



RATED #1

BY CUSTOMERS FOR BRAND APPEAL AMONG RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Walton EMC received the highest score in the Electric Cooperatives segment of the J.D. Power 2024 U.S. Utility Brand Appeal Index (BAI) Study, which analyzes how well U.S. utilities relate to their customers and evaluates the specific actions that influence overall brand experience. Visit jdpower.com/awards for more details.

Pursuing Everyday Excellence

WALTON EMC 2025 CEO REPORT

When news came last August that Walton EMC had earned a coveted J.D. Power Award and the right to be called “#1 for Brand Appeal” among the nation’s residential electric cooperatives, I was extremely pleased. But I wasn’t surprised.

The outstanding customer engagement this honor recognizes is the norm at your co-op. Day in and day out, we focus on providing safe, reliable and affordable energy while maintaining a connection with our members and the communities we serve.

It takes many highly trained, dedicated people doing great work to sustain the kind of excellence our customer-owners expect and deserve. In big ways and small ones, Walton EMC employees rose to the challenge in 2024 when faced with situations that put our abilities to the test.

This report details some of the ways we demonstrated our core commitment to investing energy in what matters most.

IN SERVICE TO YOU

Great service begins with great people. Walton EMC is powered by a team of individuals who each day demonstrate our values of service, integrity and excellence.

Our team is made up of over 250 committed individuals who are also your neighbors, friends and members of the co-op. From the frontline workers (linemen and customer service reps) to the many behind-the-scenes folks, we rely on the collaboration of every Walton EMC employee to ensure reliable, safe and affordable service to you, our customer-owners.

As we continue to promote a culture of service and teamwork, we also encourage our employees to strive for individual achievements. At the 2024 International Lineman’s Rodeo, two Walton EMC apprentice linemen were named among the best at what they do. Out of 400 apprentice linemen competing, Mason Tolbert placed second overall among electric cooperative competitors and third among all apprentices. Phillip Mork earned a seventh-place finish in the co-op division. Walton EMC was the only electric co-op with two representatives finishing in the division’s top 10.

Fifteen Walton EMC linemen recently competed in the 2025 Georgia Lineman’s Rodeo, bringing home more top finishes. Now, some of them will be moving on to this year’s international competition. The advanced skills and knowledge in electrical linework and safety our linemen gain from the experience are just another way we’re ensuring everyday excellence in all facets of co-op operations.



Ron Marshall
President/CEO



Walton EMC apprentice linemen **Mason Tolbert**, left, and **Phillip Mork** displayed their skills and knowledge while competing at the **2024 International Lineman’s Rodeo**.

ACHIEVING THE LOWEST POSSIBLE COST

As a customer-owned cooperative, Walton EMC prioritizes providing reliable service at the lowest possible cost. Achieving this goal begins with controlling expenses.

Our highest expense is purchased power. Nearly 80 cents of every dollar you pay on your electric bill is used to purchase the power we distribute. Every other expense Walton EMC has (payroll, power poles, gas, building improvements, etc.) is paid from the remaining 20 cents. Your co-op employees are constantly checking our inventory, maintaining our current assets and finding innovative ways to use our existing equipment - maximizing the value of our members' dollar.

By controlling these expenses, we are able to provide competitive rates to our members. In 2024, our customer-owners paid 30 percent less in the summer and 15 percent less in the winter than neighboring Georgia Power customers.

READY TO RESPOND

Walton EMC's comprehensive storm response plan was put to the test by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, and Winter Storm Cora this past January. Our careful planning had personnel, equipment and supplies ready to roll as soon as outages were reported during these major weather events.

These proactive steps proved important when Helene's hurricane-force winds reached our territory on Sept. 26, 2024, resulting in nearly 26,300 members without power. Within 12 hours, 98% of these members had their power restored.

Winter Storm Cora's high winds and icy conditions combined to pull down power lines and break utility poles, causing widespread outages. As the storm came through on the evening of Jan. 10, 2025, our line teams worked tirelessly in challenging conditions to restore lights and heat to over 13,000 homes and businesses within 18 hours.

Walton manages more than 2,600 miles of vegetation continuously growing near our overhead distribution system. Contact between trees and power lines is one of the leading causes of service interruption. Although a large expense to perform, vegetation control is a vital part of maintaining service continuity. Walton operates a four-year cycle of both trimming and herbicide applications to mitigate adverse effects of vegetation damage. Walton is committed to improving reliability performance by constantly measuring our system interruptions against the national averages. We are proud to report that we average fewer outage minutes per customer than most U.S. cooperatives.

While it may seem inconvenient or unsightly to you at the time, this proactive measure helps keep your power on during storms and our linemen safe while working.



As a customer-owner of Walton EMC, you paid **25 percent less** than neighboring Georgia Power customers.



Within 18 hours, our team repaired damage and **restored service to more than 13,000 homes and businesses.**

SOLID FOUNDATION

Due in no small part to our adherence to controlling expenses where we can, your cooperative is on sound financial footing. We currently serve more than 125,000 member-owners and last year delivered in excess of 4.5 billion kWh. In December, we returned to you \$9,000,000 in capital credits. Those are your share of our excess revenue.

SUPPLY CHAIN IMPROVES

Ensuring reliable power delivery requires having access to essential materials and equipment to construct, maintain and repair our electric distribution system. 2024 brought significant improvements in supply chain reliability. We now have confidence that supplies will arrive in a timely manner.

MEETING ENERGY DEMAND

Fulfilling our promise to deliver reliable, affordable electricity to Walton EMC customer-owners' homes and businesses is one of the greatest challenges we face in the ongoing quest for service excellence. We carefully review growth forecasts, plan years in advance and take proactive measures to ensure you always have the power you want at the lowest possible cost.

Power supply is an increasingly important topic that has created a number of headlines in the news about the ability of the utilities to keep up with the demand. An estimated 540 people move to Georgia each day. In addition, over 400 facility expansions and new projects came to the state last year according to the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, large-scale data centers have also caused concern due to the enormous energy demands of these facilities. The availability of affordable electricity is one of the primary reasons that Georgia has become so attractive to these centers as well as businesses in general.

Walton EMC has been successful in the past competing for large load customers of various sizes. If it makes sense to compete for and serve a large load we are committed to ensuring that the cost of serving them does not fall on our member-owners.



Your co-op employees are constantly **checking our inventory, maintaining our current assets and finding innovative ways to use our existing equipment.**



We take a responsible approach to **working with energy-intensive facilities like data centers.**

SUPERIOR SUBSIDIARIES

The performance of Walton EMC’s subsidiaries is another point of everyday excellence. These affiliates provide additional co-op revenue and reduce costs, factors that contribute to keeping members’ bills as low as possible. It’s also notable that our affiliates are considered among the very best at what they do.

Walton Gas is entirely owned by Walton EMC. Established in 2002 in response to member requests that the co-op “get in the gas business.” The company operates from the same building as Walton EMC, sharing resources and employees with the co-op. This arrangement provides benefits to the co-op, such as being able to draw on Walton Gas employees for extra staffing assistance during storm situations. The co-op also benefits from sharing expenses for facilities, personnel, equipment and supplies with our in-house subsidiary. These cost savings reduce overhead, allowing us to maintain competitive rates for our customer-owners. Beyond personnel and financial contributions, it’s notable that Walton Gas is a three-time winner of the prestigious J.D. Power Award for providing service excellence to Georgia’s natural gas consumers.



Walton EMC and two other Georgia electric cooperatives jointly own **EMC Security**. Since 1998, EMC Security has serviced over 135,000 homes and businesses in the state of Georgia. Whether you use their services or not, every Walton EMC customer-owner benefits from the revenue of this subsidiary. Walton EMC is able to maintain our competitive rates thanks to the profits from EMC Security.



We also join several other co-ops as an owner of **Georgia Right of Way**. This shared service helps us control costs by reducing the quantity of private contractors for necessary right-of-way maintenance. In addition, Walton EMC also receives a portion of this company’s patronage capital returns (similar to our capital credit refunds), which are applied to the co-op’s bottom line.



LOOKING FORWARD

2024 brought its share of challenges and achievements. I am proud of what we have accomplished as a co-op and am looking forward to the future. In 2025, Walton EMC employees remain committed to reliability, great service, supporting our communities, educating our members and keeping everyone safe.

Our goal is to continually improve our services for every member living and working along our lines. We understand the importance of our jobs and take pride in the responsibility of keeping our members’ lives moving. In every way, and on every day, you can count on Walton EMC. Thank you for being a part of our co-op.