

# POWERlines

## How Linemen are Born



What is it about linemen that fascinates us, and how is a lineman born?

Electrical linemen construct and maintain our electrical infrastructure. They scale utility poles and work with thousands of volts of electricity daily. Linemen skirt risky situations each day to keep the grid running. One mistake could mean injury or death. To work safely and effectively, each lineman at Coweta-Fayette EMC goes through at least four years of training to become a full-fledged lineman.

Here are the five steps every linemen takes:

### **Apprentice Lineman**

All linemen at CFEMC start out as an Apprentice Lineman and go through four years of apprenticeship training. Our linemen attend Northwest Lineman College while an Apprentice Lineman. They receive training at the Georgia EMC training grounds in Smarr, where they get hands-on experience working on a substation, building lines, and climbing poles.

Apprentice Jimbo Boone said, "I love not seeing four walls every day. I get an adrenaline rush during storms. I started this job during an ice storm. I was green, and it was tough not knowing what to do," he said.

As an Apprentice Lineman of four years, he's had a lot of on-the-job training in addition to written and field tests. "After my next test, I'll be a Powerline Technician."

### **Powerline Technician**

After four years, Apprentice Linemen become Powerline Technicians (PLTs). PLTs receive on-the-job training for three years with assessments every six months. PLTs get training and experience in above ground and underground

construction, as well as maintenance, so that crews can fill in for one another.

"Before I started here, I never did overhead," said Brandon Smith. "You're able to make more of your own decisions. It's you and one other person. I like to get out there knowing I'm doing something for somebody."

### **Journeyman**

Powerline Technicians can become Journeymen after three years. Journeyman are full-fledged linemen. They do all the work that Apprentice Lineman and PLTs have learned to do up to this stage. They can also run crews and fill in for Crew Chiefs. Many of our linemen love the work that Journeymen do and choose to retire at this stage.

As a Journeyman, Steven Robinson said, "We have a lot more responsibility. We are supposed to set more of a standard for linemen." However, just because Journeymen no longer take classes or have regular assessments doesn't mean they aren't learning. Robinson said, "If you're not learning, you shouldn't be working."

### **Crew Chief**

Others rise to the position of Crew Chief. They are responsible for trucks, other linemen and structure the layout of daily work. Assignments for crew chiefs can be big or small crews. A big crew can have two bucket trucks, whereas there are only two linemen on small crews.

Crew Chief Scott Barber joined CFEMC in 1995 because "I didn't like being in four walls. I wanted to be outside," he said. "I enjoy getting to train younger guys and watching them learn the tools of the trade."

*continued inside*



## The President's Message

Chris Stephens  
President and CEO

As with any business, our success is attributed to our customers, or members in our case, and our employees. When people think about an electric utility employee, they typically think of the electric lineman and with good reason. These brave men and women are the ones who leave the comfort of their homes, leave their families and loved ones, and go out in the worst weather conditions where they are exposed to high voltage wires and equipment to restore electric service to our members' homes.

This was never more apparent than during Hurricane Irma. With some sources reporting an estimated 16 million people without power due to the effects of Irma, this may be the single largest number of outages caused by a weather event recorded in U.S. history. It is certainly the highest volume and most geographically widespread electrical outage caused by a single weather event in Georgia history—with more than 1.5 million power outages reported because of damage from the storm. EMCs reported approximately 550,000 outages at height of the storm; 40,000 of which were CFEMC members.

Hurricane Irma was a historic storm and Georgia's utilities coordinated a historic response. More than 13,000 personnel and resources were committed to restoration efforts among utilities. Damage to electrical systems occurred in service territories of all 41 EMCs in Georgia. Conservative estimates have 1,500 to 2,000 EMC broken poles statewide, thousands of downed trees, and hundreds of miles of downed line. We had 63 broken poles.

More than 4,500 linemen participated in the EMC restoration effort, traveling to assist from 18 other



states as far north as Wisconsin and as far west as Oklahoma. 99% of EMC outages were restored within 5 days of the outage peak.

At CFEMC, we had a total of 245 linemen who traveled from as far away as Kentucky and Fort Loudon, Tennessee to assist us in restoring electric service to our 40,000 members within 72 hours.

For the vital work linemen perform in extraordinary circumstances such as Irma, and for their commitment every day, Georgia House of Representative Alan Powell (R-Hartwell) sponsored House Bill 260 which was carried in the Senate by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) to make available a specialty license plate to honor Georgia's electric utility line workers. This was signed into law by Gov. Nathan Deal in May 2017. Georgians can now show additional support and appreciation for our linemen and other utility line crews through the purchase of the state's first "Thank a Lineman" vehicle license plate.

Proceeds benefit the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation which provides assistance to burn patients and their families at the Joseph M. Still Burn Center in Augusta. One of the greatest dangers linemen are exposed to is the risk of electrical burn due to contact with high voltage lines or equipment.

I hope you'll consider purchasing a "Thank a Lineman" license plate to recognize line crews and support burn patients and their families through the important work of the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation.

## Linemen *continued from cover*

### General Foreman

General Foremen supervise groups of crews. Groups include: underground, above ground and construction crews. General foremen manage crew chiefs and scheduling, and their role is essential after major storms when it comes to assessing damage and strategizing for recovery.

General Foreman Darrel Sewell emphasized how the work is a balancing act, since he supervises general maintenance, two overhead crews, substation maintenance, and light installations. "It is a lot of responsibility," he said. "But, I always like teaching how important it is to learn our system."

Right-of-Way Foreman Richard Davis said, "Most linemen will tell you that he is his brother's keeper," because "dealing with electricity is not only very dangerous, but it's not very forgiving."

Governor Deal and the Georgia Legislature passed a resolution proclaiming April 2018 as Lineman Appreciation Month. Linemen are also recognized nationally in April. Our linemen go through years of training and will always go the distance to power your homes and businesses. If you'd like to help us celebrate, stop by our Facebook or Twitter page and leave an encouraging word—don't forget to include the hashtag #ThankALineman.



# Our linemen go the distance – literally – to provide power

**Costa Rica, Guatemala and Dominican Republic are a few places where CFEMC has sent linemen.**

Richard Davis, a Right-of-Way Foreman at Coweta-Fayette EMC with over 16 years of

experience, twice had the opportunity to journey to Costa Rica two weeks at a time. He went first in 2006 and second in 2012. The lines that Davis helped build now power a school and many homes.

Before our crews arrived, many homes ran on small solar panels powering a single “Christmas bulb” that would provide light to living spaces and rustic outdoor kitchens. “To see that was a humbling experience,” said Davis.

Davis has fond memories from the trips. He recalled “sitting under a lime tree at lunch every day.” He remembers the grand send-off the entire community gave the linemen before they left. “It was like a festival,” he said.

While there, the linemen became a part of the community. While they worked hard, they enjoyed the slower pace of life.

For one of our linemen, the differences between urban and rural hearkened back to a time before electrical cooperatives when American cities prospered as rural America toiled without power.

In 2008 and 2011, CFEMC General Foreman Jody Hand traveled to the Playa Grande community outside of Ixcán, Guatemala. Hand and a team of linemen installed 13 kilometers (or about 8 miles) of single-phase line connecting Playa Grande to the Ixcán substation.

All their tools got tied up in customs. The crew had to do everything manually like the local linemen.

Instead of riding in bucket trucks, linemen at the local co-op ventured out on motor bikes with a small bag of tools. Linemen wielded machetes to cut rights of way. Local linemen even climbed poles by maneuvering ropes tightened around their legs.

To get to Ixcán, they had to fly into Guatemala City, “which is a lot like flying into Atlanta. They have everything there,” said Hand. They were told a charter plane would take them to Cobán, where they would drive the rest of the way. When they

arrived in Guatemala City, the crew found out their charter plane crashed. So they rode six hours on rough dirt roads.

Before crews came, the communities outside Ixcán ran diesel generators for three hours each day to power their homes and businesses. Diesel fuel is expensive, and the towns couldn’t afford to run the generators.

Their lack of reliable electricity impacted every aspect of daily life.

“Everyone cooked with wood-fire stoves. Early in the morning, you could look out and see smoke rising from people’s stoves,” said Hand.

He said the women cooked fresh tortillas each morning and carried them in baskets on their heads as they go into town. “You’d never tasted anything like that. They don’t make it like that here,” Hand said.

No air conditioning or refrigeration meant people had to adapt their habits around food. Butcher shops paid people to shoo flies off meat hanging in windows, cited Hand. Hand passed a home with a 300-pound hog laying in the doorway. The guide told him the whole community would come together to slaughter and eat the hog. Preserving fresh meat wasn’t an option.

Hand left his clothes in Guatemala both trips. “The humidity was ungodly,” he said. Their clothes desperately needed washing. When the crew sent their clothes to be washed, they had to be hand-washed in the creek. Hand said the clothes came back smelling worse than before. He bought a fresh pack of shirts before his second trip, knowing he’d have to leave those behind too.

Hand recalled an incident that would never happen in the United States. When he sat down to eat with his crew and workers from the local co-op, somebody burst through the door to report a fallen tree knocking out power in a nearby town. “I was blown away by the fact they were out of power for four or five days before somebody went into town to tell them,” said Hand.

Even in the most rural areas of the United States, people have access to power. Lawmakers and leaders fight for rural prosperity in our country. The stark contrast between urban and rural life has not been a reality since the Rural Electrification Act of 1936. After that, communities banded together to get affordable and reliable power.

The National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Foundation partners with local co-ops like Coweta-Fayette EMC to bring power to rural communities around the world. Together, we are helping to bridge the gap

between rural poverty and urban prosperity.

Why is it important to CFEMC to send crews to develop electricity abroad? “We have the means,” said Davis. Cooperatives are “all about relationships,” he said. Davis is a third-generation co-op worker. He feels a sense of camaraderie with the folks from CFEMC’s sister co-op in Costa Rica.

Davis said CFEMC linemen plan to journey to Bolivia this Spring to deliver power to a rural community. According to Davis, the Bolivian government has promised them electricity for 20 years.

CFEMC aims to help deliver on that promise. Stay tuned to our Facebook and Twitter feeds to follow their journey.

For pictures, videos, and information on the international work from linemen around the country, visit [www.nrecainternational.coop](http://www.nrecainternational.coop).

*(Top Photo) A mother and her children walk alongside new line construction on a rural Guatemala path.*

*(Bottom Photo) Linemen from Habersham EMC and Jackson EMC work together to pull up an electrical line in rural Guatemala*



# Test Your System



## ***Security Resources***

When your security system was installed by Relyco or converted from another vendor to Relyco Security, all of the components were tested for proper operation.

For added assurance, however, you should test your system **AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH** to ensure it continues to communicate properly with our Central Station Operator.

You can easily do this yourself by following these simple steps:

- Call the Central Station at 770-252- 8117 or 888-227-0705 and let them know you wish to test your system. You will need to provide your pass code at this time. This is a good time to update your contact information, making sure the Central Station has the correct names and numbers to notify in the case of an alarm.
- Close all of your doors and windows that have sensors installed; arm your system and let your exit delay time expire, typically 60 seconds. Open a protected door, window, etc., preferably nothing with entry/exit delay. Once the siren begins sounding, wait at least 60 seconds before disarming the system.
- Call the Central Station to verify they received your alarm signal and that it was for the correct zone. If they did not receive your signal, ask them to notify the Relyco business office of your need for service, or simply call our office at 770-253-4053, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., to request service on your system.

Be safe, secure and satisfied with Relyco.

Chris Stephens, President and CEO  
 C. Bradford Sears, Jr. Attorney  
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**POWERlines**

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Company:	Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Corporation
Whom should I contact for more information?	Coweta-Fayette EMC Customer Service Center: (770) 502-0226 Address: Coweta-Fayette EMC 807 Collinsworth Road Palmetto, GA 30268
How will I be billed?	You will see an additional line item on your monthly bill for your Green Power purchase from Coweta-Fayette EMC.
How will my bill be calculated?	All Coweta-Fayette EMC members are eligible to purchase Green Power from Coweta-Fayette EMC on a "first come, first served" basis. Coweta-Fayette EMC's Green Power is available to members in blocks of 100 kWh for an additional fee of \$ 2.00 each month.
How much will my total electricity service cost, including utility charges?	Based on a monthly average usage of 500 kWh and the purchase of one, 100 kWh Green Power block, the following table provides you an estimate of your 2017 monthly electricity bill. Your actual bill will vary based on your use of electricity. 2017 Monthly Electricity Cost \$59.00 Green Power Premium \$ 2.00 Total \$61.00
Will my rates change over time?	The existing rate structure for your Coweta-Fayette EMC Green Power service is presently fixed and determined by Board action. Many factors control this cost however we feel it will only change when contract conditions change or new, more costly, renewable resources are added to the program and we must adjust the price to account for the increased price of the new generation.
What sources will be used in my certified product?	Please refer to the Product Content Label below.
If I want to terminate this agreement/contract, what is the early termination fee?	There is no cost associated with terminating participation in Coweta-Fayette EMC's Green Power program.
What length of agreement/contract is required?	No contract or re-enrollment is required. You will remain enrolled in Coweta-Fayette EMC's Green Power program until you terminate your participation by notifying Coweta-Fayette EMC.
What other fees might I be charged for?	There are no other fees associated with participation in Coweta-Fayette EMC's Green Power program.

PRODUCT CONTENT LABEL		
The product is sold in blocks of 100 kilowatt-hours (kWh). The product will be made up of the following renewable resources.		
Green-e Energy Certified New <sup>1</sup> Renewables in Coweta-Fayette EMC Green Power Program	2017 <sup>1</sup>	2018 <sup>2</sup>
-Biomass	100%	100%
-Geothermal	0%	0%
-Eligible hydroelectric	0%	0%
-Solar	0%	0%
-Wind	0%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Generation Location Georgia		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2017 figures reflect the resources that were supplied for the year ending December 31, 2017.</li> <li>The 2018 figures are prospective and reflect the power that we have contracted to provide. Actual figures may vary according to resource availability. We will annually report to you before August 1 of next year in the form of a Historic Product Content Label the actual resource mix of the electricity you purchased.</li> <li>New Renewables come from generation facilities that first began commercial operation within the past 15 years. This product includes generation from a facility that is approved for extended use by Green-e Energy.</li> </ol> For comparison, the current average mix of resources supplying Coweta-Fayette EMC includes: Coal (16%), Nuclear (27%), Oil (0%), Natural Gas (54%), Hydroelectric (1%), Solar (1.46%), and Other (0.54%). The average home in the United States uses 897 kWh per month. [Source: U.S. EIA, 2016] For specific information about this electricity product, please contact Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Corporation, (770) 251-9788, <a href="https://utility.org/green-power-news/">https://utility.org/green-power-news/</a> .		
	Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Corporation's Green Power Program is Green-e Energy certified, and meets the environmental and consumer-protection standards set forth by the nonprofit Center for Resource Solutions. Learn more at <a href="http://www.green-e.org">www.green-e.org</a> .	

**GREEN POWER EMC MEMBERS' RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

