



The underground crew, from left: George Palacios, Jason Rangel, Mark Grimsley, Mike Farinsky Jr., and J.D. Sotelo.

PG&E crews upgrade capacity in Santa Cruz

Nothing lasts forever. And that includes the underground cable that carries power to California homes and businesses.

On a sunny day in December, about three miles down the coast from the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Local 1245 members worked under a crystal clear sky installing 4700 feet of 21kv underground cable. The project was necessary, according to Heavy Crew Foreman J.D. Sotelo, to replace old cable dating to the 1970s that was reaching the end of its reliable service.

"The project includes installing three underground switches, reworking three 21 KV primary risers and replacing two runs into Arana Substation—one to the north and one to the south," explained Sotelo, as Lineman Skip Alcorn and Apprentice Lineman Ty Wyatt worked from a bucket nearby on one of the risers, assisted by Apprentice Lineman Daniel Silverstrom on the ground.



Ray Acosta, left, and Scott Walker are ready for the cable pull.



Mike Farinsky, Jr. secures a Kellum grip on to a cable in order to pull in braided rope on Soquel Avenue in Santa Cruz. Working in the vault with him is J.D. Sotelo.

Cable Replacement

Photos by Eric Wolfe

Sotelo only paused a couple of minutes to explain the parameters of the project before returning to work in an underground vault near the intersection of Seventh and Soquel Avenues in Santa Cruz, where he was joined by Lineman Mike Farinsky, Jr. Working outside the vault were Apprentice Lineman Mark Grimsley and Utility Workers George Palacios and Jason Rangel. Waiting a short distance down the road to pull cable were Labor Foreman "C" Ray Acosta and Apprentice Lineman Scott Walker.

The crews, about midway through the month-long project, were in their third of an expected six clearances.

"It's a great project," said Sotelo, made easier by the availability of some GC equipment and apprentice linemen, who were receiving training in 600 amp underground splicing from the Division personnel.



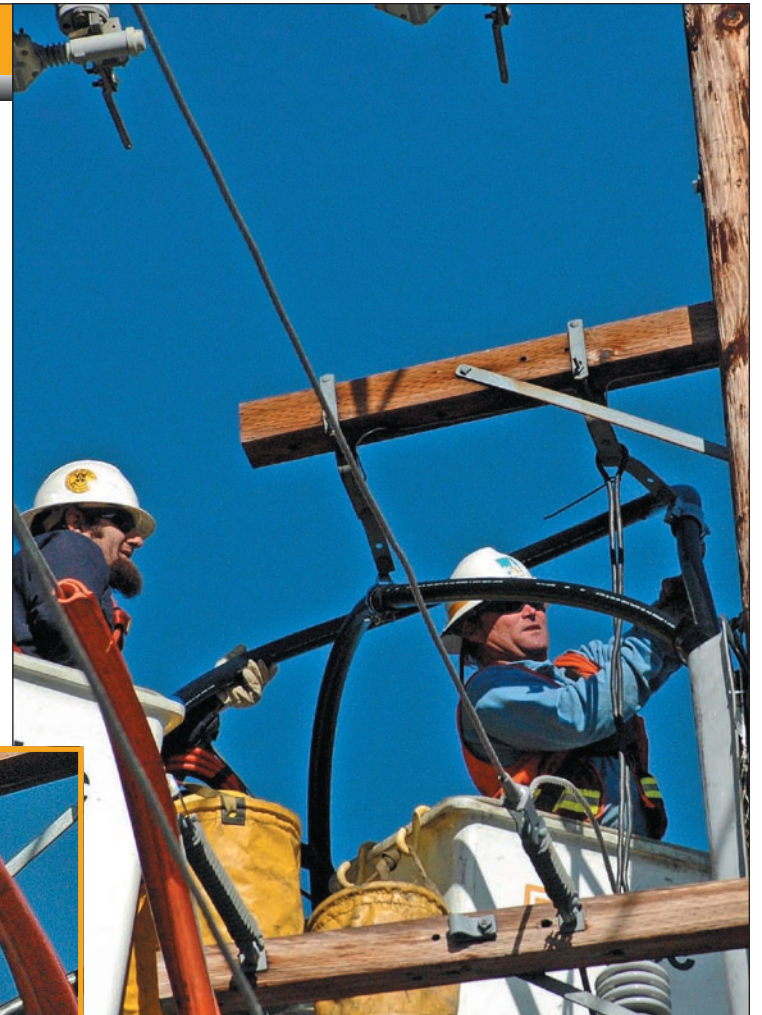
Replacing cable on Soquel Avenue in Santa Cruz.



Daniel Silverstrom assists from the ground.



Skip Alcorn relocates a temporary protective grounding cable in order to land the new 1100 Al cable at top of riser pole.



Reworking the riser from the bucket are Skip Alcorn and Ty Wyatt.



Ty Wyatt installs a switch terminal that will connect to the newly-replaced underground system.



Working from the bucket on the riser, from left, are Ty Wyatt and Skip Alcorn, assisted by Daniel Silverstrom on the ground.