# Knowledge is **PUWER**

## **BECOMING A** WALTON EMC LINEMAN

The skill and knowledge of Walton EMC's linemen play a critical role in keeping the power flowing along more than 7,300 miles of electricity distribution lines.

These professionals work with thousands of volts of electricity while constructing, maintaining and repairing overhead and underground power lines and electrical systems. They often labor in rain, snow, darkness, extreme cold and heat to continue the co-op's legacy of delivering safe, reliable electricity. One mistake could mean injury or death.

"Line work is an inherently hazardous profession. Without the proper training, it becomes dangerous," said Wesley Payton, Walton EMC's superintendent in Snellville.

This is why Walton EMC's lineman training program is challenging by design. Trainees must commit to an intensive, seven-year course of on-the-job education to earn the title of journeyman lineman.

"We ask a lot of the guys that get in the program here because they are the future linemen at Walton EMC. Our customer-owners depend on us to keep the lights on!" said Greg Pannell, superintendent for the co-op's Monroe and Watkinsville locations.

Trainees participate in classroom instruction, independent study and hands-on work experience. They must earn several certifications, pass a battery of tests and demonstrate a mastery of skills in electrical grid construction and maintenance to advance through training.

"The goal of our program is to train a well-rounded, safety-minded lineman who can handle any situation given, from normal daily linework to major storm outages," Pannell said.

After successfully completing the training program, the new journeyman lineman is gualified to supervise upcoming trainees. Even then, his own education isn't complete.

Every Walton EMC lineman trains throughout their career to build on skills and safety knowledge.

"Good training promotes safety, and safety must be our first priority always," Pannell said.

Apprentice Nate Howell uses an insulated shotgun stick to complete one of the four events at the Georgia Lineman's Rodeo. While this competition is held on unenergized lines, the shotgun stick allows linemen to manipulate electric utility hardware carrying more than 14,400 volts.



Coach Adam Simmons, right, gives an "attaboy" to Apprentice Lineman Landon Robertson during the competition at the 2024 Georgia Lineman's Rodeo. Simmons, a rodeo champion himself, says the event makes those participating more efficient at doing their everyday job.



Apprentice Lineman Coby Pickett demonstrates focus and skill while competing at the 2024 Georgia essential abilities linemen rely on every day to safely maintain our community's electric system.







If you're driving through the country about halfway between Perry and Marshallville and suddenly run upon a thick forest of utility poles, chances are you've found the site of the Georgia Lineman's Rodeo.

This annual competition draws linemen from

knowledge of electrical linework. A special

across Georgia who showcase their skills in and



**SCAN THE CODE TO SEE RODEO VIDEO + PHOTOS** 

emphasis is put on safety, just as it is in every lineman's day-to-day routine. Two divisions make up the contest. The apprentice division accommodates newer linemen who are still learning and honing their

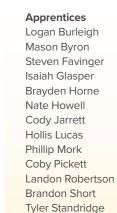
skills. The journeyman division is for seasoned veterans of line work.

Apprentices compete individually while journeymen compete in three-person teams. Of 141 apprentices competing, Walton EMC fielded 16 for this year's event – the most in the co-op's history.

"It was so much fun having a good group to compete," says team coach and former Lineman's Rodeo champion Adam Simmons. "We built momentum from six competitors last year. These guys want to better themselves and see how they measure against other linemen."

-continued inside

The biggest group of apprentice linemen in Walton EMC's history 2 demonstrated their skill and knowledge at the recent Georgia Lineman's Rodeo near Perry. Each apprentice competed in four A climbing events and took a written test.



Caleb Tallant

Mason Tolbert

Bryce Watson



#### WALTON EMC COMPETITORS

#### Coaches

Jacob Brooks Tommy Ledford Jared Smith Adam Simmons

#### Judges

Brad Adcock **Brandon Brooks** Greg Pannell Wesley Payton Preston Roberts John Spence

#### SCAN HERE FOR THE REALITE ONLINE

## **Step 1** Point your phone camera at the QR code.

ton EMC news online



#### REALITE IULY 2024 VOLUME 74. NO. 7

### quick guide

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WHEN WE'RE AVAILABLE **Power Outages and Emergencies** > 24/7 Contact Center > M-F, 7A-7P Business Offices > M-F. 8A-5P

### find us

Monroe 842 US Hwy. 78 Snellville 3645 Lenora Church Rd. Watkinsville 2061-D Hog Mountain Rd.

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©2024 Walton EMC is a customer-owned power company. That means our cooperative focuses on service, not profit We serve more than 135,000 accounts in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, DeKalb, Greene, Gwinnett, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Rockdale and Walton Counties.

Our subsidiaries supply natural gas and security services.

## LINEMAN'S RODEO

*—continued from front* 

Apprentice competitors complete four different events, three of which are known: the hurtman rescue, where contestants "rescue" a life-sized dummy from the top of a utility pole; a lighting arrestor change out; and a written test. The remaining two events are surprises until the rodeo.

All the events (except the written test) are performed while manually climbing the poles. No bucket trucks are allowed.

Competing in the rodeo has practical benefits both for the linemen and Walton EMC. "The constant practice for the rodeo and doing things over and over makes them more efficient," says Simmons. "They learn little tricks and ask themselves 'How can I do this more efficiently?' It rolls over to the field. They take what they learn from the competitive environment and use it every day."

Simmons already has an eye toward next year. "We had a lot of new guys compete this year and a lot of good times in the events. There were probably 10 of our apprentices that could have walked away with it. They'll be ready next year with their first competition out of the way. I hope it continues to gain steam."

## **Charity Sporting Clay Tournament**

August 15, 2024 Cherokee Rose Gun Club



# 2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT

# members

employees

METERS ADDED	2,330
TOTAL METERS	138,778
AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILL	\$157.13

## **KWH SOLD** 3,691,048,403

## SENICE

ELECTRIC VEHICLES ON THE SYSTEM	860
AVERAGE CALL LENGTH	4 MIN, 16 SEC
NUMBER OF CALLS ANSWERED	273,565

reliability

### MILES OF LINES INSTALLED

UNDERGROUND	68
OVERHEAD	36.88
SOLAR INSTALLATIONS	
RESIDENTIAL SOLAR INSTALLATIONS	642
MEMBERS SUBSCRIBED TO COMMUNITY SOLAR	1,828
KWH GENERATED BY SOLAR	11,359,623

saf	ety
	CAFETY

PASSED SAFETY ACCREDITATION HOURS OF CYBER SECURITY TRAINING 91%

250+

taxes	
PROPERTY TAXES	\$2,787,390
AD VALOREM TAXES	\$44,266
SALES TAX	\$23,480,499
FRANCHISE FEES	\$2,469,525

community					
SCHOOL EMPOWERMENT GRANTS					
TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT	\$241,589				
NUMBER OF GRANTS	46				
TRUST SCHOLARSHIPS					
TOTAL AWARDED	\$355,000				
OPERATION ROUND UP					
TOTAL DONATIONS	\$679,686				
NUMBER OF DONATIONS	83				
SUBSCRIBERS	71,587				
OTHER DONATIONS					
CORPORATE DONATIONS	\$240,100				
CHARITY DONATIONS	\$96,433				

## SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

