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## **VINLEC Taking Steps to Improve Reliability**

The strategic objective of improving the reliability/continuity of electricity supply in St. Vincent is about to take a giant leap at VINLEC with the introduction of live-line maintenance work on its transmission and distribution system. This follows a very significant step taken about two years ago when the use of Pole Trusses was introduced to reduce the number of outages linked to the replacement of rotten poles. Over the past three weeks employees in the Transmission and Distribution Department were involved in the final phases of preparation to technically and mentally prepare themselves to undertake scheduled live-line maintenance activities.

Live Line maintenance on a power system involves the removal/replacement of: poles, transformers, capacitors, cross arms, insulators, and other auxiliary fittings on the transmission and distribution infrastructure, while maintaining the flow of electricity to customers. In the current operating mode within the company, all such activities are performed on deadlines (i.e. de-energised lines). In these cases, customers are informed well in advance of the electricity outage to facilitate scheduled maintenance work. This improvement will allow the company to continue to provide electricity to critical customers while maintenance work is underway on its transmission and distribution infrastructure. Consequently, customers are likely to see less outages for planned maintenance activities.

Getting to this stage started some four years ago when the company introduced a structured Lineman Development Programme. Over this period, several Linemen in the Transmission and Distribution Department have been involved in self-study, classroom training, practical training and skills based assessment by certified regional experts under the auspices of the Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation – CARILEC. The project to develop live-line maintenance crews in VINLEC is headed by Mr Elrias Williams, Manager Special Projects; an exercise he commenced in his former position of Senior Transmission and Distribution Engineer.



Staff performing live-line work during training.

An important component of safe live-line maintenance work is having the correct tools and equipment, and the company spared no efforts in making sure that employees have all the requirements (including a highly specialized line truck). During the past three weeks these employees were given theoretical and practical training with the necessary tools and equipment under the guidance of the Training & Skill Development Department of K-Line Maintenance and Construction a Canadian based company. The three-week training was conducted by Mr. Allen Moss, Director-Training & Skill Development, Mr. Paul Komaromi and Mr. Mark Wetzel- Training & Skills Development Specialists.



Testing of gloves to ensure workers safety.

The participants involved in the different components of the training all received commendation for their interest and dedication throughout. The employees involved in the **Electrical Testing and Certification Training** were: Keyon Jack, Richard Salandy, Dillon Scotland, Shenique Sam, Kevin Peters, Niaje Layne and Dellon Lavia, while those involved in the **Live-Line Training** were: Dwight Roberts, Lonnie Dabriel, Les Malcolm, Lamont Sterling, Mowai Latham, Brian Deane, Shane McDowall, Ulpian Wilkinson, and Aaron Charles.



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*Participants from phases one and two of Live Line Training with facilitators from K-Line Maintenance & Construction Ltd- Canada*

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