

Nyssa Gate City Journal

SECOND SECTION

VOLUME LV

The Sugar City

THE NYSSA GATE CITY JOURNAL, NYSSA, OREGON, THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1960

10 Cents Per Copy

NUMBER 15

Utility Company Personnel Scans System From Air



Idaho Power Uses Low-Flying Plane For Inspection of Transmission Lines

"It's strictly for the birds—and men with strong stomachs and good eyes."

Such was an observer's conclusion recently as his feet touched steady, solid earth at Boise again after three hours in the air on a typical ground-skimming patrol of Idaho Power company transmission lines.

Taken along for a first-hand look at how these trouble-spotting missions are performed, he watched J. Harry Anderson, transmission line maintenance foreman for Idaho Power's central division, carry out a painstaking aerial inspection over a 200-mile route extending to the Hagerman valley and back to Boise again by way of the utility's Strike and Swan Falls generating plants.

Anderson, peering steadily out the window at the lines while the patrol's light plane flew a parallel course 75 feet above the ground, had checked the condition of pole after pole, their insulators and the wires stretching between these structures that march across the land like soldiers on single-file parade.

"We can tell much more about the condition of the pole cross-arms and insulators from the air than from the ground," Anderson had explained at the start of the patrol as Pilot Harold Dougal lifted the chartered plane from the Boise runway and turned east.

Shouting above the engine's throaty roar, the utility foreman ported that he tries to fly routine patrols over the central division's more than 1,000 miles of transmission lines at least once a month. Similar aerial inspections also are performed in Idaho Power's eastern, western and southern divisions to prevent service interruptions, or "outages," on the utility's far-flung complex of high-voltage lines, which now total more than 3,000 miles.

Anderson continued speaking as the plane glided earthward above Idaho Power's sprawling Boise Bench substation to start patrolling a line to the east toward Mountain Home.

"We make emergency patrols whenever there is bad weather that might have damaged the lines or whenever we get a 'trip-out' report," he said. "Dougal and I can get to a trouble spot much faster than a crew on the ground."

In 1959 alone, the foreman flew nearly 100 routine and emergency patrols totaling 7,262 miles. Frequent ground patrols also are made in each of the company's four divisions.

Anderson pointed to a walkie-talkie radio on the cabin floor.

"When I spot something wrong with the lines, I use this to call the dispatcher in Boise and he sends out a crew to make repairs."

Pilot Dougal, an old hand at low-level patrols throughout the Northwest, now had jockeyed the plane into position about 25 feet to one side of the transmission line. For the next 200 miles, constantly adjusting the plane's throttle and flaps, he would follow every dip and rise in the terrain.

"Don't worry," said Anderson as he saw the observer look nervously at the poles flashing by just off the wingtip.

"We fly low and slow—but we fly by the safety rules. Dougal has been okayed for this type of flying and holds a special permit from the Federal Aviation agency."

Anderson turned his full attention to the line, and the observer looked around him.

Below, the sage-dotted desert was almost a blur as the plane winged eastward. To the south the sun was playing peek-a-boo

in billowing storm clouds, painting the land with light and shadow resembling a patchwork quilt. An eagle, its great wings flapping frantically as the plane approached, soared away from its perch on a pole crossarm.

"Birds that nest in the cross-arms are one of our biggest problems," Anderson said. "Twigs or grass in the nests touch the lines during wet weather and cause trouble, but the company is steadily putting up another type of pole that doesn't give birds any place to build nests."

Rain suddenly drummed on the windshield, just as the plane nosed down into the Snake River canyon near Grandview. The plane moved across the canyon floor, where a network of Idaho power lines gather from all directions like swarming bees, and then zoomed upward to hurdle the sheer bluff on the opposite side.

"This is an up-and-down job from start to finish," Anderson said. "For example, we have to climb to 8,300 feet where the Emmett-Stibnite line goes over Meadow Creek summit. That same line goes over Cabin Creek summit at 7,370 feet and then we have to glide down the Angels' Flight slope on the other side."

The foreman suddenly pointed out a coyote standing near the line and looking up at the plane.

"During one patrol we spotted a cow trapped in a hole near Buhl," Anderson recalled. "We figured out which farm the cow belonged to and dropped a note near the farmhouse."

"Not long after that, I got a letter from the farmer thanking me and saying the cow had been missing for two or three days." Back in Boise after the three-hour patrol, Anderson told the observer that he already had been on two other flights that day. One had taken him north of Horseshoe Bend to pinpoint the source of an outage, while the other had taken him over the mountains east of Boise to check on a false report of a fallen pole.

Nyssa Rites Held Tuesday Morning For B. J. Rookstool

Funeral services were held Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock for Benjamin Freeman Rookstool who succumbed Saturday following a long illness.

Mr. Rookstool was born September 8, 1892 at Spencer, S. D. In 1894 the family moved to Hamburg, Iowa where he spent his early boyhood years. At the age of 15 years Mr. Rookstool, with his family, moved to Custer County, Nebr. He completed his education and grew to manhood near Callaway, Nebr.

He was married to Virginia Poston July 25, 1913 and to this union were born five boys and four girls. One daughter, Harriet preceded him in death.

Mr. Rookstool was engaged in farming near Callaway, Nebr. until 1936 at which time he and his family moved to Nyssa where he proceeded to improve sage brush land and build a home for his family. They made their home on that farm until Mr. Rookstool's retirement in 1958 when they moved to Nyssa.

Surviving are his wife, Virginia of the home; five sons, Ansel of Corby, England, Harold of Othel-

VALENE MITCHELL IN CAST OF EOC'S 'OLD KING COLE'

A cast of 19 for the Eastern Oregon college production of "Old King Cole" has been announced by Richard G. Hiatt, director.

The play is scheduled for May 6, 7, 13 and 14 and included in the cast is Valene Mitchell of Nyssa. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Mitchell of 706 North Second street.

lo, Wash., Wayne of Urevada, Nevada, Claude of Pendleton, Ore. and Keith of Ontario, Ore.; three daughters, Mary Jane of Oregon City, Ore., Betty of Tulelake, Calif., and Lola of Nampa, Idaho.

Other survivors are four brothers, Chris of Parma, Idaho, Glenn of Ansley, Nebr., Roy of Nyssa and Albert of Hastings, Nebr.; two sisters, Clara of California and Marie of Hiawatha, Kan.; 23 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Three brothers, Frank, Irvin and Raleigh and one sister, Bertha preceded Mr. Rookstool in death. Another brother and sister died in infancy.

Local services were held at Lienkaemper chapel with the Rev. Earl Hastings of the Nyssa Christian church officiating. Interment was made at Callaway, Nebraska.

Funeral Services Conducted Monday For Wm. Reitenbaugh

Funeral services were held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock for William Reitenbaugh who died accidentally Thursday as he was testing a homemade device to lessen the pain and discomfort of a stiff neck.

Mr. Reitenbaugh was born December 23, 1896 in Iowa and was married to Eva Handee in 1922 who succumbed in 1941. In 1954 he was married to Marie Karter.

He had lived in Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Idaho and came to the Nyssa area in November, 1956. He was employed on the farm of Norman Hipp. He was a veteran of World War I and a member of the American Legion.

Surviving are his wife, Marie of the home; five daughters, Mrs. Mabel Robeson of Burley, Idaho, Mrs. Mamie Wright of Murtaugh, Idaho, Mrs. Evelyn Wiebe of Oklahoma, Mrs. Blanche Hart of Colorado and Miss Marie Reitenbaugh of Greeley, Colo.; three sons, Herbert of Hazelton, Idaho, Charles of San Diego, Calif., and Richard of Denver, Colorado.

Also surviving are one brother, George of Nyssa; two sisters, Ethel Shaffer of Indiana and Lily

TEENAGE DANCE POSTPONED

A teenage dance was scheduled to be held at the Eagles hall Friday April 15. The event has been postponed until Friday, April 22 from 9 to 11:30 p.m.

ATTEND FAMILY DINNER

Mr and Mrs. Oscar Schafer attended a family dinner in Caldwell Sunday at the home of Mrs. Schafer's sister, Mr. and Mrs. Kerby Kindall. LaVada Lenaghan and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bachmann of Boise were there.

Brown of Missouri and also 20 grandchildren.

Services were held at Lienkaemper chapel with the Rev. Paul Ludlow of the Nyssa Methodist church officiating. Interment was made in the Nyssa cemetery with graveside services conducted by the American Legion.

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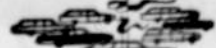
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