

Monday 1 March 2010

Bairnsdale resident announced as 2009 Lineworker Apprentice of the Year

Bairnsdale resident Nathan Smith has been announced the 2009 Lineworker Apprentice of the Year by Gippsland TAFE, one of the premier training facilitators of the Victorian utilities industry.

Nathan is a fourth year apprentice linesman with electricity distributor SP AusNet and is based at the power company's Bairnsdale depot.

SP AusNet's Apprentice and Trainee Manager Gerard Cooke said it was an excellent reward for Nathan, who had worked hard in the field and shown great focus on his studies.

"Nathan has impressed all his colleagues in Bairnsdale as well as the broader SP AusNet community," Mr Cooke said.

"Nathan is a team player and always eager to learn from the more experienced lineworkers around him," he said.

Gippsland TAFE's Program Leader – Training and New Products Mick de Graaff was full of praise for Nathan and his strong work ethic.

"Nathan is a quietly confident young man, who has gone out of his way to help other apprentices complete their required tasks at school," Mr de Graaff said.

"Nathan's ability to retain theoretical knowledge and then put it into practice with minimal assistance is a credit to his capability.

"Nathan is always thinking and acting before others and has shown a natural leadership among his peers. This is shown by the way others will look to him for guidance," Mr de Graaff said.

Nathan was presented with his award at Gippsland TAFE's Chadstone campus on Tuesday 23 February, an event attended by the President and Board Members of Gippsland TAFE and several senior SP AusNet representatives.

SP AusNet, which distributes electricity across the eastern part of the state, has an annual apprentice and trainee recruitment program aimed at developing the essential skills needed by the energy industry, as part of its *Skilling for the Future* plan.

Earlier this year, SP AusNet welcomed thirty-one apprentices and trainees into its business, taking the total accepted since the program's inception in 2000 to nearly 200.

SP AusNet's 2011 apprentice and trainee recruitment will begin around August, so anyone interested is encouraged to keep an eye on local newspapers for details closer to that time. Further information will also be available at www.sp-ausnet.com.au.