

# Merry & Bright

## WE KNOW WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE BEST HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Looking for the season's top twinklers? Walton EMC has you covered with our 2025 Merry & Bright list of must-see holiday lighting displays. Scan the code below or visit our Facebook page to find a list of area homes, churches, businesses and neighborhoods that have decked the halls and welcome drive-by visits.

Know a place that should be added to the list? Ask the Walton EMC member to share their lighting intel by completing the form at [waltonemc.com/merryandbrightlist](https://waltonemc.com/merryandbrightlist). We'll update the list throughout December.



## Is your GATE card expiring?

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT RENEWED CARD TO WALTON EMC IS DEC. 31, 2025

Farmers and producers eligible for a Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) card are reminded to check your status. Cards expiring in 2025 must be renewed with the Georgia Department of Agriculture by Dec. 31.

Walton EMC customer-owners renewing a GATE card this year must also update your tax-exempt status with the co-op. **Renewed cards should be submitted to Walton EMC no later than DEC. 31, 2025.**

Submit a copy of your renewed GATE card to Walton EMC by:

**MAIL:** Walton EMC, Attn: Connie Bentley, P.O. Box 260, Monroe, GA 30655

**FAX:** 770.267.6479

**EMAIL:** [gatecardelectric@waltonemc.com](mailto:gatecardelectric@waltonemc.com)



# realite

DEC 2025

**Walton EMC**  
INVESTING *energy* IN WHAT MATTERS MOST



## Ready for a Refund?

### CHECK THIS MONTH'S BILL!

Good news, Walton EMC members – most of you are part of a \$11 million refund this December!

#### Who's getting a refund?

Members who had electric service with Walton EMC in 2001, 2002 or 2024 are included.

#### When will I get my refund?

Refunds will be issued during December – a nice holiday bonus.

#### How will I receive my refund?

Most members will see their refund as a credit on their December bill. Look for a line item labeled "capital credit refund." The amount will be automatically deducted from the total amount due for the month.

If you no longer have an electric account or if your refund is more than \$500, you'll get a check in the mail instead.

#### How much will my refund be?

Your refund is based on how much electricity you purchased during the refund years.

#### Why am I getting a refund?

Walton EMC is a not-for-profit cooperative, which means any money left after covering expenses – called margins – belongs to you, the member.

Each year, those margins are assigned to your capital credit account based on your power bills. The co-op uses that money to reduce debt, prepare for emergencies and invest in our electric system.

When financial conditions allow, your board of directors – members just like you – votes to return a portion of those funds.

#### How much has Walton EMC returned so far?

Including this year's refund, we've returned an impressive \$163 million to our members.

#### How can the co-op afford to do this?

We keep energy prices competitive, manage costs carefully and operate efficiently. When the co-op does well, our members benefit!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Capital credits are one of the biggest advantages of being a Walton EMC member. Unlike customers of investor-owned utilities, co-op members get service at cost – because you own the company!



**Walton EMC**  
waltonemc.com

REALITE DECEMBER 2025 VOLUME 75, NO.12

### quick guide

IF YOUR POWER OR OUTDOOR LIGHT IS OUT  
[waltonemc.com](https://waltonemc.com) > Report an Outage  
770.267.2505

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.

**Web** [waltonemc.com](https://waltonemc.com)  
**Facebook** [facebook.com/waltonemc](https://facebook.com/waltonemc)  
**Youtube** [youtube.com/emctv](https://youtube.com/emctv)

### our leaders

**President and CEO** Ron Marshall

**Senior VP Corporate Services** Russell DeLong

**Senior VP Walton Energy and External Affairs**  
Jim Bottone

**VP Engineering and Operations** Tim Morris

**VP Power Supply** Hudson Kingery

**VP Finance** Darlene Butler

**Board Chair** Michael Lowder

**Board Vice Chair** Jason Sidwell

**Board Secretary/Treasurer** Stan Pitts

**Board Members** Tommy Adcock, Billy Ray Allen,  
Dan Chelko, Wayne Lester, Sam Simonton,  
Dawn Taylor

**Public Relations** Savannah Chandler,  
Morgan Barfield

**Design** mPrint Design Studio

### walton gas

**NEED NATURAL GAS SERVICE?**  
770.GAS.HEAT or [walgas.com](https://walgas.com)

### emc security

**NEED SECURITY SERVICE?**  
770.963.0305 or [emcsecurity.com](https://emcsecurity.com)

©2025 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.



# WALTON EMC'S *'electric cowboys'* TURN IT ON AT INTERNATIONAL LINEMAN'S RODEO

There wasn't a beefy bull or bucking bronco in sight at this rodeo just west of Kansas City, Mo. Instead, the 41st Annual International Lineman's Rodeo, the Super Bowl of the electric-utility profession, is where "electric cowboys" tested their chops in timed events.

Walton EMC linemen were among the 750 hard-hatted competitors who pitted their expertise against the industry's best and returned home winners. The team of Mason Tolbert, Hollis Lucas, Phillip Mork, Harry Ruiz and Nate Howell dominated the apprentice division for electric cooperatives, garnering three of the top five awards presented. In all, Walton EMC linemen collected six of the contest's top awards.

## HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL HONORS WENT TO:

- **Ruiz**, who led the team with three, top-five awards. He was named fourth-place finisher overall among apprentice linemen and second place in the electric cooperative division. Points earned for his fourth-place score in the written test event elevated him to the highest finish among the Walton EMC team.
- **Howell**, who recorded the team's best individual performance with second place overall in a timed event involving a "mystery" task revealed just before he competed.
- **Tolbert** and **Lucas**, who finished third and fourth, respectively, in the co-op division.

"These results showcase the exceptional talent and dedication of our apprentices, our journeyman and their coaches," said Tim Morris, Walton EMC's vice president of engineering and operations. "Earning three out of the top five positions in the Co-op Division against national competition is a testament to the quality of their motivation to learn, Walton's training program and the commitment of our entire team."

The team was coached by journeyman linemen and rodeo veterans Adam Simmons, Blaine Ogle and Ryan West. The Walton team spent many after-work hours studying and practicing for the competition's four skill events and a written test. To get a perfect score, a lineman must deploy all safety procedures and best practices without a misstep, such as dropping a tool while working on a pole.

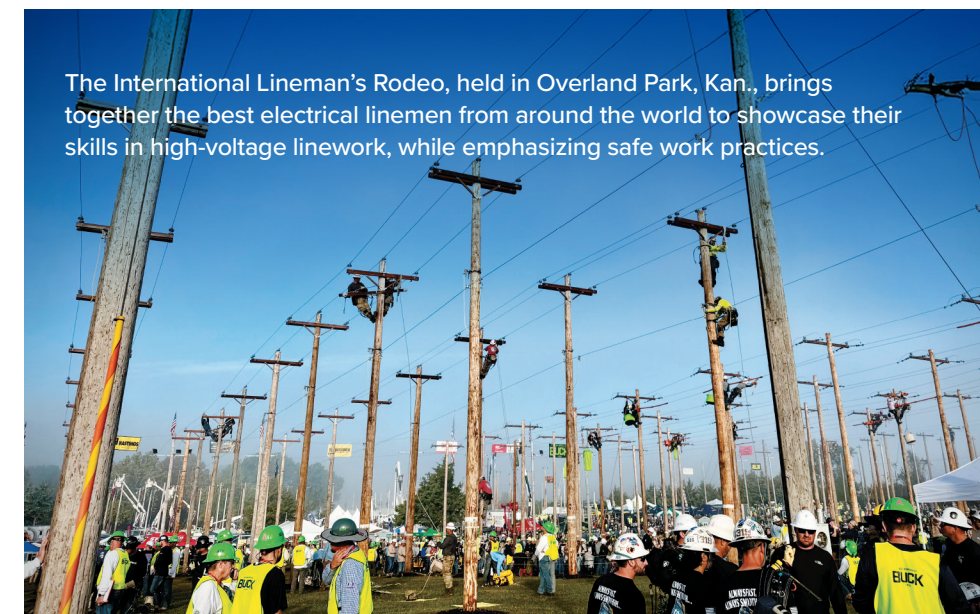
"Coaching this team has been one of the highlights of my career," said Adam Simmons. "To see them execute under pressure and earn six top-five finishes is proof of their work ethic and determination throughout the preparation process."

Walton EMC was also represented by journeyman linemen John Spence, Jacob McNary and Josh Mercado who served as event judges. The co-op's Brad Adcock, Preston Roberts and Savannah Chandler, along with lineman families, also made the trip to support the five competitors.

After a long day of "rodeo-ing," the Walton team headed to the awards banquet where they walked the red carpet again and again to accept awards. Celebrating their success are, from left, Phillip Mork, Adam Simmons, Nate Howell, Harry Ruiz, Hollis Lucas, Blaine Ogle and Mason Tolbert.



Gathered at the International Lineman's Rodeo awards banquet are, from left to right: Tim Morris, vice president of engineering and operations, Ryan West, Jacob McNary, Phillip Mork, John Spence, Hollis Lucas, Nate Howell, Blaine Ogle, Adam Simmons, Brad Adcock, Harry Ruiz, Josh Mercado, Mason Tolbert, Preston Roberts, and Ron Marshall, CEO.



The International Lineman's Rodeo, held in Overland Park, Kan., brings together the best electrical linemen from around the world to showcase their skills in high-voltage linework, while emphasizing safe work practices.



Harry Ruiz



Hollis Lucas



Phillip Mork



Mason Tolbert



Nate Howell



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**Step 2** Tap the screen to access Walton EMC news online.