

# Rayle Lines

## Member Newsletter



December 2023

The Official Newsletter of Rayle Electric Membership Corporation

## Rayle EMC seeks applicants for college scholarship

**R**ayle EMC is accepting applications for the prestigious Walter Harrison Scholarship, a program sponsored by the member-owned electric cooperatives in Georgia. The \$1,000 scholarship can be used for academic expenses at any accredited two- or four-year university, college or vocational-technical institute in Georgia.

"We're proud to participate in the Walter Harrison Scholarship and to offer financial assistance to students and their families," said Tony Griffin, General Manager of Rayle EMC. "We recognize the growing cost of education, and we're happy to play a part in helping members of our community."

Students applying for the Walter Harrison Scholarship must be accepted or enrolled in an accredited undergraduate degree program, complete a two-page application and write a two-page autobiographical sketch with references to future plans and goals. The scholarship is available to any college-level student of any age.

The Walter Harrison Scholarship is awarded to students who possess exemplary academic records. GPA, SAT scores, academic standing and scholastic honors are all taken into account when determining a student's eligibility. In addition, a student's specific financial needs are also considered by the scholarship committee, comprised of directors and managers of Georgia EMCs. The committee's goal is to award the scholarship to a

remarkable student who may otherwise not be able to afford college.

The Walter Harrison Scholarship was created in 1985 by the board of directors of the Georgia Electric

Membership Corp., the trade association for the electric cooperatives of Georgia. The award pays tribute to the late Walter Harrison, a pioneer in the rural electricity movement and a leader at the local, state and national levels in the electric cooperative program.

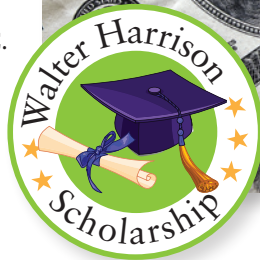
Since 1985, Georgia's electric cooperatives, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Georgia Rural Electric Supply Corp.

have awarded \$285,500 to 276 students through the Walter Harrison Scholarship program.

Of the applicants last year, 15 students attending eight Georgia schools were awarded scholarships, two of whom were from Rayle EMC. This next year will support 16 students from Georgia.

To receive a scholarship application, contact Rayle EMC at (706) 678-2116 or visit [www.rayleemc.com](http://www.rayleemc.com). Completed applications are due to the EMC by Jan. 19, 2024.

Rayle EMC, based in Washington, is a consumer-owned cooperative providing electricity services to more than 15,000 members in Wilkes, Lincoln, Greene, Morgan, Taliaferro, Hancock, Oglethorpe, Clarke, Madison and Oconee counties.



# Meeting demand

## How Georgia's electric cooperatives are managing supply-chain disruptions

**S**upply-chain problems have been in the news lately, but what, exactly, is a supply chain?

Simply put, a supply chain is the network of organizations, resources, activities and technology involved in the manufacturing and delivery of a product.

Supply-chain concerns were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as the result of a “perfect storm” of factors, including shifts in consumer demand, labor shortages and disruptions in the freight industry. These and other factors led to unprecedented problems with the availability and cost of products across all business sectors.

Georgia's electric industry is no exception to this trend, with challenges related to the availability and cost of critical equipment and supplies, such as transformers, conductors, utility poles and meters. Electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) seeking to acquire these materials have experienced significant delays and drastic price increases. In some cases, materials can cost twice what they did before the pandemic.

### Causes and effects

Workforce shortages at manufacturing facilities, the scarcity of raw materials and components, driver shortages in the trucking industry and higher fuel prices have contributed to this situation. Much-needed materials in short supply include raw wood for utility poles; chemicals for treating poles; casting materials for hardware; and the chips, also called semiconductors or microchips, that are used in meters.

Lead times for delivery also have increased. Products that once could be ordered a month or two in advance now may take a year or longer to be delivered. For example,



*A nationwide shortage of distribution transformers is causing delivery delays across the U.S. Procurement times have risen from two months in 2018 to more than a year today, and average costs have doubled or tripled.*

lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one or two months to as long as two years, and, for bucket and line trucks, the lead times can be four years or longer.

The availability of transformers is a primary concern because a shortage could impair an EMC's ability to restore power during outages.

“Electric cooperatives have mutual-assistance agreements to support one another after major outages, with sister co-ops sending crews to areas that face extensive restoration work. We also have seen cooperation among cooperatives when it comes to meeting the challenges of item shortages,” says Rayle EMC General Manager Tony Griffin.

### Sensible strategies

EMCs in Georgia are taking steps to stabilize their supply-chain security, sustainability and resilience. Some of

the changes include expanding their supplier base, forecasting further into the future and carrying more inventory. One of the successful strategies at Rayle EMC is to “forecast out much longer for some items than we did traditionally, prior to the pandemic,” Griffin says.

Other strategies include retrieving idle transformers that were set in anticipation of development that has not yet occurred and removing and reusing meters from homes and businesses that no longer receive service. Many cooperatives also are staying with reliable vendors that consistently produce the necessary materials and components needed by electric utilities.

Rayle EMC is “taking proactive steps to ensure that supply-chain issues will not affect the reliable service that our members expect. However, we anticipate that these issues will continue to increase our operational costs. As a not-for-profit utility, we work hard to minimize the impact of rising costs on our members,” Griffin says.

# Project SHARE

**Rayle EMC is proud to continue its participation in the Salvation Army's Project SHARE.**

**P**roject SHARE is a program that was established by the Salvation Army in cooperation with the electric utilities of Georgia. This program provides emergency assistance to Georgians who need help with basic necessities such as housing, food, medical care and utility services. The program assists the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed, the sick and others who are experiencing financial hardship.



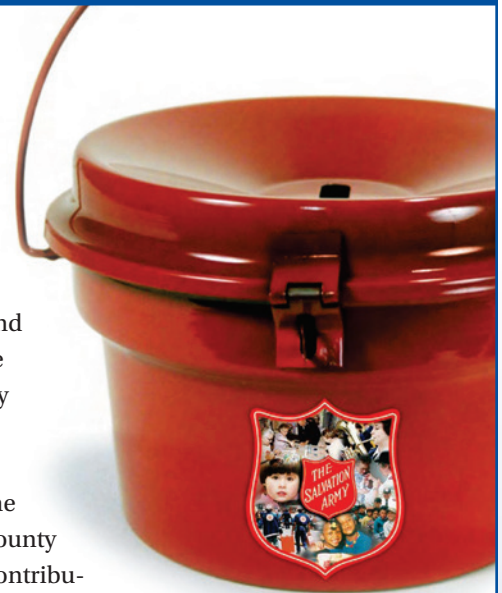
Since its inception, Project SHARE has helped more than 1 million people throughout Georgia. It is an award-winning program that has become the model for many other utility assistance programs.

Project SHARE is a year-round program. To participate in and sustain this program, Rayle EMC members may make donations by checking the desired dollar amount pledge on the form below and returning the form with their bill payment. The amount checked will be added to the member's

monthly bill and remitted to the Salvation Army each month. Funds will be used to help the needy in the county in which the contributions are given. If, at any time, you would like to cancel your SHARE pledge, you may do so by calling Rayle EMC at (706) 678-2116.

If you would like to make a larger individual donation or a one-time contribution to Project SHARE, please send a check with your contact information to: **The Salvation Army, 1000 Center Place NW, Norcross, GA 30093, or you can make your donation by credit card by calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY (1-800-725-2769).**

Project SHARE is administered through the Salvation Army's designated agencies. Those seeking assistance through this program should contact their county's Department of Family and Children Services.



**I understand this is a direct, tax-deductible contribution to the Project SHARE program. Please add the pledge amount to my monthly Rayle EMC bill.**

I pledge:  \$1     \$3     \$5

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Rayle EMC Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip and return coupon to Rayle EMC with your bill payment.*





## Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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From everyone at Rayle EMC, we wish you a merry Christmas filled with laughter, joy and the love of family and friends. And a happy new year filled with new hopes and new beginnings. Thank you for your continued patronage and support.

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Our offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 26, for the Christmas holidays; and Monday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day.

## Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption expires Dec. 31

**T**he Georgia Department of Agriculture offers exemptions to qualified producers for agriculture equipment and production inputs, including an exemption for certain uses of electricity. All members who are eligible and currently have a Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) card must renew their certification annually.

To continue having the qualifying agricultural exemption status applied to Rayle EMC electric accounts, members should submit their 2024 GATE card and the addendum listing all accounts requiring exemption to Rayle EMC by Dec. 31, 2023.

Any accounts that do not have a 2024 card on file at the time of their January billing cycle will be charged sales tax. **This sales tax is refundable only from the Georgia Department of Revenue.**



# GATE

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption  
GEORGIA DEPT of AGRICULTURE