

News Release



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas linemen return to Guatemala

Little Rock, Ark. — Jan. 30, 2018 — Since 2013, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas linemen have traveled to Central America to build power lines to deliver electricity to more than 1,700 rural Bolivians and Guatemalans. On Feb. 4, 15 electric cooperative linemen will travel to Guatemala to provide electric service for more than 105 villagers who have never had electrical service.

“During the mission, electric cooperative linemen from Arkansas will work with EMRE, a municipal electric utility, to expand service to rural areas including Las Tortugas and San Jorge communities that are located near the Mexico border,” said Duane Highley, president/CEO of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. “The Arkansas linemen’s primary project is to build approximately 7.5 miles of power lines that will have multiple connections to homes and huts.”

The project area is agriculturally based and produces corn, beans, rice, coffee, tea, cacao, pepper, cardamom and other domestic crops.

According to Highley, the new power line will help improve the quality of life to rural Guatemalans just like rural Americans experienced in the 1930s and 40s in the United States.

“As we have seen and experienced in our blessed nation, the quality of life that electricity brings is beyond measure,” he said. “Each of the electric cooperative linemen are honored to volunteer to help make the world brighter for current and future generations in Guatemala.”

Linemen and their respective cooperatives participating in the project are: Kenneth Byrd and Zac Pettis with Arkansas Valley Electric of Ozark; Terry Harkey with Craighead Electric of Jonesboro; Shawn Hammonds, Zack Lewis and Chris Wiles with First Electric of Jacksonville; Keith Uselton with Mississippi County Electric of Blytheville; Joey Burk and Billy Smart with North Arkansas Electric of Salem; Richard Freeland with Ouachita Electric of Camden; Doug Evans and Jamie Reeves with Petit Jean Electric of Clinton; Kyle Thomason and Brandon Winer with Southwest Arkansas REA of Texarkana; Daniel Baker with Woodruff Electric of Forrest City; and Kevin Riddle with Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. of Little Rock.

NRECA International is coordinating the project.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 500,000 homes, farms and businesses in Arkansas and surrounding states.

For additional information, contact:

Rob Roedel, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, 501.570.2296 or rob.roedel@aecc.com
www.aecc.com

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