

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 qualified 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.



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 Lineman's Rodeo near Perry. The event tests essential abilities linemen rely on every day to safely maintain our community's electric system.



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.

realite

JULY 2024

Walton EMC
INVESTING *energy* IN WHAT MATTERS MOST

reliability members safety employees community service



WALTON EMC APPRENTICES TEST SKILLS AT

ANNUAL LINEMAN'S RODEO

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 across Georgia who showcase their skills in and knowledge of electrical linework. A special 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

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



SCAN THE CODE
TO SEE RODEO
VIDEO + PHOTOS

WALTON EMC COMPETITORS

Apprentices

Logan Burleigh
Mason Byron
Steven Favinger
Isaiah Glasper
Brayden Horne
Nate Howell
Cody Jarrett
Hollis Lucas
Phillip Mork
Coby Pickett
Landon Robertson
Brandon Short
Tyler Standridge
Caleb Tallant
Mason Tolbert
Bryce Watson

Coaches

Jacob Brooks
Tommy Ledford
Jared Smith
Adam Simmons

Judges

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

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quick guide

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CFO/Senior VP Finance Marsha Shumate

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Jim Bottone

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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

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

KWH SOLD
3,691,048,403

employees

267

safety

PASSED SAFETY ACCREDITATION	91%
HOURS OF CYBER SECURITY TRAINING	250+

service

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

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

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