Risky business

The crew performed maintenance on several transmission lines that Duke couldn't reach

BY MIKAYLA KREUZBERGER
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — A helicopter crew from Pennsylvania spent Thursday and Friday assisting Duke Energy with maintenance and pressure washing of several towers and power lines in Oconee County.

Sandy Yuda, of Seneca, said she and her husband, Larry, heard a helicopter hovering over their Lake Keowee home on Friday morning.

"We walked out to our dock and there was a man dangling from a helicopter repairing the power line," she said.

Sandra Magee, a spokeswoman for Duke Energy, said the helicopter's crew performed maintenance on several transmission lines that Duke couldn't reach by bucket truck.

"They are also washing down the towers because of the build-up from buzzard droppings on the insulators," Magee said.

Tim Smith, a Duke Energy employee, said the helicopter crew spent Thursday pressure washing the insulators.

"It's pretty amazing to see them work," Smith said. "The helicopter has a pressure washer attached to it and it gets really low and close to the towers."

Smith said Friday the crew installed shields to prevent buzzards from contaminating the insulators in the future.

"They drop the crew off on the tower and then the helicopter brings the shields one at a time," Smith said. "It's only taking them about an hour to cover one tower."

He said Haverfield's helicopter crew is comprised of people from all over the U.S.

"These guys live throughout the country, and they do this kind of work all around the U.S.," he said. "They love this work – I think it's the thrill of the job. The pilot told me he saw a Youtube video of a helicopter crew working on lines, and he knew right then he wanted to do that. He said he's been flying for six years now."

Magee said maintenance would last no later than today.

mikayla@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6681



A Haverfield Aviation helicopter crew works on Duke Energy power lines on Friday on Hesse Highway near Westminster.