

## TRI-VALLEY DISPATCH

Casa Grande, Arizona

Wednesday and Thursday, March 24 and 25, 1999

# ED2 booth teaches fairgoers about Electricity

By HOLLIE COSTELLO Staff Writer

ELEVEN MILE CORNER— Students line up with eager faces as the bolt of electricity shoots through the booth, proving once again the many hazards of electricity.

There are prizes but few notice. A ball that generates static electricity is a hit but only for a while. What really catches people's attention is Hazard Hamlet, a live action show of what happens when something you can't see, namely electricity, mixes with items found in a neighborhood.

This year, Electrical District 2 will once again bring the Hazard Hamlet to the Pinal County Fairgrounds to attract attention and maybe teach a few people what electricity is all about.

"(Hazard Hamlet) is very good because people can't see electricity until you bring the focus to them," said Dale Cassity, coordinator of the exhibit.

Cassity said the hamlet is geared to the elementary school students; however, everyone can learn about the dangers of electricity just by watching the presentation.

"We cover substations, houses, digging in the back yards, climbing on the roof or trees," Cassity said.

He said that when the kids see the low-voltage arc fly through the air, it both draws them to the booth and makes them step back.

"They can see it's not safe." Cassity said.

Last year, ED2 presented the Hazard Hamlet to over 4,000 kids, including children from some of the area schools' sister cities in Mexico. With the amount of children only speaking Spanish, Cassity has added a bilingual lineman to groups that go out to the classroom.

Kevin Jennings has been taking the hamlet to schools throughout Pinal County, teaching school children of all ages that electricity, while it may-look cool, is a very dangerous thing.

"You should see their eyes when they come into the room and see (the hamlet)," Jennings said. "They get excited because they think it's a toy."

A toy with light-up "electrocuted" people and television sets that short-circuit on a bolt of

electricity, a toy that shows how birds can sit on electric wires without burning their tails but humans have to be careful when cutting tree limbs in case they contact a live line. This toy is a learning tool in disguise.

Jennings, a journeyman lineman for ED2, encourages people to question the things they see as part of the Hazard Hamlet exhibit and to tell stories of their experiences with electricity. Stories, he said, are as good as the questions kids have when hearing him explain electrical currents, insulators and conductors.

"We have fun with it, we make it fun on purpose," Jennings said. "But they really learn things when (I visit)."

Jennings gets it to the more scientific aspect of electricity when visiting with the junior high school, but he said even adults have expressed awe at the Hazard Hamlet.

The cross-generational learning experience is what makes Hazard Hamlet a perfect exhibit for the Pinal County Fair.

"We get so many responses from the fair," Cassity said. "There is an interest in our field, into how electricity works."