

# News Release

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## Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas

### ***Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas linemen to electrify additional Guatemalan villages***

**Little Rock, Ark.** — April 23, 2015 — A group of Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas linemen will depart Arkansas on April 29 to continue a mission that the cooperatives began in 2013 to provide electricity to remote Guatemalan villages. Arkansas electric cooperative linemen have assisted in providing electric service to more than 770 rural Guatemala residents.

According to Duane Highley, president and CEO of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, the current mission will involve the villages of Sepamac, Jolom l'Jix and Zapotal and result in bringing electricity to more than 1,390 rural Guatemalans. The villages are located in northeast Guatemala.

“Arkansas electric cooperative linemen are changing lives with each mission that is completed,” Highley said. “Our men that volunteer their time and expertise for the electrification missions often say that the work changes their lives also. There is no way to explain the emotions involved with seeing someone flip the switch and have power with their homes for the first time.”

Highley said that Arkansas electric cooperatives and ERMCO, a manufacturer of transformers, are donating materials, labor and funds to assist with the project. Cooperative crews will assist in construction of electric distribution line, related infrastructure and provide some training to local line workers.

The 2015 mission will also involve electric cooperative linemen from Indiana. Linemen from Indiana have worked in Guatemala in the past also.

“The Indiana crews will work and then the Arkansas crews will continue the electrification process,” said Mel Coleman, CEO of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Salem and president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board of directors. “Just like during outages, the men will work together in a common effort to deliver power to those in need. Both crews should be commended for their willingness to volunteer for the mission.”

Linemen and their respective cooperatives that are participating in the project are: Matt Lairamore and Kyle Metcalfe with Arkansas Valley Electric of Ozark; Andy Caywood with Carroll Electric Cooperative of Berryville; Michael Counts and Andy Ward with Clay County Electric of Corning; Brent Hufstедler with Craighead Electric Cooperative of Jonesboro; Kirk Kempson with First Electric Cooperative of Jacksonville; Joey Burk and Paul Garrison with North Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Salem; Richard Freeland of Ouachita Electric Cooperative of Camden; Ryan Hayes with Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative of Texarkana and Will Glover with Woodruff Electric Cooperative of Forrest City. Doug Evans, safety manager for Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., will also assist the crew during the trip.

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:**

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