

Co-op Promotes Career Development for Local Youth

It's no secret that skilled tradesmen, including electricians, are in short supply these days.

It may surprise you to learn that your co-op has sponsored an event for nearly 60 years that encourages and trains young people to pursue a career in the electrical industry.



Learn more about the event:



Making the Holidays Bright



Children of Walton EMC employees added realism to Walton EMC's Christmas float by roasting marshmallows around a realistic fire pit.

See more holiday photos:



CELEBRATING 90 Years 1936–2026

Ninety years ago this month President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the first-ever nighttime State of the Union address, using the radio to speak directly to Americans about his programs to spur recovery from the Great Depression. Among his progressive plans: making electricity accessible to all.

Most Monroe residents heard that broadcast from an electric radio, common to households situated along the municipal power grid installed there in the 1920s. But those living beyond the town limits gathered around a "farm radio" operated by a precious battery. Electricity — with all the potential benefits and conveniences for their homes, businesses and farming operations —wasn't available in rural Walton County.

But 1936 would be the year the story changed.

Residents living beyond city power lines united behind a common goal: bring electric service to the countryside. They formed Walton Electric Membership Corporation, a consumer-owned electric company. Life in this area would never be the same.

Energizing progress

Almost 400 Walton EMC members began 1938 with lights, water pumps, kitchen appliances and a radio powered by reliable, affordable electricity supplied by the new Walton EMC. Country stores finally had access to the power necessary for operating coolers and gas pumps, paving the way for commerce to flourish. Electric lights and heat were coming on in county schools, post offices, banks and churches, too.

Today, the electrical necessities of daily life and work are defined differently. The first 90 miles of power lines energized in late 1937 now number 7,483. Walton EMC serves consumers in 10 Georgia counties rather than one. And the forward momentum continues.

To celebrate the co-op's 90-year legacy of service, we'll spotlight stories that look at both where we've come from and where we're headed. The future remains bright for electricity and its power to move us forward.

A 'good light'

Walton EMC has been powering possibilities for members since the co-op's electricity distribution lines became operational in late 1937. The home of Lindsey Powers, a 47-year-old farmer living in Walton County's Turkey Creek community, was the first to be connected. Decades later, an elderly Powers recounted his story about that memorable event.

"They [the lights] finally came on. We had a little 40- or 50-watt bulb. After dinner, I failed to go to the field again."

"She [Mr. Powers' wife] said, 'Why are you not going to the field again?'"

"I said 'I'm celebrating today. I'm gonna sit here 'til dark comes and see how supper eats with a good light!'"

Watch
Lindsey's
story:



Throughout 2026, we'll feature members' stories about how electricity influenced their lives. We invite you to tell us your story.

Did you uncover a \$5 co-op membership receipt while cleaning out grandma's attic? Do you remember your family's first color TV or microwave?

We want to hear about all of it. Send your stories and photos to: Walton EMC 90th Anniversary Project, care of Savannah Chandler at scandler@waltonemc.com.

Blood drives set for 2026

True to the cooperative principle of caring for the community, Walton EMC customer-owners and co-op employees are continuing a long tradition of giving life at Red Cross blood drives.

WHEN:

February 12

April 16

September 3

December TBD

WHERE:

Walton EMC Office,
842 Highway 78 NW,
Monroe

WHO:

Donors of all types — especially those with type O blood and those giving platelets — are urged to give.

SIGN UP:

Laurie Treadwell, ltreadwell@waltonemc.com
or the Red Cross Blood Donor app

January is
National
Blood Donor
Month

