



**Green Cross
for Safety**
an **nsc** award

Green Cross for Safety® Awards 2020 Finalist - Advocate

Xcel Energy

Working next to roadways, where many power lines are located, can be dangerous. Motor vehicles are already the top cause of workplace deaths, then there's the hazard of working with electricity. Xcel Energy linemen Kellen Schmidt and Scott Knight have experienced many close calls in their years building and repairing power lines.

As linemen, Scott and Kellen had no previous experience with the legislative process; however, their passion and commitment made them powerful influencers. They worked with subject matter experts from across the company to push for a new law to expand existing Move Over laws and protect utility and other workers on smaller roads. They enlisted the support of Xcel Energy leadership, who connected the linemen with internal resources to achieve legislative changes.

Schmidt testified at several committee hearings to gain their support for the new law. Gov. Mark Dayton signed the legislation after it passed with bipartisan support. On Aug. 1, 2019, the law the linemen pushed for went into effect. It requires drivers to slow down or move over when approaching utility, construction and emergency vehicles stopped along two-lane roads. The law expands the Ted Foss Move Over Law, named after a Minnesota State Patrol officer who was killed while

stopped on a roadside, which previously only applied to four-lane roads.

While the law has changed, there is still a great deal of education necessary to get drivers in Minnesota to slow down and move over when approaching utility vehicles working roadside. Xcel Energy is working with other local utilities and the Minnesota Safety Council to shine a light on this issue and educate drivers.



Kellen Schmidt and Scott Knight have shown that no matter how insurmountable a problem seems, change can be made through passion, teamwork and commitment. They shared their experience, set a course of action and asked help to achieve their vision. As a result, utility, construction and emergency workers across Minnesota, and the roadways they work on, are safer because of their commitment.