



## He Was Crying, But They Couldn't Help Him

Most parents agree that the hardest part of being a parent is watching a child go through something really tough and not being able to fix it for them. It's a common sentiment, often superimposed over inspiring images for social media. One mom in Mitchell County lived it for what seemed like an eternity as her 3-year-old cried for her while sitting in a tractor pulling a grain cart that had made contact with an electrical line.

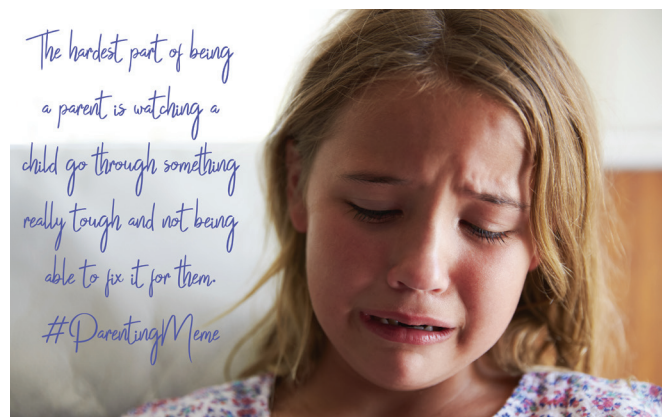
There's probably not much a rural 3-year-old would rather do than ride in a full-size piece of farm machinery. Imagine the thrill, hearing the big motor growling, breathing in the heady aroma of freshly cut wheat and even staying up late — what an adventure he was having!

Then, just as the work day was drawing to a close, the unthinkable happened. The machinery was passing an electric line just a little too closely, and broke a pole. In an instant, the exciting

ride became a life or death situation.

Luckily, although the driver was only 17 years old, he knew better than to get out and check for damage or take the terrified toddler to his parents. Unless the machine you are in catches on fire, the safest place to be is shrouded within the metal of the vehicle. You want to do anything you can to avoid being a pathway to the ground.

When the sheriff's deputy responded to the call, he instructed the dispatcher to call out both Rolling Hills Electric Cooperative and Prairie Land Electric Cooperative. Most of Mitchell county is served by Rolling Hills, but Prairie Land territory weaves through it, and it's difficult to be certain who is actually responsible for the line. It's best to err on the side of having more trained lineworkers at the scene than fewer. This line was actually Prairie Land's, but the Rolling Hills linemen lived much closer and arrived sooner. They were able to put grounding chains on either side of the accident and take initial steps to make the scene safer while everyone waited for Prairie Land to ensure the line was de-energized and would not inadvertently be re-energized.



Prairie Land Foreman **BRANDON BLUE** was on his way from Smith County. It's a long drive no matter what, but when children are in danger, and it's getting darker and scarier every moment, it seems even longer. The deputy was busy keeping family and onlookers at least 50 feet away. While the driver stayed calm, the 3-year-old grew increasingly scared and exhausted. As the sun went down and time ticked further past bedtime, the toddler couldn't keep from crying. It took extreme willpower for his mother to keep from running to get him.

Even so, staying away is critical. If electrical current is flowing through the grain cart and into the earth, the charge can ripple out 30-40 feet, depending on the conditions of the soil. Recent rains would have the current reaching further, and there is no way to know for sure until it's too late.

**Continued on page 16C ▶**



## Congratulations Prairie Land Employees!

Prairie Land extends its congratulations and appreciation to Norman Kats and Gregg Glennemeier for their years of service to our members and the cooperative.



**Norman Kats**  
35 years

**NORMAN KATS** began his career with Prairie Land in 1985, working on the construction crew in Norton. He then moved to Stockton, working on the maintenance crew. Kats then advanced to lead lineman and moved to Phillipsburg.

In 1990, he moved back to Norton to work on a floating maintenance crew. In 2005, as a journeyman lineman, Kats worked on a rotating construction and maintenance crew.

In 2006, he became the warehouseman, the position he currently holds with Prairie Land.

Norman and his wife, Sondra, have seven children and eleven grandchildren. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family and golfing.



**Gregg Glennemeier**  
20 years

**GREGG GLENNEMEIER** began his employment with Prairie Land on Sept. 8, 2000, as an apprentice lineman for the construction crew in Bird City.

In 2003, he moved to Norton to work on the construction crew. In 2008, Glennemeier received his journeyman lineman certificate. In 2017, he advanced to crew foreman.

Gregg and his wife, Ashley, have three children, Tyson, 19; Brynn, 17; and Evelyn, 5. In his spare time, he enjoys wood-working and working on the family farm.

## He Was Crying... *Continued from page 16B* ▶

"We get a lot of these types of accidents," said Blue. "At least one per year, and this year we've already had three or four. It's very difficult to keep people away from the scene, and keep the driver in the cab. People have been lucky. The lines can de-energize themselves at the time of the accident, but you don't know if someone down the line has a generator, or if any of the safety features failed. Unless there is fire, you should never get out of the cab or approach the scene until a lineman has cleared it. These people did everything right."

As soon as Blue arrived, he assured the line was not energized and gave the OK for the boys to get out of the tractor. The youngster wanted to be carried, so

Blue scooped him up and took him to his mom.

This story ended with a mom finally getting to hold her son and soothe his cries. Thanks to the courage and level-headed thinking of the young driver, the emergency personnel trained in electrical safety, and family members who managed to make themselves stay back, these two survived. Sometimes, a cry is the sweetest sound in the world when you've escaped the possibility of never hearing it again.



## KILOWATT TIPS

### September is National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month. One of the best ways to stay one step ahead of storms, power outages and other emergencies is to plan ahead.

Prairie Land recommends every emergency kit contain these items:

- ▶ One gallon of water per person, per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation.
- ▶ At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- ▶ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and weather radio with extra batteries.
- ▶ Flashlight and extra batteries.
- ▶ First-aid kit.
- ▶ Whistle to signal for help.
- ▶ Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place.
- ▶ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- ▶ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- ▶ Manual can opener for food.
- ▶ Local maps.
- ▶ Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger.



**Kilowatt**

## Coming Clean While Saving Water

How can you reduce energy costs if about 90% of a washing machine's total energy consumption is used to heat the water? Reduce the amount of water used.

Consider a high-efficiency washer that uses about 23 gallons of water per load, instead of the 41 gallons used by traditional machines. The higher cost of high-efficiency machines pays off in water and energy savings.

**KILOWATT** was adopted by Prairie Land after the December 2006 ice storm. She now brings you energy and safety tips each month.