

# JEMCOnews

A PUBLICATION FOR JACKSON EMC MEMBERS



## Linemen Help Bring Light to Village in *Guatemala*

DECEMBER 2023 | IN THIS ISSUE

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# BRINGING LIGHT

This time of year, we make our homes brighter. As the glow of festive lights brightens our homes and hearts during this special time of year, we are reminded of the warmth that comes from gathering with friends and family, reflecting and expressing gratitude.

As you read this month's issue of *JEMCO News*, you'll find a story about four of our linemen volunteering to bring electricity to a small village in Guatemala. Along with linemen from other Georgia cooperatives, they spent 17 days in challenging terrain to get electricity an entire village that had never experienced the convenience of flipping a switch for light. Their work helped provide many things we take for granted. These homes lacked not only the simplicity of turning on a light bulb but also the luxury of refrigerating food or cooling their spaces on scorching summer days.

Electric cooperatives, like Jackson EMC, were established in the 1930s to

bring electricity to the rural areas of our country. In many cases, to people who'd been overlooked - mostly farmers in areas deemed too remote to extend power lines for electric service. It's surprising sometimes to think that today there are still many people around the world who don't have access to something we take for granted. But the work of our linemen - Ben, Michael, Corey and Pete - in Guatemala is a reminder of the origins of electric co-ops, echoing our commitment from over 85 years ago to enhance the lives of people in northeast Georgia through the transformative power of electricity.

The volunteer linemen who built power lines in Guatemala will tell you how life-changing the experience was for villagers seeing a light bulb turn on the first time in their homes. That light represents new possibilities for their families. They can read schoolbooks in the evening. They can listen to the radio. They can prepare meals inside their homes.

We were honored to support our linemen in this international effort. Through this opportunity, we can see the cooperative principle "Concern for Community" in action transforming the lives of people receiving electricity for the first time. Our linemen will also say this experience transformed their lives. You can read their story and watch a powerful video about their journey.

We're thankful for Ben, Michael, Corey and Pete volunteering to roll up their sleeves and bringing light to others through this inspirational mission.

Have a story to share about our linemen volunteering? Share it with me at [chip@jacksonemc.com](mailto:chip@jacksonemc.com).

**CHIP JAKINS**  
President & CEO

## Scholarships Available

### Walter Harrison Scholarship Applications Now Open

Looking for ways to help pay for college? Georgia students pursuing post-secondary education at colleges and technical schools can apply for the \$1,000 Walter Harrison scholarship, which is awarded based on merit, school performance, GPA, scholastic honors, extracurricular activities and financial need. Applicants must be accepted or currently enrolled as full- or part-time students at any accredited two- or four-year university, college, or vocational-technical institution in Georgia and live in a primary residence served by Jackson EMC.

To apply, students must complete an application and submit a brief essay explaining why they would be good candidates for the scholarship and outlining their educational careers and any special circumstances for consideration. Students could use this opportunity to highlight community involvement or a desire to serve others.

FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT  
[JACKSONEMC.COM/WALTERHARRISONSCSCHOLARSHIP](https://www.jacksonemc.com/walterharrisonscholarship)

### University of North Georgia Students May Be Eligible for A.T. Sharpton Scholarship

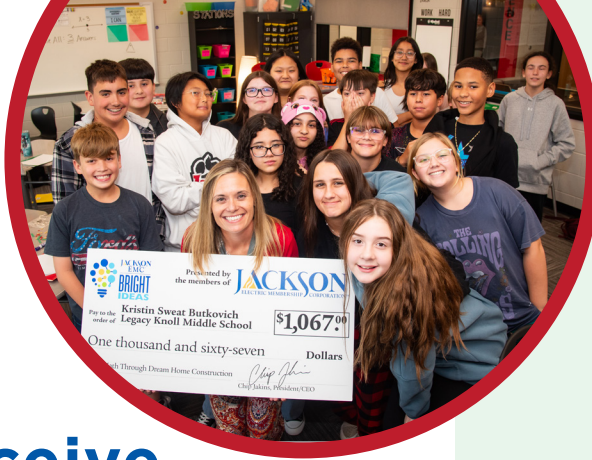
Students attending the University of North Georgia who are from one of the 10 counties served by Jackson EMC may be eligible for the A.T. Sharpton scholarship. This scholarship is designated to provide educational opportunities to students who demonstrate financial need. The University of North Georgia Foundation distributes funds annually for the A.T. Sharpton scholarship.

The scholarship is named in honor of A.T. "Troy" Sharpton, who served as chairman of the Jackson EMC Board of Directors from 1976 to 1989. Sharpton operated a 300-acre beef cattle and poultry farm in Gwinnett County.

If you're a current UNG student, check with your financial aid advisor for more details.

Applications are due to  
**Jackson EMC by January 31, 2024.**

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# 48 Teachers Receive Bright Ideas Grants from Jackson EMC

Jackson EMC is helping teachers bring exciting ideas to life in their classrooms with the Bright Ideas grant program. This year, the cooperative awarded 48 grants to teachers in 30 schools totaling \$73,600.

The Bright Ideas grant program awards up to \$2,000 to sixth through eighth-grade teachers in Jackson EMC's service area for innovative class projects that would go unfunded otherwise.

This year's grants will fund projects in science, technology, art, music, math and more.

Since 2015, Jackson EMC has awarded more than \$550,000 in Bright Ideas grants to local educators.

Funded projects provide a unique, hands-on, student-led learning experience that create opportunities for improved critical thinking skills. A panel of independent judges with expertise in education reviews the applications.

Applications for the 2024-2025 school year will open in August.

Scan the QR code to see the list of Bright Ideas grant winners.



Hear firsthand from Andrew Cox, a teacher at Twin Rivers Middle School, about the impact of Bright Ideas grants on our new podcast, "Your Power. Your Community."



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [JACKSONEMC.COM/BRIGHTIDEAS](https://JACKSONEMC.COM/BRIGHTIDEAS)





# Linemen Help Bring Light to Village in



# Guatemala

Four linemen from Jackson EMC volunteered with linemen from other Georgia electric cooperatives to bring electricity to a remote village in north-central Guatemala.

In just 17 days, the linemen built four miles of electric lines to bring power to Sesalt, a village that had never experienced the benefits of electricity. The linemen brought electricity to approximately 90 households, two schools and two churches.

Jackson EMC journeymen linemen Pete Arteaga, Ben Campbell, Michael Fraser and Corey Willard joined forces with linemen from Cobb EMC, Coweta-Fayette EMC, GreyStone Power Corporation, Habersham EMC, Snapping Shoals EMC and Walton EMC. The project was sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International Foundation.



WATCH JACKSON EMC LINEMEN  
VOLUNTEERING IN GUATEMALA:



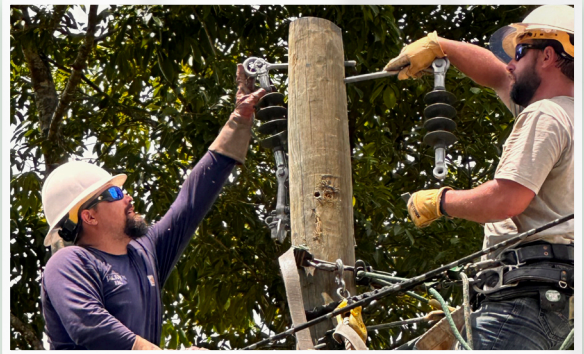
Arteaga, a Jackson EMC lineman in Gainesville, said the project initially seemed daunting – until the volunteer linemen from the participating cooperatives learned more about each other. **“Once we started working together and realized what each other knew and were capable of, and what each person was good at doing, that really helped out a lot,”** he said.

The linemen didn’t have the benefit of the tools and equipment they typically use for line work.

**“Here at home, we have bucket trucks and line trucks and various battery tools. There—there’s nothing. It’s all on hooks and hand tools and very physical,”** said Willard, a Jackson EMC lineman in Jefferson.

Their work included building power lines along paved roads in Sesaltul. However, the real challenge arose when they extended electric service to homes, navigating through difficult terrain along trails in heavy vegetation leading to the villagers’ homes. Local villagers helped the linemen find each home.

**“I’d say 99 percent of the huts were dirt floor,”** said Fraser, a Jackson EMC lineman in Lawrenceville. **“They had bamboo walls or big palm leaves [for roofs]. And some of the huts had tin roofs with block walls. They slept in mainly hammocks or a makeshift little bed.”**



Michael Fraser



Corey Willard



Ben Campbell



Pete Arteaga

“I will never forget this opportunity and taking part in it. It was a long 17 days. It was well worth the experience.”

**BEN CAMPBELL**

*Jackson EMC Journeyman Lineman*

Each village home received four lights, two switches and two outlets. Turning on the lights in the homes for the first time was an unforgettable and heartwarming experience.

**“You would flip the breaker on and turn the switch on and they would look at the light, just look at it. Then, immediately they would go over and turn it off like they were going to run out of power if they left it on,”** Fraser said.

Campbell, a Jackson EMC lineman in Neese, said having electricity in their homes will make it easier for villagers to experience modern life. **“There was a lot of joy, a lot of smiles,”** he said. **“You could almost see it in their faces the ideas they had and what they could do in their homes now [with electricity] and the things they can do with their lives moving forward.”**

Prior to the project in Guatemala, Jackson EMC employees raised almost \$7,000 for supplies and equipment at two schools in the village, including ceiling fans the volunteer linemen installed at the schools during the project.

\$114,500 IN GRANTS RECENTLY AWARDED

The Jackson EMC Foundation Board of Directors recently awarded \$114,500 in grants to organizations.

**Organizational Grant Recipients:**

**\$15,000 to Peachtree Christian Health, Inc.,** Duluth, which supports caregivers and their loved ones by providing a compassionate care center for its Caregiving Financial Assistance Program.

**\$15,000 to St. Vincent de Paul Society - Flowery Branch,** to fund direct aid for housing assistance for Hall, Barrow, Gwinnett and Jackson County families in crisis and food for their food pantry.

**\$15,000 to St. Vincent de Paul Society - Gainesville,** to help fund direct aid for housing assistance, including rent, mortgage and temporary housing for Hall County families in crisis.

**\$15,000 to St. Vincent de Paul Society - Lawrenceville (Grayson Highway)** for its financial assistance program that provides funds for rent and mortgage to Gwinnett County families in crisis.

**\$10,000 to the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation** for its Hands on historic Athens program, which provides assistance for home maintenance and modest repairs for low-income families so they can remain in their historic homes.

**\$10,000 to Ashton Hope Keegan Foundation, Inc.,** for its Ashton Sent Us Program to support at least 20 women in need in Clarke, Jackson, Madison and Oglethorpe counties with items such as textbooks, supplies and exam fees during their educational certification.

**\$10,000 to CHRIS 180 (Creativity, Honor, Respect, Integrity and Safety)** for its Gwinnett Counseling Center, with a mission to heal children, strengthen families and build community, to assist children, teens and families in Gwinnett and Hall counties receive trauma-informed counseling in order to heal, build coping resiliency skills and thrive.

**\$7,500 to Athens Parent Wellbeing** for its Mental Health Support for Pregnant and Postpartum Parents Program to provide 100 therapy sessions for mothers and their families in Barrow, Clarke, Gwinnett, Jackson, Madison and Oglethorpe counties.

**\$7,500 to Casa De Amistad,** Athens, whose mission is to improve the well-being and self-sufficiency of Hispanic individuals and families, for its ESL and GED classes program.

**\$7,500 to Joshua's Voice, Inc.,** Buford, for its Autism Spectrum and Sensory Processing Disorder Awareness, Training and Tools Program to purchase sensory kits and educational materials for first responders and other organizations in Banks, Gwinnett, Hall and Jackson counties that may encounter people with autism and/or a sensory processing disorder.

**\$2,000 to Tiny Stiches, Inc.,** Suwanee, to provide materials and supplies for its network of volunteers to handcraft a 28- to 32-piece set of clothing and blankets to keep an infant warm and dry for the first three months of life, donated to mothers in need in Gwinnett, Clarke and Hall counties.



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
OR TO APPLY FOR A FOUNDATION GRANT,  
VISIT [JACKSONEMC.COM/FOUNDATION](https://www.jacksonemc.com/foundation)

**5 Brilliant Tips for Saving Energy During the Holidays**

If you're making your list and checking it twice, be sure to check off the ways you can save energy this winter. Here are some ways you can trim back on your energy use and save money for gift-giving:

- 1. Keep your thermostat set to 68 degrees.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use and can bring significant savings. As a rule of thumb, your heating cost will increase 3% for each degree above 68 degrees.
- 2. Open your curtains and blinds during the day.** Let the sunshine in during the day for a natural way to warm your home in the winter. Be sure to close them before night to reduce chilling.
- 3. Find and seal leaks.** You can keep your home feeling cozy this winter by caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors. If you can feel a draft while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

- 4. Put holiday lights on a timer.** By using a timer to turn lights on and off later in the evening, you can reduce how much energy you'd use otherwise.
- 5. Celebrate longer with certified LED light strings.** LED lights can last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent lights and use 75% less energy.



FIND MORE ENERGY-SAVING TIPS  
AT [JACKSONEMC.COM/WAYSTOSAVE](https://www.jacksonemc.com/waysstosave)

# How is Your Electric Dollar Used?

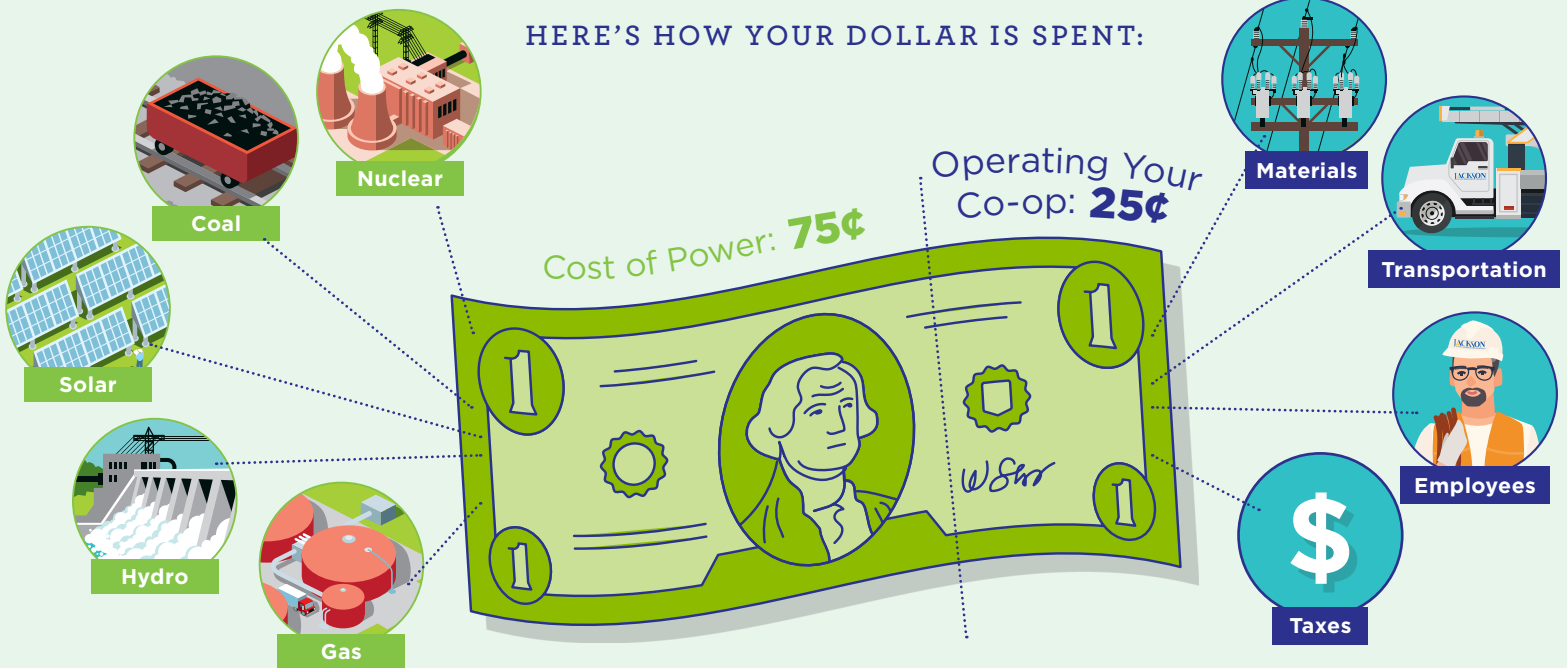
Jackson EMC is a cooperative, which means we're owned by the members we serve. We don't have investors or shareholders, so we don't make a profit for anyone else. We use the money we receive to fund the services needed to bring you reliable electricity.

You may have wondered how your money is used. Approximately 75 cents of every dollar goes to pay for the electricity going to your home or business. What's left over

pays for equipment, billing, labor and other business expenses. We're a not-for-profit co-op, so we return margins to members whenever possible.

We invest in our distribution system to strengthen our infrastructure and ensure we can restore power quickly after outages occur. We work hard to keep costs as low as possible while delivering the exceptional service our members expect - like reliable power and great customer service.

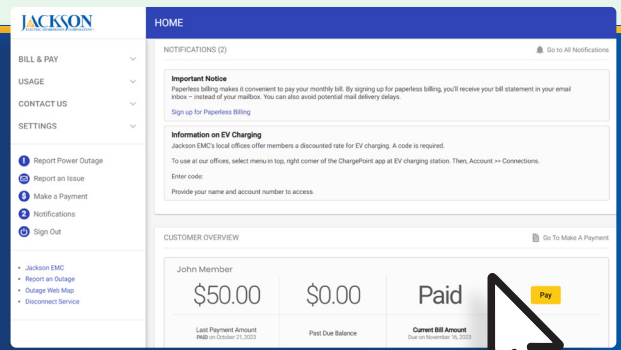
## HERE'S HOW YOUR DOLLAR IS SPENT:



## MyJacksonEMC Website Gets New Look on January 8

The MyJacksonEMC website will have a new look, starting January 8. The revamped website will be easier to navigate and have a simpler look similar to the mobile app. Manage your account, pay your bill, monitor daily energy use, report an outage, and more with the MyJacksonEMC website.

If you've already registered for a MyJacksonEMC account, you don't need to do anything. Want to register for a MyJacksonEMC account or learn more? Visit [MyJacksonEMC.com](http://MyJacksonEMC.com).



## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Jackson EMC is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the following: the provisions of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Civil Rights Act of 1991, as amended; Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended; Section 42 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended; 41 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60-300, and other protected veterans; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or Vietnam or disabled veteran status shall be excluded from participation in, admission, or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities. **This contractor and subcontractor shall abide by the requirements of CFR 60-300.5(a) and 60-741.5(a). These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals on the basis of their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities, and prohibit discrimination against all individuals based on their race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity,**

**or national origin. Moreover, these regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, protected veteran status, or disability.**

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Keith Johnson, Vice President, Human Resources and Employee Development. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

**YOUR POWER.  
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

A PUBLICATION FOR  
JACKSON EMC MEMBERS

**JACKSON EMC OFFICES**  
1000 Dawsonville Highway  
Gainesville, GA  
(770) 536-2415

85 Spratlin Mill Road  
Hull, GA  
(706) 548-5362

850 Commerce Road  
Jefferson, GA  
(706) 367-5281

825 Buford Dr  
Lawrenceville, GA  
(770) 963-6166

**EMC SECURITY**  
55 Satellite Blvd., NW  
Suwanee, GA  
(770) 963-0305 or  
(706) 543-4009

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## Jackson EMC Returns **\$15 Million** in Margin Refunds to Members

As a Jackson EMC member, you're an owner of the cooperative, so instead of making a profit, we return to you the money we don't use to build and run the electric system that powers your life. These funds are called margin refunds.

This month, approximately 235,000 current and former members of Jackson EMC will receive their share of a total of \$15 million in margin refund checks.

After this December's refund, Jackson EMC will have refunded \$204 million in margin refunds to its member-owners since the cooperative was founded in 1938.

Margins are refunded for a combination of years, so former, long-term and newer members benefit from belonging to an electric cooperative, like Jackson EMC. This year, margin refunds will go to those who received electric service from Jackson EMC in 1996, 1997, 1998 and/or 2022. The amount of each member's refund check is based on the amount each member paid for electric service during those years.

**“Jackson EMC operates at cost, which means our primary focus is member service, not profits. Crossing the \$200 million mark in returned margin refunds this year shows Jackson EMC’s long history of keeping the cooperative financially strong to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity for its members.”** said Rodney Chandler, chairman of the Jackson EMC Board of Directors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [JACKSONEMC.COM/MARGINREFUNDS](http://JACKSONEMC.COM/MARGINREFUNDS)