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April 18 is National Lineman Appreciation Day

GPA recognizes vital role of its Linemen in keeping the island energized and safe

(Fadian, Guam) The Guam Power Authority invites the community to join the agency in celebrating National Lineman Appreciation Day on April 18 by thanking a Lineman. Each year, Guam participates in the national day of recognition to honor the skilled GPA Linemen who work daily to keep the island powered and safe.

In 2013, the U.S. Senate designated April 18 as National Lineman Appreciation Day, and each year, line workers are honored for their vital role in keeping electricity flowing nationwide.

GPA General Manager John M. Benavente, P.E., stated, "Each year, we look forward to April 18 to recognize our GPA Linemen who work daily in high-risk situations to keep our island powered. Our GPA Linemen, with support of our partner crews from the CNMI, Pohnpei, and Snohomish PUD, played a vital role in post-Typhoon Mawar recovery, and on National Lineman Appreciation Day, we extend our utmost gratitude for their hard work. We thank our GPA crews for their unwavering dedication to GPA's mission of providing reliable and resilient power for Guam."

The Job of a Lineman

Linemen are responsible for many critical tasks. On any given day, Linemen are assessing the conditions of power lines, repairing damaged lines and transformers, connecting new service lines to homes and businesses, and restoring lost power connections. They work to maintain Guam's energy infrastructure and keep electricity flowing into villages, homes, schools, and businesses. They perform ongoing maintenance work in the villages to trim trees that may become risks to power lines if they fall.

GM Benavente noted that throughout the nation and on Guam, Linemen are first responders during storms and other catastrophic events who work to make the scene safe for other public safety heroes.

He added, "Our Linemen are our first responders at GPA. This means that when there are emergency situations, such as downed power lines or poles due to weather-related issues or accidents, we call on them to assess the situation and ensure our community is safe. They help us to prepare for storms and are the first to be deployed after a storm to swiftly repair any damages to lines so other first responders can safely navigate the streets.

Linemen are skilled electricians who work with thousands of volts of electricity high above and below the ground and respond to calls of downed power lines 24 hours a day. They often work under dangerous conditions to construct and maintain the energy infrastructure of Guam while putting their lives on the line, which is why safety is of utmost priority at GPA. A Lineman's job centers on installing, replacing, repairing, and protecting power lines.

Developing a Technical Workforce

Jennifer G. Sablan, P.E., Assistant General Manager of Operations, said that GPA's Apprenticeship program is a proven training ground to develop quality and highly skilled employees to fill the technical workforce needed at GPA.

Asst. GM Sablan said, "Under the guidance of seasoned mentors in the Operations division, our apprentices gain hands-on experience, valuable knowledge, learn necessary job skills, and receive their national certification as journeymen. Graduates of the program are trained as Substation Electricians, Relay Technicians, and Line Electricians. Our recent graduates gained significant skill-building during Typhoon Mawar, which has made our team even stronger."

To date, GPA graduated five cycles of apprentices, 16 in the fifth cycle, and will graduate its sixth cohort by the end of 2024. The seventh cycle is slated to begin this year. GPA receives hundreds of applications each year for this apprenticeship program, which takes three to four years to complete before they become employees of GPA.

Jesse Cruz, Power System Superintendent, who has worked for GPA for 29 years and was an apprentice during the first cycle, noted that GPA now has 51 Linemen on its team.

Cruz said, "Each day, our crews understand that our mission is to keep the energy flowing throughout the island and keeping each other safe on the job. We are a very tight-knit group that has learned, trained, and worked together during some of the harshest conditions. We serve our community with pride, and the thanks we receive from our customers after we connect their new line or fix an issue are rewarding for us."

GM Benavente added, "The job of a Lineman is dangerous and complex, but they're also the smiling faces you'll see when you install new service to your homes and businesses and in the community educating about line safety and energy conservation. Join me in thanking a Lineman today and be sure to say hello when they're working in your villages."

Join GPA in thanking the line workers for their dedicated service and in celebration of National Lineman Appreciation Day on April 18. Use the hashtag #ThankALineman or #ThankaGPALineman on social media to show your support for the men and women who help keep Guam energized.

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