

BRIDGESIDE JOB

Vigilance is essential

When you've got a 10,000-pound hunk of metal dangling at the end of a boom you want to keep a close eye on where it's going.

That was the challenge for Lineman Al Fortier and Apprentice Lineman Michael Hamill last month during the installation of a transformer that will serve the new Bridgeside Shopping Center in Alameda.

It's nothing new for a line crew to install a transformer. But no matter how routine the job, no matter how often it is performed, linemen know the key to safety is being alert to the possibility of something going wrong.

"You want to make sure you're watching the boom—making sure it's not getting into any energized lines," says Fortier. The boom operator, in turn, relies on Fortier's hand signals to stay clear of trouble.

Getting into energized lines isn't the only potential hazard when moving a transformer.

"You want to have your outriggers down so the truck is leveled off properly," Fortier explains. You also don't want to overload the crane. "You have to look at the boom angle and make a calculation off the chart of what is the maximum load you can pick up with that boom radius and angle," he says.

Working the job with Fortier and Hamill were Line Working Supervisor Michael Sherman and, operating the boom, Apprentice Lineman Mark Regan.



The crew, from left: Line Working Supervisor Michael Sherman, Apprentice Linemen Mark Regan and Michael Hamill, and Lineman Al Fortier.



Apprentice Lineman Mark Regan operates the crane.

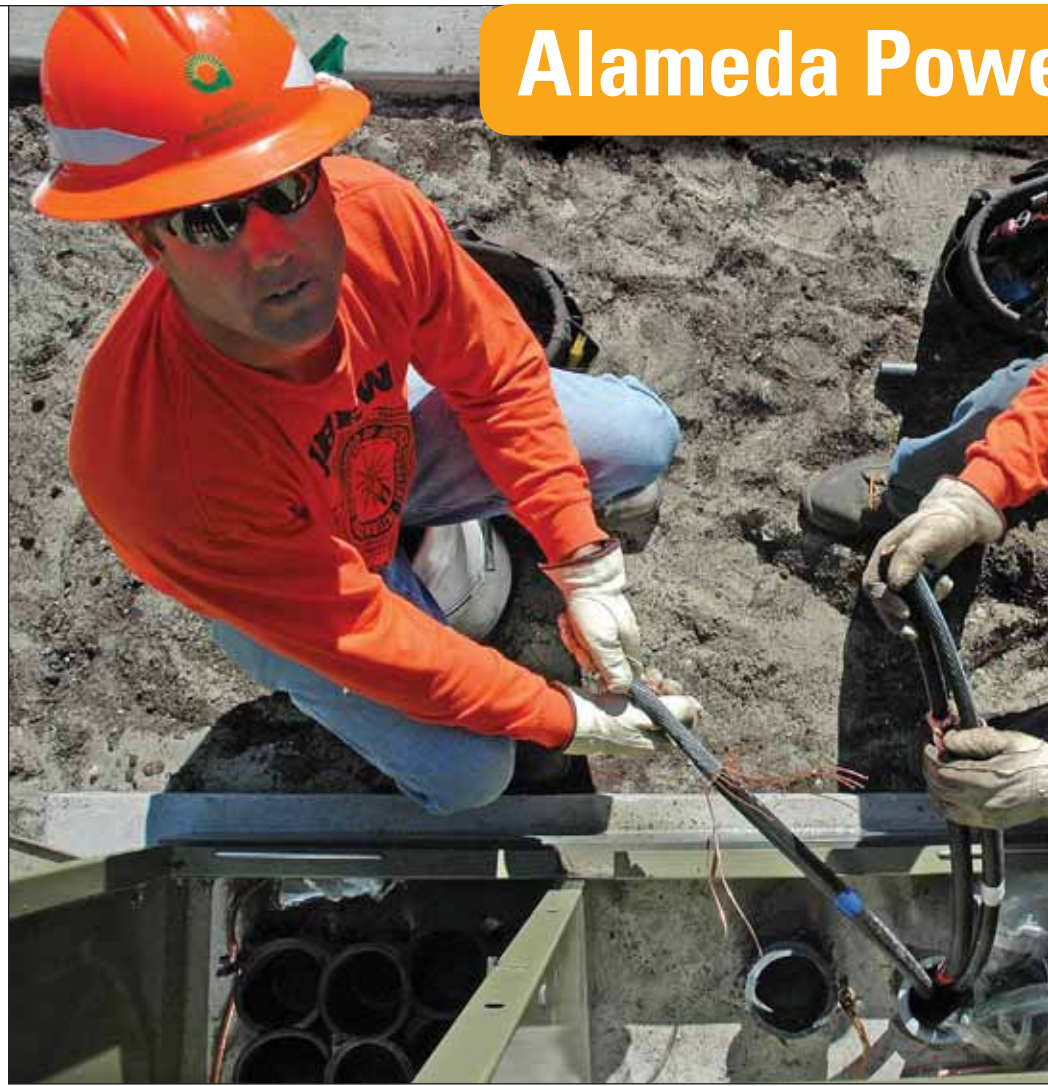


Apprentice Lineman Michael Hamill, left, and Lineman Al Fortier guide the 10,000-pound transformer to the pad. Operating the crane is Apprentice Lineman Mark Regan.



Local 1245 Business Rep. Lynne Morel and Lineman Gary Fenton talk shop in front of the new mall that will be served by the transformer being installed by the AP&T crew.

Alameda Power



Ken Swain, left and Erik Rivera prepping cable ends for termination.

HARBOR BAY ISLE JOB

Transformers for Harbor Bay Isle



Ken Swain

The crew, from left: John Deschaine, Eddie Courtney, Erik Rivera, Ken Swain and Michael Stover.

Erik Rivera and Ken Swain looked like old hands last month as they prepped cable ends for termination during the installation of a pad-mount transformer—one of two transformers that will feed four buildings on North Loop Road, Harbor Bay Isle, in Alameda.

Rivera and Swain recently completed the first step in their apprenticeship, another milestone on the road to becoming linemen. Apprentices, of course, are essential to any utility that wants to replenish its workforce—and any utility that doesn't want to do that is in big trouble.

Line Working Supervisor John Deschaine, working on the Harbor Bay Isle job with the apprentices, can tell you what it takes to make it as a lineman.

"We're looking for guys not afraid to work, who have initiative, and want to learn the trade." An apprentice also has to "have the ability to take orders in an extremely stressful situation," says De-

schaine, who serves on the Apprenticeship Committee at AP&T.

"We're looking for motivation. It's not just the money, it's also the trade. You've got to want to be a lineman," he says.

After the prep work Rivera and Swain will press the one-ought connector on the cable end, then slide the elbow housing on. A load break pin will be inserted on the tip, after which it will be ready to install on the primary bushings.



Groundman Michael Stover applies caulk to the transformer.



GIBBONS STREET JOB

Root of the problem

When a street light box pushed up out of the ground, an AP&T crew got to the root of the problem—tree roots that is. The crew removed the metal box and cut away the offending roots to make room for a new fiber glass box. All in a day's work so that your street lights stay on at night. Working the job were Street Light Technician Brian Darnell, Electric Helpers Richard Quinn and Scott Kolberg, and Construction Foreman Jimmy Ford.

Street Light Technician Brian Darnell prepares to replace the old street light box.



At work on Gibbons Street are, from left, Street Light Technician Brian Darnell and Electric Helpers Richard Quinn and Scott Kolberg. Not pictured: Construction Foreman Jimmy Ford.



Erik Rivera

Later, when the contractor's secondary is ready, the crew can go hot and check the voltage.

Also working on the job are Groundmen Michael Stofer and Eddie Courtney.

ALAMEDA POINT JOB

Crossed wires

When the AP&T crew arrived at Pacific and Main at Alameda Point, they suspected a bad transformer. They isolated a neighboring transformer so they could test the transformers one at a time for possible problems. But a visual inspection of a nearby span of wire soon revealed that one of two parallel lines was draped across the other. How it happened is anybody's guess: Freak wind? Dangerous prank? Sabotage by the Leprechaun Liberation Front? No matter. Line Working Supervisor John Deschaine, working from the bucket, quickly disentangled the lines.

You get some interesting company when you're working at heights.



Line Working Supervisor John Deschaine reviews the situation with (from left, Ken Swain (obscured), Erik Rivera and Michael Stofer.



System Tech Alex Gonzalez



Groundman Eddie Courtney secures the transformer to the pad.



John Deschaine begins the visual inspection from the bucket (above) and isolates a transformer (right).



Continued on page 16.

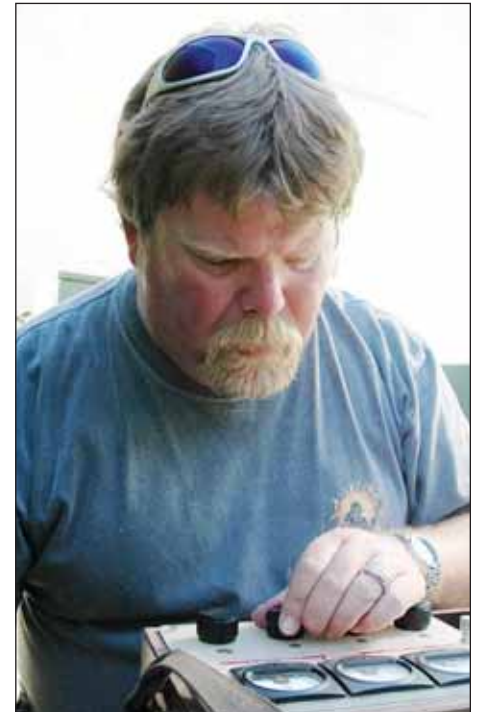
OLD CENTRAL SUBSTATION

Testing new transformers

Transformers have to be tested before they're put into service—one of the many precautions that go into assuring the reliability of the electric system. AP&T utilizes extra space at its old central substation on Grand Street to put the new transformers through their paces.

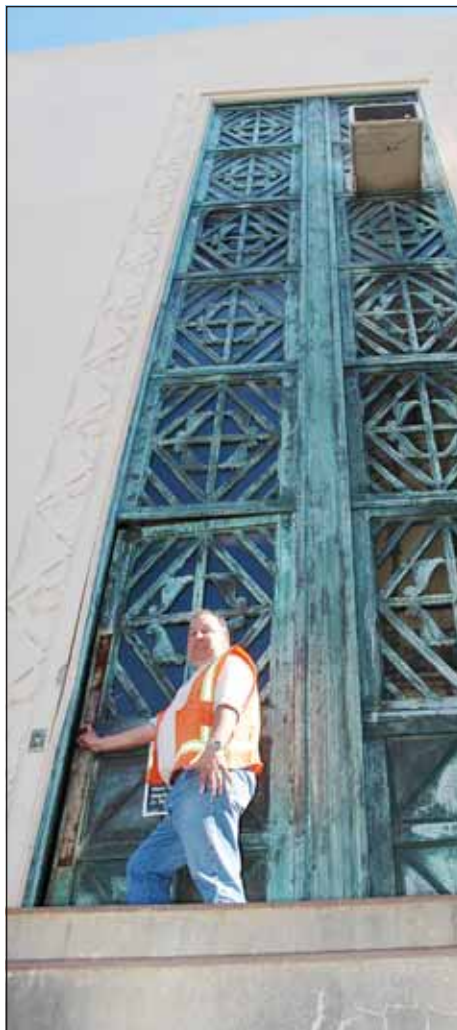


Performing the tests are Electrical Maintenance Technicians Fernando Morales (above) and Greg Davis (right).



Old Central Substation

There was a time when the old central substation was the center of action for the Alameda power system—and something of an architectural curiosity as well. Advisory Council Member Larry Rodriguez offered the Utility Reporter a tour—including the gigantic front doors (right), old breakers (bottom), and the old system dispatch board (below).



STOREROOM

Making the job ready

Before anything gets done in the field, people behind the scenes lay the groundwork. At AP&T that's the job of storeroom personnel. They work with the engineers to make sure the job is ready and supply the linemen with the necessary equipment and accessories. Managing inventory properly is important to efficiency because the utility doesn't have a lot of room to buy materials in bulk.



From left, Sal Tafaoa, Stock Clerk; Torrie Dettmer, Store Clerk; Ryan Madigan, Storekeeper; and Jeff Rude, Facilities Maintenance.

DISPATCH

Keeping it juiced

An organization like AP&T requires a variety of skilled workers in closely coordinated functions to keep the lights on. But no one is more critical to the job of keeping the system juiced than the System Dispatcher.

At AP&T, four System Dispatchers work in rotation to make sure the trans-

mission and distribution lines are bringing power to the city's 33,000 residential and business customers.

In the event of an outage, the Dispatchers prescribe the sequence of activities to restore power.

"We lost the whole city one time in a lightning strike," recalls System Dispatcher Joe Parker. "The whole thing went dark. But we got to switching and restored power in a matter of minutes."

AP&T's other System Dispatchers are Eileen Edman, Joseph Torres, and Chief Dispatcher Larry Rodriguez.



System Dispatcher Joe Parker has 14 years at AP&T, including 9 in dispatch.