

Local Schools



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Students Taught Electrical Safety

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Students Taught Electrical Safety

In light of its 100th anniversary, Poplar Bluff Municipal Utilities put on a live line demonstration at several of the schools within the R-I district last week, teaching students about the hazards of electricity.

The demonstration opened on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at O’Neal Elementary, with Mark Baker—representative for the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—asking second graders what they already understood about electricity.

Students variously yelled out: “It stings you.” “It’s dangerous.” “It turns on your TV.”

City linemen showed what happens when a bird decoy, a tree branch and a Mylar balloon crosses power lines. They also cooked a hotdog from the inside out with high and low voltage, revealing what the meat looks like afterward. Lastly, they used a Tonka Truck and an action figure to demonstrate what to do if a vehicle comes in contact with live electrical wires.

“All electricity wants to go back into the ground,” Baker said, noting that it is safer to stay in the car unless it is on the verge of catching on fire, then “hop out like a bunny” away from the vehicle since the currents are generated from the center, weakening as the ripples travel further.

There are different types of electricity, Baker shared, explaining that direct current is what is found in batteries, alternating current is in power lines and static electricity is caused by

friction, the most powerful form of which can be seen in lightning.

Municipal Utilities, a city-owned electric company, reportedly first went online in 1917 after residents passed a bond issue to construct and operate a power plant. The city recently held a celebration at the Black River Coliseum, offering visitors rides in a bucket truck, among other activities.

Pictured: Union representative Mark Baker shows students a hotdog cooked for two seconds with high voltage that appears uncooked on the surface but is blackened inside.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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