In the Middle of Nowhere

How one customer worked with SCE to achieve his American dream

Lights, Camera, EDISON!

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company news

The number of people following Southern California Edison on Twitter.

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Technical Specialist Emily Stadnik (left) chatted with business customer Gary Yeung about connecting with SCE via social media at the annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month event in Irwindale, Calif., on May 3.

At the Fourth Annual Korean Cultural Festival in Irvine, Calif., on May 18, Nuclear Control Operator Craig Hong took a break from handing out Korean language information on energy efficiency to participate in (and win) a traditional Korean outdoor game of jegichagi.

Principal Manager Ed Robinson bought tickets for an opportunity drawing at the Valor employee resource group’s annual Armed Services Day luncheon on May 14 in Rosemead, Calif.

On May 18, Lineman Mitch Brewer (right) and his father Robert (left) rode in the Fifth Annual Powerhouse Ride in Kern County, Calif., to benefit two local nonprofits: Camp KEEP, a children’s educational camp, and Bakersfield Search & Rescue.

Technical Specialist Joe Foulk (left) and Project Manager Qiana Charles (center) shared a laugh at a May 15 celebration honoring recently retired Edison International Executive Vice President of Public Affairs Polly Gault (right) in Rosemead, Calif.

got stories?
Submit your photo or quotes of work-related events, people and places to inside.edison@sce.com.
Southern California Edison’s rank on the 2013 DiversityInc Top 7 Regional Utilities specialty list. Companies on the list are honored for their commitment to diversity, as measured by factors such as supplier diversity and availability of resource groups for employees.

The approximate number of house fires electrical failures cause annually in the U.S., resulting in 438 deaths, 1,430 injuries and $1.47 billion in property damage. Understanding the basics of your electrical system can help you identify potential hazards. Learn more at www.esfi.org.

The number of people following SCE on Twitter. Follow @SCE for the latest outage updates, safety tips and energy savings information.

The percentage of American males who are overweight and at risk for developing serious health problems such as heart disease and cancer. Learn more about men’s health risks, recommended screening tests and preventive actions at www.cdc.gov/men.

The number of television and movie productions filmed at SCE facilities in 2012. SCE allows filming at several locations to help studios keep productions in California, benefiting the state and local economies. Read the related story on page 12.
Customer Hero: Abel Cuevas

Customer Solutions Representative Abel Cuevas received a call from a longtime customer whose service had been disconnected. “He’s owned a restaurant since 1958, and his business has taken a hit in recent years,” said Abel. “As a former business owner myself, I sympathized with his struggle.” Abel set up a payment plan to help the customer get back on track, then arranged for the customer’s SCE payments to be automatically deducted from his bank account so he doesn’t have to worry about paying each month.

Abel recently helped the customer a second time. “He was really pleased with what we were able to do for him the first time around, so this time, he was much more positive,” he said.

“Abel went out of his way to engage this customer, who now has a great impression of the company,” said Supervisor Ruben Sepulveda. “Taking the extra time to help really paid off.”


Jack K. Horton
Humanitarian Award

Material Handlers Hilarie Hall and Theresa Miraglia were working at the Irwindale Distribution Center when they heard cars skidding and a loud crash from outside. They went to investigate and found a woman and three children had been involved in an accident. While Hilarie called 911 and reassured the children, Theresa provided first aid to the woman until emergency personnel arrived.

In a separate incident, Material Handlers Hector Flores and Jose Gastelum and Warehouse Clerk Robert Navarro were working at the IDC when a traffic accident took place outside. Jose and Robert got traffic cones from the building and directed traffic around the accident scene, while Hector stayed with the accident victim until help arrived.

“We’re all very proud of Hector, Hilarie, Joe, Robert and Theresa,” said Operational Services Vice President Walter Rhodes, who recognized all five winners during a staff meeting on May 6 in Irwindale, Calif. “Their actions demonstrate how we can extend SCE’s safety culture into the communities we serve.”
Southern California Edison’s field employees spend a lot of time climbing in and out of trucks to get equipment, and they need to be able to do so safely. In 2008, the company put together a cross-functional team to make design changes to its trucks, ultimately resulting in fewer injuries, significant cost savings and an award for the project team.

As a first step, the team consulted with the Electric Power Research Institute, which has a vast body of knowledge about vehicle design for the electrical industry. “EPRI did studies on our vehicles and took measurements,” said Kai Chiu, Technical Services technical specialist and ergonomics lead for the project. “They also provided handbooks and a report on similar studies at other utilities, which showed us what kinds of changes we could make.”

The team worked directly with vehicle manufacturers to implement their recommendations, such as adding handholds to make climbing into trucks easier and making the steps leading into the truck deeper and closer together. “The manufacturers who fabricate our trucks were very receptive to our guidance,” said Michael Smith, technical specialist, Vehicle Design & Delivery. Once the changes were made, field employees tested the vehicles, and the team created job aids to help employees use the new designs properly.

About 60 percent of SCE’s trucks built since 2009 incorporate the new ergonomic design features, and as a result, the company has saved about $1.4 million in worker’s compensation costs. In January, the project team—consisting of Kai and Michael, plus Transmission Construction Methods Manager Dan Carbajal and Construction Methods Technical Specialists Gregg Patterson and James Wood—received an EPRI Technology Transfer Award for their work in turning EPRI’s guidelines into reality.

Going forward, team members will develop design standards to make sure the changes are maintained in the long term. “The new vehicle designs make life easier for those of us who climb in and out of those trucks every day,” said Lineman Dan Bjorklund. “We need to keep those improvements going.”

New ergonomic improvements to SCE’s trucks are colored bright yellow.

Video Safety Quiz

Watch this month’s safety quiz video on elevator safety at http://inside.edison.com/z613. Email at least four safety hazards you noticed to inside.edison@sce.com by COB June 21 to be entered in a drawing for safety giveaways.
Electricity is generated, transmitted and distributed to customers through a system known as the grid. The grid includes sources of electrical power, or generating facilities, plus power lines, substations and equipment for distributing electricity to residential and industrial customers.

The grid can be divided into three main systems. The transmission system, colored purple in the diagram, connects generating facilities to the subtransmission (pink) and distribution (orange) systems that deliver electricity to customers. The systems handle different levels of voltage, which is the force that causes electricity to move—the higher the voltage, the greater the force.

Transmission systems move electricity over long distances, so their voltage is high. A typical transmission voltage is 220,000 volts, or 220 kilovolts (abbreviated as 220 kV). These voltage levels are too high for delivery to the average customer, so the voltage must be stepped down, or reduced, at substations. A typical voltage level for the subtransmission system, which connects transmission to distribution, is 66 kV. Voltage is stepped down even further—for example, to 12 kV—before electricity is delivered to residential customers.
Over his three years in Southern California Edison’s Customer Service Program Services Operations department, Quality Control Inspector Randy Webb has seen nearly every mile of the company’s 50,000-square-mile service territory. When customers retrofit or install new electrical equipment as part of an SCE energy efficiency program, he’s responsible for inspecting their projects to make sure the equipment is compliant with the rebate programs. He spends a lot of time on the road, often driving more than 2,000 miles a month through wind, rain and snow to complete up to 20 inspections a day. Randy keeps safety at top of mind as he inspects all types of electrical equipment—from lighting fixtures to pool pumps and control panels—to ensure the correct equipment is properly installed and no other hazards are apparent. “I’m always on the lookout for safety issues, or anything that could turn into a safety issue, either for me or for the customer,” said Randy.

Each Monday, Randy plans his schedule for the week. To help make his work as efficient as possible, he maps out each inspection’s location and time, then calls each customer to let them know when he will arrive.

Today, Randy is inspecting lighting fixtures at a warehouse in Claremont, Calif. He talks with the contractors at the job site and checks their reports to see what equipment they installed, making sure that it matches the project information submitted by the customer. After inspecting the equipment, he notices an improper fixture was installed. He photographs the fixture, logs his findings in a report and explains the discrepancies to the contractor. The Program Services Operations department then uses Randy’s report to decide whether an energy efficiency incentive will be paid.

“I take great pride in my work,” said Randy. “I always try to take an extra moment to show care for our customers and contractors, help them understand my findings and make sure they’re aware of any safety issues I notice.”
2006 was a big year for Southern California Edison business customer Phillip Luong. After farming part-time for years, the electrical engineer decided to leave his job at UCLA’s Fusion Research Laboratory and purchase a 300-acre catfish farm in Desert Center, Calif. He was excited to pursue his passion full time, but the financial realities of running a large-scale farm, combined with an economic slump, soon resulted in tough times. Through a long-term collaboration with several SCE employees, Phillip was able to save money while upgrading his equipment and making his farm more sustainable overall.

When he purchased the farm, it was being used to raise catfish and grow jojoba trees. The trees weren’t profitable, so he cleared them out—no small task. But Phillip, a Vietnamese immigrant who came to the United States on his own at the age of 12, is no stranger to adversity and hard work. “I wanted to make my farm as sustainable as possible,” said Phillip. “It’s in the desert, in the middle of nowhere, so instead of just dumping the water with manure from the fish, I started reusing it to grow and fertilize vegetables.”

To make his farm even more efficient, Phillip worked with SCE engineer Russell Krinker, now retired, to research and install energy-saving equipment. He took advantage of an SCE program called On-Bill Finance, which provides business customers with no-interest loans to upgrade their equipment and facilities. They also investigated natural ways of increasing the amount of oxygen in the fish ponds, such as introducing algae, which helped Phillip avoid using costly aerating equipment during periods of peak demand.

Although the new equipment helped Phillip save money on energy, he was still having trouble making ends meet and was concerned that he would have to let go of employees. That’s where Account Executive Aurora Cantu stepped in. “I suggested that he have a rate analysis done to see if we could save him some more money there,” said Aurora. Phillip had three meters on his farm, one of which he had started to use primarily for pumping. Aurora worked closely with Phillip, Russell and Regulatory Operations to confirm that the meter was eligible for a lower pump rate. Aurora had the rate updated and Phillip’s account rebilled, resulting in a credit of about $3500.

Despite his progress, Phillip is still thinking ahead. “I’d like to find someone to help me invest in solar energy to offset the high peak rates I encounter in summer,” he said. “And someday I want to have fruit trees, chickens, cows—a fully functioning farm—and invite students to come and learn where their food comes from.” Although she’s no longer his account executive, Aurora is still helping guide Phillip in the right direction. “My next step is to get him in touch with the folks at the Energy Education Center in Tulare,” she said. “We hope to engage the huge agricultural community throughout our service territory to find ways to help him save even more money on energy.”
As television and movie producers move productions out of state to take advantage of tax incentives, Southern California Edison is doing its part to help local communities and the state’s economy by allowing filming at its facilities. SCE substations, office buildings and educational centers have starred in feature films, television shows, commercials and photo shoots for decades—yet because of precautions the company takes, most people never notice.

A CONVENIENT SOLUTION
Several SCE facilities, such as the Eagle Rock Substation in Los Angeles, Calif., are located a few miles from local film studios. Shooting at these locations is cost effective because cast and crew travel allowances are minimal. Along with convenience, many of SCE’s facilities offer unique architectural characteristics that production crews find appealing. In 2012, Transmission & Distribution’s Land Management department received 134 inquiries about company locations, and 28 projects were approved for filming. Revenue from film shoots is considered other operating revenue and distributed to shareholders and ratepayers.

KEEPING IT SAFE
Safety is the top priority for all film shoots at SCE facilities, and each location has its own set of safety procedures that cast and crew are required to follow. For example, when filming at Mountainview Generating Station, the entire production crew must participate in a safety orientation before filming. “It’s a long but necessary process,” said Richard Fujikawa, Land Management land services agent. “At some of our other locations, like Eagle Rock, the facility has been retrofitted with additional safety precautions, and high-voltage equipment is walled off or protected from access.”

SCE coordinates with local firefighters who are on site during all shoots at outdoor electrical facilities, and often works closely with cities and police departments on additional safety precautions. If aerial shots are planned, SCE’s Air Operations team provides input to film crew aircraft to help them maintain a safe distance from power lines. SCE Corporate Security, production crew security and SCE facility representatives are also on site during all productions. For example, a senior patrolman or lineman will be present to ensure the crew doesn’t film too close to transmission lines.

PROTECTING SCE’S REPUTATION
In every film, commercial and photo shoot, SCE works closely with production managers to make sure all company signs are removed and facilities aren’t identifiable—even if it’s just a transmission line in the background. “SCE is known to be a trusted, reliable and safe company, and we won’t jeopardize that reputation for any reason,” said Steve Conroy, Corporate Communications director. “If a proposed scene calls for an unsafe stunt, chances are we won’t allow that production to be filmed on site.”
Southern California Edison recognizes as leader in social media.

In May, the 2013 Utility Social Survey recognized Southern California Edison as a top 10 utility in social media, ranking fifth out of 53 participating utilities. The survey results were presented by E Source, which helps utilities network and learn from industry best practices.

Southern California Edison increased its Facebook fans from 980 in May 2012 to approximately 36,000 in May 2013. The company uses social media to interact with customers and broadcast energy efficiency, safety, and historical information.

In April, Southern California Edison also won a 2013 Social Media Icon award from PR News for its millionth refrigerator recycling campaign. As a result of the campaign, more than 12,000 people entered an Southern California Edison-sponsored sweepstakes to win a new Energy Star-qualified fridge.

On May 28, the city of Newport Beach, Calif., received a $261,150 incentive from Southern California Edison’s Savings By Design program for its new LEED-certified, energy efficient civic center. The center includes a new city hall, expanded library, park, restored wetlands and multipurpose community room.

The city hall features energy efficient water-cooled chillers, under-floor air distribution and LED lighting and is 31 percent more efficient than a standard code-compliant building. It also contains equipment that continually measures energy use throughout the building.

“The Newport Beach City Hall is a great example of SCE partnering with local governments to help cities save money and be more energy efficient,” said Eddie Marquez, Local Public Affairs Region Manager.

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Southern California Edison has partnered with Long Beach, Calif., and City Light & Power, the utility company that operates and maintains the city’s street lighting system, in a program to install and test emerging technology LED streetlights. The first LED replacement lamps were installed in April.

SCE provided four different types of LED streetlights, which were installed in four neighborhoods throughout the city.

“The city of Long Beach is currently collecting feedback from residents on the new lights, which last longer and use about 40 percent less energy than the high-pressure sodium lights used in most areas.”

The Huntington Library in San Marino, Calif., has created a Web-based exhibition showcasing parts of the Southern California Edison photo archive, which the library has maintained since 2007. “Form and Landscape: Southern California Edison and the Los Angeles Basin, 1940–1990” focuses on the post-World War II period and includes photos showing power generation and transmission, commercial architecture and “all-electric” kitchens.

“SCE donated its 80,000-large photo collection to the library for it to be preserved,” said Ed Hume, Corporate Communications manager. “This is the first use of Edison’s images in a public exhibition by the Huntington and the first opportunity for people to see the breadth of the collection.”

The exhibition will run through December at http://jspet-edison.com.
The Santa Barbara Steam Plant building also housed a substation that received power from Capistrano. The 1985 earthquake caused equipment to collapse, interrupting all power service west of Capistrano. The building was considered a total write-off as a result of the quake.

Internal Edison Steam Plant.
A senior manager suspected that someone was accessing his work email and reading his emails without authorization. Unsure of what to do next, the manager called the Ethics and Compliance Helpline to share his concerns and ask for guidance.

Based on the information the manager provided, a case was opened and an investigator was assigned.

THE INVESTIGATION
The investigator interviewed the manager and determined that years prior, an employee received access to the manager’s calendar for business purposes. The employee, who had since transitioned into another role in a different location, had not only been accessing the manager’s email and calendar without any valid business reason, but was improperly disclosing confidential business information to coworkers.

After an initial interview, the employee contacted coworkers by text and phone to discuss the investigation, advising them not to cooperate and to deny that any confidential information was shared. During a second interview, the employee denied contacting coworkers and speaking to anyone about the investigation, despite proof of phone calls and texts.

THE CONSEQUENCES
The investigation determined the employee accessed the manager’s computer without permission and gave false information during the investigation, which violated the Ethics and Compliance Code and Cybersecurity policy. The employee being investigated was terminated.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
Employees must comply with the Edison International Code of Conduct, company policies and the laws, rules and regulations that apply to our business. Employees should also periodically review and remove access granted to others who no longer have a business need to access confidential information.

When involved in an ethics investigation, it’s important to cooperate and tell the truth. You should also never attempt to interfere with the investigation by discussing it with others and trying to influence their answers to investigators.
“Water spilling over the Kern River dam represents truly clean and efficient energy production.”
On May 4, Designer Shedale Rayford and other volunteers joined Sharefest, a nonprofit that fosters volunteerism, at West High School in Torrance, Calif., to clean the campus, paint walls, trim trees and replace light fixtures.

got photos? To have your photo featured on our online Photo Wall, email your picture of volunteer or fundraising activities to 501@sce.com. You could also be featured in next month’s print issue!