

ACCIDENT CLAIMS REA EMPLOYEE

Don Henion of Wheatland died Thursday, Sept. 27 the victim of electrocution while working on a powerline in the Uva area, north of Wheatland.

An employee of the local Rural Electric Association (REA) since 1975, Henion had a good safety record with the local office according to REA manager Isabelle Schad.

Henion was up in a bucket truck when, "he accidentally got into some hot lines while working on an outage", Schad said.

She explained that the Uva area is outside Wheatland on the highway that goes to Guernsey.

Both the local REA and representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) are investigating the fatal accident, said Schad.

And she noted this is the first electrocution logged by the local REA in about 20 years.

So far, in 1984, the REA had spent \$15,000 for safety including sending employees to seminars and testing the eyes and ears of the personnel. That is an average amount the REA spends for safety annually, Schad said.

Henion was previously employed by Custer Public Power District in Nebraska, Schad said, and had "at least 20 years" experience behind him as a linesman.

With that amount of experience, Schad said, they are not certain how or why Henion managed to get caught by the electrical current.

"It's just one of those unexplainable things", she said adding "he was a good employee. We will miss him".