



OUR PEOPLE: MARK CIPHERY

Mark Ciphery knows what it takes to keep a hydroelectric station running.

With 35 years experience under his belt from OPG and its predecessor Ontario Hydro, the Electrical and Control Technician is comfortable tackling any challenges that come his way.

“Being familiar with the equipment is the key,” said Ciphery, who works at OPG’s Stewartville Generating Station (GS) on the Madawaska River. “If we get calls from the control room, we’ll troubleshoot the problem, repair and maintain it and keep it going.”

Ciphery’s day is spent dealing with many pieces of auxiliary equipment, inspecting, maintaining and repairing things like generators, transformers and high-voltage circuit breakers to ensure the station is running optimally.

But he also spends a lot of time mentoring the next generation of electrical workers coming up the ranks and passing on the years of knowledge he acquired from others.

“I’ve always liked to share knowledge and I’ve always cared about being able to share my experiences. Hopefully, people are getting something out of it at the end of the day,” he said.

Ciphery started his career in 1981 after post-secondary education and short stints with Northern Telecom in Ottawa and Toronto. Just seven years later, he started teaching other apprentices entering the industry.

Today, he continues to share his know-how as he trains operator agents in the Lower Madawaska area. As Ciphery explains, operator agents serve as the eyes and ears of control room managers at hydro stations who can’t be on the ground to see and fix problems that arise.

Recently, he assisted in training at OPG’s Kipling and Thunder Bay generating stations. At Thunder Bay GS, a coal-converted biomass station, he helped put together a training package for workers at the station to maintain the outside electrical equipment at the site, which includes transformers, high voltage circuit breakers, high voltage disconnect switches and power lines. This OPG-owned equipment had been maintained by Hydro One, but responsibility for it has now passed on to the company.

Ciphery says training people is important work, especially now with hydro stations like Stewartville GS and Arnprior GS going through extensive upgrades to aging equipment.

“Until the day I leave, we’ll have to maintain the new equipment. Someone has to do that,” Ciphery said.

Even after 35 years, Ciphery is happy to continue to be one of the people who does just that. While retirement may be looming, it isn’t quite on his mind yet.

“I’m not staying because I have to stay; I’m staying because I like my job.”

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT MARK CIPHERY

Position: Electrical and Control Technician

Work location: Eastern Operations - Stewartville Generating Station

Years of service: 35

Favourite spot to visit in Ontario: Ottawa Valley. “It’s nice for a day drive.”

Favourite movies: *A Few Good Men, Passchendaele*

Favourite weekend activity: Spending time with family and his first grandchild, who turned one on December 7



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