



# The LAMPLIGHTER

Official Member Newsletter of Washington EMC

April 2024

Serving members in Baldwin, Emanuel, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Warren, Washington and Wilkinson counties

## Whatever it takes to power life

### *A lineworker's perspective*

**B**eing a lineworker is ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. And the lineworkers at Washington EMC work rain or shine, and oftentimes in challenging conditions to help ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on Monday, April 8. The following column was written by Ricky Josey, one of our many dedicated lineworkers. Enjoy!—Wendy Sellers, President/CEO

My name is Ricky Josey, and I'm one of 20 Washington EMC linework-

ers who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community members have the power to live their lives. I love my job! It's hard work, but it's very rewarding. I hope this will give you a better look into what we face and, more importantly, why we do it.

#### **The danger**

A lot of people know linework is dangerous because we work near high-voltage electricity. If you lose focus, it could be deadly. You have to be aware of

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**Wendy Sellers**  
President/CEO





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Wendy Sellers, President/CEO

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### OFFICE HOURS

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

### PHONES

Local (478) 552-2577

Long distance (800) 552-2577

### 24-HOUR CALL CENTER

To report a power interruption  
please call:

Local (478) 552-2577

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### BRANCH LOCATIONS

12860 Broad St.  
Sparta, GA 31087  
*Closed on Thursday*

100 W. College St.  
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### Convenient bill pay options include:

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319 N. Smith St., Sandersville, GA 31082  
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### Pay your bill online

[www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)

#### Use the free Washington EMC mobile app

Look for WEMC in the

App Store or Android Market.

#### Pay by phone

(478) 552-2577 or (800) 552-2577

# To the top!

## Training stages for electric lineworkers

Known for their strength and agility, lineworkers are dedicated to ensuring our communities have reliable power. Safety is always top priority on the job, which is why lineworkers spend thousands of hours training as they advance their skills.

### Here's a look at the career progression of a lineworker:

#### Crew leader

A crew leader is an advanced position that requires supervising lineworkers on job sites, coordinating with contractors and directing daily activities for crews.



#### Journeyman lineworker

Post-apprenticeship and with roughly 7,000-plus hours of training under the belt, journeyman lineworkers are fully trained in their field. They repair, update and install overhead and underground power lines, as well as other electrical equipment.



#### Apprentice lineworker

Before reaching lineworker status, they are required to work as an apprentice. Apprentice lineworkers earn competitive wages while receiving hands-on training and experience in the field. They typically spend four years in their apprenticeship.



#### Groundperson/linehelper

Many lineworkers begin their career as a groundperson, or linehelper. They assist line crews with tools, keeping job sites safe and operating smaller equipment.



Regardless of stage, all lineworkers continue education and training throughout their career. Training and testing requirements vary from utility to utility.

# Whatever it takes,

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your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you. We often work on energized lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. You're working with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. The environment can definitely increase the pressure, because when you need power the most, it is usually when the weather is at its worst. We're often working in storms with rain, wind, extreme heat and cold, in the dark or on the side of the road. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what we're trained to do.

Many may not realize it, but we go through years of training before we can officially be called a lineworker. We typically start as a groundsman, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then we transition to apprentice status, which typically spans four to six years. After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training under our belts, we transition to journeyman lineworker status, which is when we're considered officially trained in our field.

But the education is ongoing. Lineworkers continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

## The physical demand

The daily expectations of a lineworker are physically demanding, but you won't hear any of us complain



about that. I know what I signed up for—loading heavy materials, climbing poles, and in and out of buckets. A lot of times, we go places the trucks can't, so I might be hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of equipment and materials. But that's the job. Most of us are just happy to be outside.

## The sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. You don't know what type of situation you're going to face or when you're going to face it. We get calls all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed out on a lot of quality time with family and friends, but my family is very

supportive, and it pays off in the end. We make sure there is nothing standing in the way of helping our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

## It's worth it

One thing that makes this job worthwhile is the relationships you build with your co-workers. My co-op is my second family, and the line crews are a brotherhood of sorts. In this work, you have to depend on the person beside you to get the job done safely. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everybody else.

I have a lot of pride in my work, and I feel I can speak for everyone else in the line department when I say there's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "thank you" from their house after the lights come back on, or seeing people flipping the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored. No matter how tired I am or how long I've been working, that feeling always makes it rewarding.

Washington EMC and its employees are members of this community. We live in the same neighborhoods. We shop at the same stores. Our kids go to the same schools. If your lights are off, there is a good chance ours are off, too. You can trust that we are doing our best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible—so you can get back to normal life.

## Community News



The Operation Round Up Board of Directors met January 29 and approved funding for the following organizations: Azalea Regional Library System-Sparta/Hancock County, City of Sparta/Hancock Department of Public Health, John-

son County Middle School Baseball, Johnson County 4-H, WACO Reads, Broken Shackle Ranch, Operation Appreciation and the American Red Cross.

We are so proud to be able to give back to organizations making a

difference in our communities and region. The next board meeting will be April 29, and the deadline for applications is March 31. For more information, visit [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com).



## Spring into high-speed connectivity!

Embrace a fresher, faster and more affordable connection from Connect, powered by Washington EMC.

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\*Connect Ultimate offers download speeds of up to 2 gigabits per second; upload speeds are typically between 1 and 2 gigabits per second. 2 gigabit speeds can be obtained by directly connecting via ethernet cable to the ONT. The device conducting the speed test must be capable of sending and receiving data at a minimum of 2 gigabits of throughput.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home, and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home. Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



### HAVE YOU EVER WANTED MORE INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS DURING POWER OUTAGES?

Washington EMC has partnered with a text messaging (SMS) solutions company to offer this service very soon!



In an effort to update our outage communication systems, Washington EMC will be offering a new system this Spring called **TEXTalerts**. It will provide a quick, simple, safe and effective method for reporting power outages, receiving important information and more. All of this is communicated directly from and to your cell phone as a basic (SMS) text. We'll release much more info soon but know that Washington EMC is working hard for our members in every facet of the member-owned co-op!

