

News Release



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas linemen earn apprentice lineman certification

Little Rock, Ark. — Nov. 14, 2017 — The inaugural class of 18 apprentice linemen from electric cooperatives across Arkansas recently completed the required certification process through a program coordinated by Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Incorporated (AECI).

Launched in September of 2015, the program requires apprentice lineman candidates to complete eight weeks of training at AECI's Little Rock campus over a two-year period. The program curriculum from Northwest Lineman College is accredited and recognized by the United States Department of Labor.

Newly certified apprentice linemen and their electric cooperative include:

- Keith King; Micheal McDaniel; Matthew Snyder; Cliff Fancher; Jordon Parton; Monty Hoskins; Joey Wiltgen; and Nathan Maloy with **Carroll Electric Cooperative of Berryville.**
- Callan Romine with **Craighead Electric Cooperative of Jonesboro.**
- Bo Mitchell; Hunter Fallen; Matt Anderson; Chance Schueren; Jake Autry; and Zack Lewis with **First Electric Cooperative of Jacksonville.**
- Trevor Adams and Hunter Frymire with **Woodruff Electric Cooperative of Forrest City.**
- Josh Harris with **Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.**

"We developed and implemented this program to provide Arkansas electric cooperative linemen with a high standard of training which in turn provides our members with the benchmark in apprentice lineman training creating a safe, reliable, responsible workforce, while still maintaining an affordable cost," said Kevin Riddle, supervisor of job training and safety for AECI.

The training curriculum also involves classroom time and a series of hands-on activities. Program participants may choose to pursue a Journeyman Lineman Certification through the U.S. Department of Labor with their certificate of completion of the AECI program in combination with 8,000 hours of documented on-the-job training.

Since 2015, four additional classes of apprentice linemen training have commenced with an additional two classes slated to begin each year. Cooperatives with participants in the current classes include C&L Electric Cooperative of Star City, Farmers Electric Cooperative of Newport, North Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Salem and Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Texarkana.

According to Keith Brown, director of corporate and member safety for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and AECI, given how well it was received, the cooperatives are discussing additional plans for the program and ongoing certifications for linemen.

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.

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