

February 15, 2011: Crews gunning to get power running

KVAL 13 - Eugene, Oregon

Crews gunning to get power running

Originally printed at <http://www.kval.com/news/consumertips/116271879.html>

By KVAL.com staff February 15, 2011

VIDA, Ore. - Heavy snow caused a tree to tumble into power lines along Highway 126, taking down the line that carries power across the McKenzie River.

So how do crews get a new line across the river?

Turns out, it's not unlike how the U.S. Coast Guard gets a rope to a stranded vessel: a line launcher.

"It's basically a gun that fires a projectile with a string attached," explained John Lay, line crew supervisor with the Eugene Water & Electric Board.

Crews then pull a heavier line across the river and attach the power line, then pull the power line back across the river.

All that, however, comes after somebody pulls the trigger on the black powder rifle and successfully gets the projectile to the other side.

Tuesday was a first run for the new piece of American-made equipment that EWEB bought to replace an older device that could no longer be repaired.

"We were lucky. This was the first time we've used it," said Lay. "All three shots went across the river."

Manufacturer comment: The Bridger™ line gun is a custom built "smooth bore" rifle, legal for line-throwing only. The video that accompanies this story is also available at www.navalcompany.com/news.htm. Thank you KVAL 13, Eugene, Oregon.