

Counties receive workforce development grant from AEP

Athens and Perry counties are the recipients of a workforce development program grant from American Electric Power to train residents to work on utility poles.

The grant was designed to help low-income Ohioans prepare for jobs in an evolving economy. AEP Ohio's program is part of the company's "Partnership with Ohio" plan, a \$15 million, three-year commitment to health, hunger and housing programs serving Ohioans in need.

"AEP Ohio's goal is to help establish workforce development programs to prepare Ohioans for jobs in this struggling economy," said Joseph Hamrock, AEP Ohio president and chief operating officer. "This announcement in Athens and Perry Counties is a meaningful step to developing programs that will start to accomplish that goal."

An AEP Ohio POWER (Putting Ohioans to Work for Economic Recovery) grant of \$33,000 has been presented to the Athens County Commissioners. The award will be used to fund their workforce development proposal targeting low-income Ohioans within the AEP Ohio service terri-

tory.

The training programs will prepare individuals in Athens and Perry Counties for Power Line Mechanic D Series training. Low-income Ohioans include those who are at or below 200 percent of the 2009-10 federal poverty guidelines.

Additional grants are being awarded to 12 other programs in 18 Ohio counties. Each new program will prepare future employees for opportunities in Ohio's targeted industries identified by the Ohio Department of Development and for retraining displaced workers to take advantage of new career opportunities. AEP Ohio received a total of 22 applications for the POWER grants.

"AEP Ohio wanted to work with other businesses and government to help ease the burden Ohio families face," Hamrock said. "This Athens/Perry County initiative will help to prepare 10 Ohioans for the workforce moving forward."

Tri-County Adult Career Center is a partner in the Athens and Perry counties program, and will provide the training for the participants.