached to a hot stick's universal head. This attached tool is a disconnect head, which is used for a variety of jobs.

**HAND LINE:** The lineman's lifeline. Complete with steel clips and a pulley block, this rope, which hangs from a pole's crossarm, is strong enough for any job—from the routine hoisting of equipment to life-saving missions.

**TOOL POUCH:** This bag also hangs from the back of the equipment belt and carries a wide variety of tools, such as pliers and wrenches.

**BOOTS:** Not cowboy boots, mind you, but lineman boots: Typically 16 inches tall (Kasper's stand 13 inches), these boots help prevent linemen from gaffing, or gouging, themselves in the leg. Serrated heels provide for a better grip when climbing, and steel shanks built into the soles provide extra support on the pole.

**HOT STICK:** Typically made of insulated, high-voltage-tested fiberglass—and extendable up to 40 feet—hot sticks help linemen safely perform a variety of jobs while working on energized power lines.

