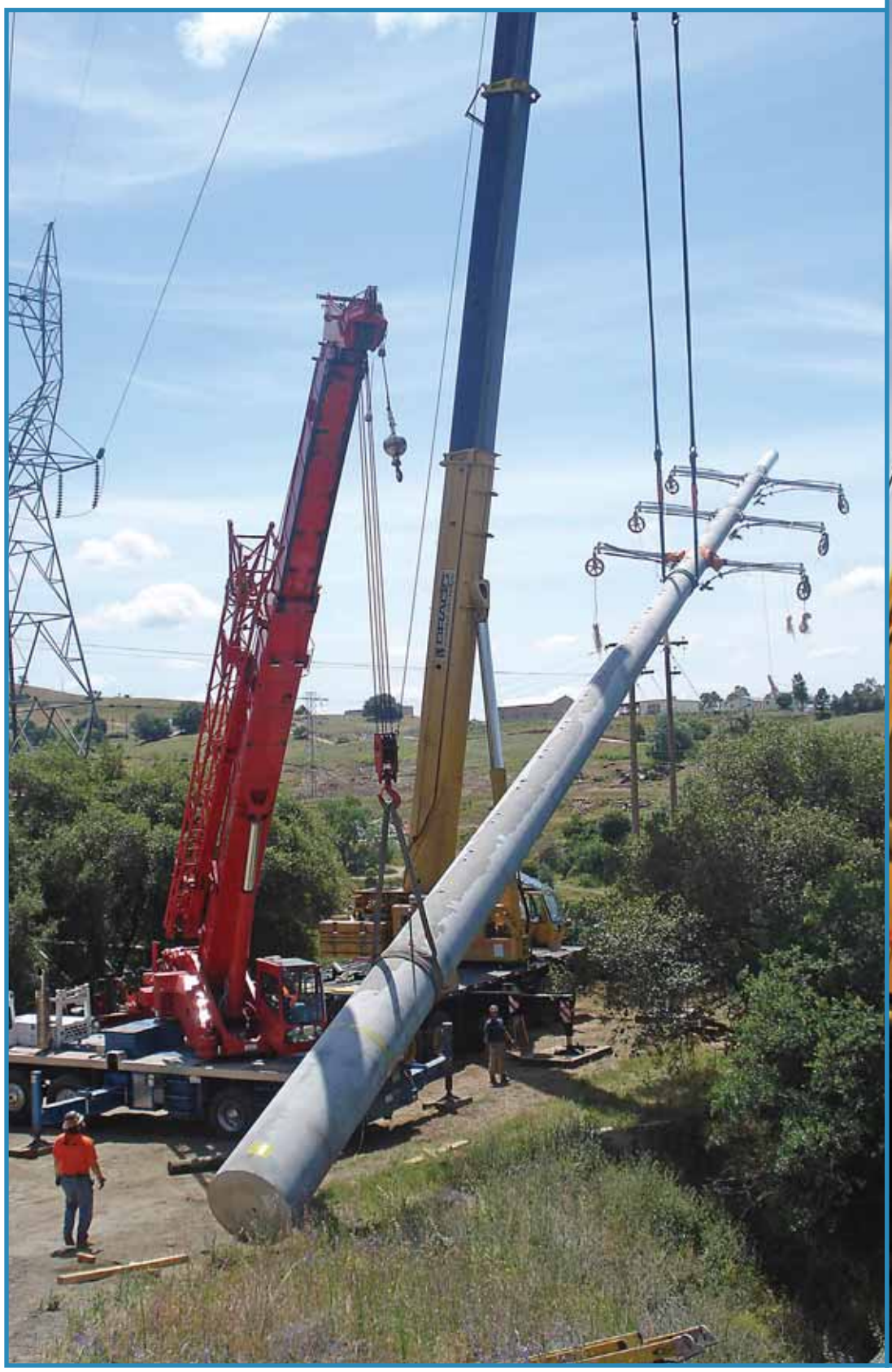
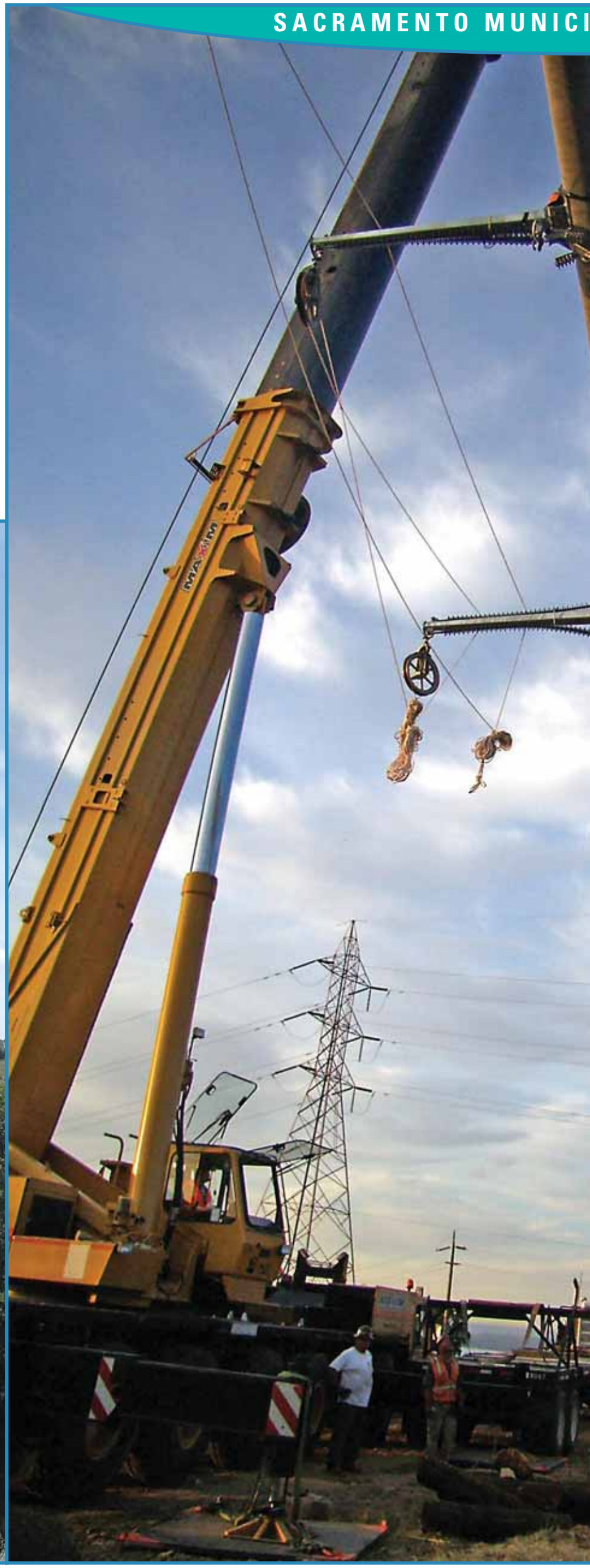
We can do anything!

SMUD crew (above) installs a steel transmission pole in two pieces. Poles weighing between 40 and 70 thousand pounds are hefted into position (below and right).





Mighty movers

IBEW members reroute 230-kv line

The construction of a new road at Folsom Dam posed a big challenge for IBEW members at SMUD last year. The problem was a stand of huge 230-kv twin-circuit towers right in the path where the road needed to go. SMUD's job: remove the towers and install new poles.

The poles installed by the SMUD linemen ranged from 130 feet to 150 feet tall, weighing 40 to 70 thousand pounds. Each cross arm by itself weighed 300 pounds. The job required IBEW members, working under Foreman Don Hurdle, to drop wire over a 115-kv line operated by the Western Area Power Administration, build parallel to the WAPA line, and then cross a PG&E line.

Besides the technical difficulties involved, the SMUD linemen faced some additional challenges in the rugged area around Folsom Dam, including ticks, rattlesnakes and being mistaken for prisoners from nearby Folsom State Prison.

Kneeling in front, from left: Jennings Reamer, Pre-Apprentice; and David Trigeiro, classification. Standing, from left: Sammy Padilla, Lineman; Elias Escamilla, Apprentice; Brian Welch, Lineman; Don Hurdle, Foreman; Phil Valderrama, Apprentice.

A pole is positioned in a deep hole, where it will be anchored with plenty of concrete.

Consequences for talking back to the boss can be severe, apparently.

Phil Valderrama, Apprentice

Folsom Dam

Folsom Dam, located about 23 miles northeast of Sacramento on the American River, was created in1955 as part of the Central Valley Project. Its primary function is flood control, but it also stores water for irrigation, for domestic use, for recreation, and for electrical power generation. Folsom Power Plant's three generators produce 198,207 kilowatts of power. **Source: California State Parks**