

# Vehicle Maintenance

## What do they do?

From bucket trucks to pool cars, the vehicle maintenance department services all vehicles in the Cooperative Energy fleet. The group is responsible for keeping all vehicles in working order and ready to go at all times. The approximately 275 pieces of equipment in the fleet keep the team of mechanics and laborers busy. The maintenance work on all the vehicles occurs at the automotive shop at the Field Operations Center (FOC), which is equipped with an overhead crane, a service pit, and other automotive equipment.

Wayne Owens, fleet maintenance supervisor, has been with Cooperative Energy since 2001. "When I started here we only had around 52 trucks and cars, and we have steadily grown since then," said Owens. The team comprises Owens and six other individuals including mechanics and laborers: Brent Stansell, Greg Burge, Gerald O'Banner, Thomas Brannon, Reed Crawford, and Clint Douglas.

## How do they keep up with the maintenance?

For fleet vehicles, the team coordinates with administrative assistants each week to get mileage updates, which are entered into Maximo, Cooperative Energy's asset management system. Maximo then generates a work order. The vehicles are then driven to the FOC for oil changes, fluid checks, and other routine maintenance.

The crew oversees the maintenance of all vehicles at the J.T. Dudley, Sr. Generation Complex, the R.D. Morrow, Sr. Generating Station, the FOC, Headquarters, and Jackson. Owens and his team keep in communication with Batesville and other distant Cooperative Energy employees about servicing their vehicles. When possible, these vehicles are brought to Hattiesburg for servicing, and other times, the vehicle maintenance team coordinates maintenance at local shops.

In addition to routine automotive maintenance, each vehicle is cleaned inside and out on a weekly basis and refueled as necessary.

## How are inspections done?

A Department of Transportation (DOT) inspection is conducted once a year on Cooperative Energy's bucket trucks, trailers and other big equipment since

the equipment periodically crosses state lines. The DOT inspects the lights, tires, safety equipment, straps on trailers, etc.



*The vehicle maintenance group is responsible for the maintenance of all vehicles in the Cooperative Energy fleet, including tractors and off-road equipment.*

The large equipment, like bucket trucks and diggers, is also subject to routine inspection. Altec Industries, the manufacturer of the bucket trucks, torques the rotation bolts for the boom and performs other routine maintenance. Terex Corporation performs an inspection every 180 days on all diggers.

The equipment is also inspected after every large job for signs of damage. "Most of our lines are constructed on cross country rights-of-way so the terrain that the equipment is subjected to really takes a toll," said Owens. "Most of the problems we find are the result of general wear and tear."

Bucket truck maintenance includes bumper-to-bumper inspections every 200 hours or every six months, whichever comes first. This includes:

- Oil changes
- Greasing
- Light checks
- Tire checks
- Check manufacturer dates on tires
- Check and/or replace filters
- Check torque on all of the bolts and turntables
- Look for signs of potential problems

## Buying and selling

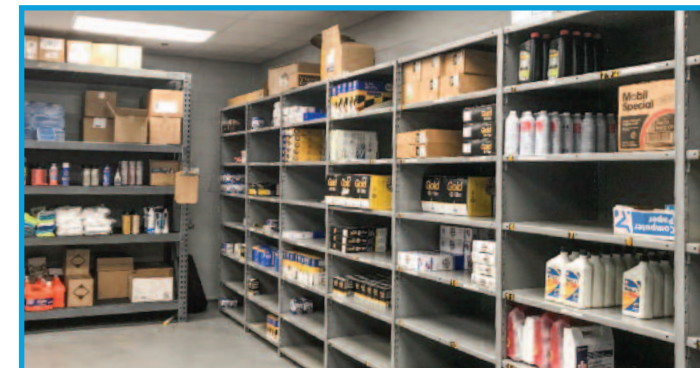
The department is also responsible for buying all new vehicles when it is time to replace the used ones. A budget is set, the supply chain group sends out bids, and the lowest bid submitted is chosen. Once the new cars are delivered, vehicle maintenance outfits them for the road with logos, winches,



*The automotive shop is equipped with an overhead crane, service pit, and other automotive equipment.*



*Large equipment is subject to routine inspections by the manufacturer and/or the Mississippi Department of Transportation.*



*Automotive parts are stocked in the shop to enable the group to quickly and efficiently service the fleet and return the vehicles to operation.*

toolboxes, etc.

The used vehicles are then available for purchase through silent auction process among Cooperative Energy employees and Member system managers. If a vehicle is not sold in the silent auction, it will cycle through the auction again, and then sold through an auction elsewhere if necessary.

## What happens when disaster strikes?

*Before a disaster:* The vehicle maintenance team has fuel tanks filled, spare parts stocked, and all vehicles ready to go.

"Our goal is to have every vehicle ready to roll every day at 5 p.m., so when a disaster strikes, we are ready to roll," said Owens.

*During a disaster:* "We work day and night to get our guys back on the road," remarked Owens. "We do not want them held up by us, so we do our best to get things back in working order as fast as possible."

## Remember that time?

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Tracy Stiglets, transmission construction and maintenance planner, was on the Mississippi Gulf Coast riding down a right of way. Stiglets was driving a go-track ahead of the crews doing an assessment when he hit rough ground. "The top layer of the ground was a thin crust and the go-track just immediately started sinking," said Stiglets. "I jumped out, grabbed the winch and hooked it to some trees behind me, but it pulled the trees out of the ground."

Stiglets then called James Evans, director of transmission maintenance, to come help. When Evans got there, only about a foot of the go-track was still above ground. It took two trackhoes to pull it out of the ground. Stiglets remarked that he remembered when they were building the line a concrete pole they had put in the area fell over because the ground was so soft.

"That go-track was completely covered in mud and water when it came to us. We had to drain water out of gear boxes," Owens said. "We worked and worked, but got it back on the road in just three days."

