



## Meet Your SEC Employee

**Blake Poindexter**  
**Line Technician**  
**4 years of service**  
**Powhatan Office**

“Are you afraid of heights?”

That’s the question that Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC) Line Technician Blake Poindexter hears most often when his profession is disclosed. To that he answers, “Well, my favorite part of my job is climbing!”

Climbing utility poles as a rural lineman is something that Poindexter aspired to for a long time. His grandfather, Billy Joe Poindexter, worked in the railroad industry and influenced him to pursue the lineman profession. Poindexter would visit his grandfather in Campbell County and he would see linemen in the community — and he was instantly intrigued. He recalls being especially inspired to try line work because of SEC Line Technician Supervisor Brad Ashwell.

Ashwell is based out of SEC's Altavista office and is actively involved in competing in lineman rodeos. Poindexter has certainly followed Ashwell's example, because he has already participated in three Gaff-n-Go rodeos.

Competing in the rodeo has been a positive experience. Participating "makes you a better lineman. You learn techniques from other cooperatives, so you leave with more than you came in with," Poindexter explains.

"This is the best profession ever. It opens a lot of doors; I can't stress that enough. I am proud to be a lineman."

Poindexter started his path to line work by earning an associate degree at John Tyler Community College after high school. He then studied heating, ventilation and air conditioning at the Richmond Technical Center. He joined SEC as an apprentice line technician. His first impression of the co-op was "this is the place to be, it is top notch." He found line work "extremely fascinating." Four years later, he has completed the four-year apprentice program and now serves as a line technician.

Achieving his dream of becoming a lineman has been beneficial to Poindexter in many ways. "It's awesome to work at a cooperative. It gives back to the community, and we are a solid team." He adds, "SEC linemen are some of the hardest-working people I know. They have mentored me, and I've become a better person. I'm eager to learn from them." He's also grateful for his parents, Steve and Linda, for their encouragement and support as he pursued his dreams.

The most challenging aspect of working as a lineman is enduring extreme conditions — it's definitely more involved than he originally thought. "With storm restoration, it is all-hands-on-deck. Troubleshooting, especially with storm damage, can be difficult."

Even in those overwhelming situations, safety always comes first. "Hazard recognition is a big deal; we are always looking out for our brothers." He adds, "It's all about going home safely at the end of the day."

Second only to climbing, Poindexter enjoys the comradery he shares with fellow employees while helping members. "We spend many hours working hard and training behind the scenes." Knowing that he's helping keep members' lights on makes it all worth it.

When asked about his favorite memory working as a lineman, he replied: "We make memories every day of the week — every day is a good day." Although, "going up in the bucket for the first time while doing energized work" was pretty cool.

When he's not working with 14,400 volts, Poindexter spends time with his wife, Jessica, and their Yorkie, Louie. Jessica is very supportive of his career and goes the extra mile to make sure he is prepared for each workday. "I'm very spoiled," he adds.

Oftentimes you can find him floating down the Staunton River by canoe or kayak. He also likes to fish and hunt.

“I’m thankful to be able to work in the country, to be outside and to work as a rural lineman.”

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