

MOST OF THE YEAR, AN AIRPLANE IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE JOB...

BUT IN THE EARLY SPRING, WHEN XCEL ENERGY GETS READY TO REPAIR POWER LINES IN THE AREA, IT SENDS OUT A HELICOPTER FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT POSSIBLE DAMAGE. XCEL MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR RALPH MELGARD SAYS ONE REASON FOR THE ADVANCE NOTICE ABOUT LOW-LEVEL FLIGHTS IS BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT POWER PLANTS AND PRISONS TO THINK SOMEBODY'S PLANNING A SNEAK ATTACK. MELGARD ALSO SAYS FARMERS WITH ANIMALS THAT ARE SCARED BY CHOPPERS WILL GET SUFFICIENT NOTICE BEFORE THE INSPECTION FLIGHTS.