

BuckSqueeze Safe Users Club

APPALACHIAN POWER EMPLOYEE WEARS FALL RESTRAINT DEVICE, AVOIDS INJURY

APPALACHIAN POWER LINE MECHANIC SALUTED FOR WEARING FALL RESTRAINT DEVICE

BUCKSQUEEZE DEVICE LIMITS FALL TO SHORT DISTANCE

EMPLOYEE SUFFERS NO INJURY AFTER INCIDENT



Chad Yates, line mechanic C, Grundy, Appalachian Power, shows the plaque and jacket he received as a new member of the BuckSqueeze Safe Climber's Club.

GRUNDY, Va. -- Bradley Electro Sales Corporation is the manufacturer's sales representative of a fall restraint device -- the BuckSqueeze -- designed to prevent line mechanics from falling to the ground when cutting out from a pole. Last month, Bradley named Appalachian Power employee Chad Yates, line mechanic C, Grundy, as a member of the BuckSqueeze Safe Climber's Club.

Along with that honor, Yates received a plaque and a jacket. But more importantly than that, Yates never had to endure the potentially life-threatening consequences of falling from a utility pole, because he chose to wear the BuckSqueeze, manufactured by Buckingham Manufacturing Co. Inc.

In June 2009, Yates climbed a pole to assist in changing out a defective transformer. He didn't know that he would soon -- through no fault of his own -- cut out, or lose his grip from, the pole. Line mechanics wear gaffs, sharp metal points on the end of climbing irons strapped to lineman's boots.

The BuckSqueeze device, attached with locking snaphooks to the lineman's body belt worn around the waist, is

designed to grip the pole if those gaffs lose contact with the pole and the user starts to fall.

Isaac Webb, manager - distribution system for Appalachian's Kingsport District, recalls the event.

"While crossing some joint use attachments coming down the pole, Chad had attached his rope safety above the attachments," Webb said. "Chad then removed his BuckSqueeze, reinstalling it below the attachments. When he unsnapped the rope safety, both feet cut out . . . thankfully, he only fell a short distance before being caught by the BuckSqueeze."

Webb said he doesn't like the idea of what might have happened had Yates not worn a BuckSqueeze that day.

"There is no doubt that Chad would have suffered some sort of injury had he not been wearing his BuckSqueeze and it likely would have been serious," Webb said. "But instead he wore the device as he should have and it worked perfectly. Most importantly, Chad wasn't injured; he didn't even get a splinter from the event."

Yates suffered no injuries that day as a result of the mishap and returned home safely that evening.