



Ameren Illinois, Wright Tree Service and Local Beekeeper Rescue Hive From Cottonwood Tree

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ALTON – What was supposed to be a routine job for Wright Tree Service to remove hazardous limbs impeding on Ameren Illinois power lines turned into a honey of a deal for a local beekeeper.

A Wright Tree Service crew was dispatched to the 1100 block of Wise Street in Alton to safely remove limbs precariously hanging over power lines when the crew noticed honeybees flying into an opening in a limb needing to be removed.

"We called Wright Tree Service to remove limbs from what Ameren Illinois considered a hazard tree to the electric grid in Alton," said David Schenck, vegetation supervisor, Ameren Illinois. "One of the limbs, about 50 feet up in the air, had a beehive inside of it. We knew that the proper ecological thing to do was to call a beekeeper, who shared with us the proper way to safely remove the limb to preserve the hive."

Once surrounding vegetation was safely removed and tree trimmers had a clear path to the honeybee-infested limb, a cotton T-shirt was placed into the entrance of the hive so the bees would not swarm the journeyman. The journeyman then used a chainsaw to cut away the limb and a pulley-system to lower the log safely to the ground.

"We took extra safety precautions to make sure we didn't disturb the bees because they are very active this time of the year," said Chris Lorenz, safety supervisor, Wright Tree Service. "We used some advanced rigging to be able to safely lower the log that the honeybees were in without disturbing them."

The removal process took about 90 minutes. Local beekeeper Johnny Murdock arrived later to gather the hive with a piece of equipment he personally made to remove honeybees. Murdock relocated the hive into a honeybee box at his home.

"I have a special vacuum I created that is gentle and doesn't hurt them," Murdock said, who is a member of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association. "Once I had 90 percent of the bees out of the log, we split the limb in half so I could get to the honeycomb and remove the rest of the bees. I wanted to preserve the honeycomb because it has larvae and the queen laying eggs. I will hang the honeycomb secured with rubberbands in the bee box and the honeybees will reattach the honeycombs to the frame. I will do everything I can to make sure it becomes a strong and healthy colony."

"This was a great partnership between Ameren Illinois, Wright Tree Service and beekeeper Johnny Murdock to understand the importance of honeybees and the environment while safeguarding electric service reliability for our customers in Alton," said Richard J. Mark, president and chairman, Ameren Illinois. "We are thrilled the honeybees were rescued and will continue to thrive."

About Ameren Illinois

Ameren Illinois delivers energy to 1.2 million electric and 816,000 natural gas customers throughout central and southern Illinois. Our service territory covers more

than 1,200 communities and 43,700 square miles and our mission is to power the quality of life. For more information, visit AmerenIllinois.com. Follow us on Twitter @AmerenIllinois and [Facebook](#).

About Wright Tree Service

Wright Tree Service is an employee-owned company offering the entire package of vegetation management services, including integrated vegetation management, storm restoration, and work planning services to utility companies and their communities across the country. Our operations are guided by a set of values: safety, integrity, excellence, teamwork, innovation, and family. Since our founding in 1933, our commitment to safety has always been our highest value.