



Media Release

For Immediate Release
March 5, 2014

MASON PUD 1 LINEMAN PROVIDES AID TO DISASTER AREAS



Michael Ferrier uses rubber glove handling to make repairs.

Potlatch, WA- Mason County Public Utility District No. 1 lineman Michael Ferrier has seen his share of bad storms. For the last three years, he has traveled to different regions of the United States as part of a relief effort to repair critical infrastructure and restore power to cities devastated by natural disasters and severe weather events. Ferrier, who started as a groundman for PUD 1 in 1986 and is currently the foreman of the electric crew, uses his own comp time and personal leave to travel with Alliance Power Group stationed out of Boston, one of its five national offices.

Alliance is a first responder when a natural disaster strikes and their website features accolades from clients in the hard struck regions where they deploy, as well as boasting a perfect safety record. Ferrier has helped restore power after major storm events such as Hurricane Irene, the tornado in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and also Winter Storm Nemo, a massive Category Three nor'easter that swept across Chicago to Massachusetts in 2013, leaving him and the Alliance fleet chasing the storm all the way across the northeast states. "There was a lot of white knuckled driving" remembered Ferrier who said that driving the interstates in complete white out conditions was one of the most nerve-

wrenching things he had ever experienced.

When asked how he became involved with Alliance, he replied "I had friends (in the industry) that introduced me to the Alliance group and the large storm relief efforts". Although he is compensated for his time by Alliance, he asserted that it is the camaraderie and satisfaction he gets out of helping these people in crisis that compels him to go each year. This last winter he even spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day away from home to work on the East Coast with other lineman from across the country to restore power for the hard hit regions that were repeatedly blanketed with snow storms all winter long. He has traveled to several states over the last few years including Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. After spending the holidays in Pennsylvania last December, he went again for another 12 day span again this February. "It's a unique situation that the PUD lets me go each year" Ferrier stated. "They do it because its valuable work experience for me and I'm able to bring new knowledge back and apply it to the work our crew does."

"There is a real advantage for us anytime our linemen are able to gain work experience outside of our small utility and electrical system." –

Darin Hall,

Electric Superintendent

Ferrier said the construction on east side of the country is a lot different than in the Pacific Northwest. Some areas have challenges with aging infrastructure and it is just "a different system...the construction is different and the voltages are different". One thing that is done differently in the east is the technique called "rubber glove handling", where they use

specialized rubber gloves to handle and move the energized lines. “In Washington we don’t usually do glove handling; we use hot sticks” explained Ferrier (*pictured right in the center bucket*). “You can only glove 5 kv (kilovolt) in this state and over there I was using gloves on 13.2 kv lines during energized circuit arm change outs.”

These differences in practices and procedures are part of the value that Ferrier gets from learning how to use different tools, different methods of repair work, and learning proficiency in different Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves and sleeves. “Part of the fun of this is that I get to meet new people and learn how they do things” he said, noting that he has worked with people from all over the country through Alliance. One of those people happens to be his son Brandon Ferrier, who is an equipment operator with Moza Contruction, an electrical contracting company in Tacoma. Brandon has traveled with and worked alongside his dad for Alliance the last two years.



“It’s a great benefit to our utility when Mike travels to these different areas. There is a real advantage for us anytime our linemen are able to gain work experience outside of our small utility and electrical system”, explained Darin Hall, PUD 1’s electrical superintendent. “As long as it doesn’t put our utility in a scheduling bind, we like our crew to expand their work experience and sets of skills so they can bring that information back and share it with our other linemen”. Ferrier agrees, “I have traveled a lot and have experienced a lot of different stuff when it comes to line work.” He plans to continue his relationship with Alliance for as long as he is able and it remains beneficial for himself and his PUD.

(Bottom left- Staging area for the relief fleet preparing to deploy to different areas of the north east; bottom right- Huge snow drifts left in the wake of Winter Storm Nemo. These drifts dwarf the amount of snow accumulation typically seen in Mason County. All photos by Brandon Ferrier.)



###

Founded in 1935, Mason County PUD No. 1 was the first public utility district formed in Washington State. PUD 1 provides non-for-profit water, sewer and electric services to approximately 7,100 customers in both Mason and Jefferson counties. The District's mission is to provide customers with safe, reliable and locally-controlled utility services with the highest possible value at the lowest possible cost.

For more information, contact:

Kristin Masteller

Director of Employee & Public Relations

kristinm@mason-pud1.org

N. 21971 Hwy. 101

Shelton, WA 98584

(360) 877-5249 Office



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.