Consumers Energy Foundation Awards Scholarships for Future Lineworkers, Honoring Fallen Employees

Three Future Lineworkers Earn Jeffrey Creel, James Farrington Scholarships

MARSHALL, Mich., June 26, 2019– The Consumers Energy Foundation is assisting three individuals training to become electric lineworkers with scholarships honoring two fallen company linemen.

The scholarship program, first announced in 2015, is in conjunction with Lansing Community College (LCC), Alpena Community College (ACC), the Michigan State Utility Workers Council and Consumers Energy. The 2019 recipients, Matthew Goodenow and Shane Peterson of ACC and Brandon Nickerbocker of LCC, were honored Wednesday at a ceremony at Consumers Energy’s Marshall Training Center. All three men are in the process of completing their training to join Consumers Energy full time as lineworkers.
The scholarships are given in honor of two Consumers Energy lineworkers killed while on the job:

- Jeffrey H. Creel, of Bronson, was struck by a passing vehicle June 22, 2012 while investigating a downed power line near Jonesville.
- James Farrington, of Alden, was shocked by an electric distribution line while working to replace a damaged power pole near Traverse City on Oct. 5, 2018.

Receiving Farrington scholarships are Peterson, of Kaleva, and Knickerbocker, of Ceresco. Receiving a Creel scholarship is Goodenow, of Tustin.

Guy Packard, Consumers Energy’s vice president of electric operations, said the scholarships are a reminder of the hazards lineworkers face every day and the importance of safety for all Consumers Energy employees.

“It’s imperative the next generation of lineworkers understands safety is our highest priority,” Packard said. “Nothing is more important than sending our employees home safely each day and protecting the public from harm. We are honored to award these scholarships in Jeff and Jim’s memories.”

Packard thanked Mary Farrington, Jim Farrington’s widow, for her participation in the ceremony and for her continued support.

“Mentoring young lineworkers was very important to Jim to make sure they did their work correctly and safely,” Mary Farrington said. “I’m pleased this scholarship program will help train future lineworkers to continue the important work done across Michigan.”

Details of the scholarship include:

- Students must be actively enrolled and in good academic standing in the Electric Utility Lineworker Program at LCC or the ACC Utility Technology Program.
- Candidates must have successfully completed all semester requirements and be selected for enrollment into the 10-week courses delivered at Consumers Energy’s Marshall Training Center.
- Annually, each college will select up to two recipients, each who will receive a onetime $2,500 payment toward their educational expenses.
- Each of this year’s recipients is either about to begin or is underway with their 10-week training class at the Marshall Training Center with the potential of becoming a Step 1 Lineworker apprentice at Consumers Energy this summer.

As with other industries, Consumers Energy has a veteran workforce and attracting individuals to learn a skilled trade is very important.
“This scholarship program helps provide an opportunity for individuals to learn this essential trade, and we’re pleased that Jeff’s and Jim’s names and Consumers Energy are associated with it,” said Pat Dillon, president of the Michigan State Utility Workers Council.

The Consumers Energy Foundation is Consumers Energy’s charitable arm. The Consumers Energy Foundation enables communities to thrive and grow by investing in what’s most important to Michigan – its people, our planet and Michigan’s prosperity.


Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest energy provider, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and electricity to 6.7 million of the state’s 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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