

Spotlight

Published by Jackson Energy Cooperative • McKee, Kentucky

Bringing comfort and joy through a lending hand

Sara Silletto needs only one word—joy—to describe the mood when volunteers from Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, including Jackson Energy, arrive to perform volunteer work at one of the commonwealth’s Ronald McDonald Houses.

“We’re so happy to see them, and they’re so happy to see us,” says Silletto, director of development at Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Kentucky, Louisville.

RMHC houses in Louisville and Lexington provide a place for families to call home while staying close to a hospitalized child. In addition to providing a comfortable place to sleep, the facilities offer meals, snacks and laundry rooms—all at little to no cost to families.

Last year, the two houses provided more than 14,600 nights of lodging to families. Most come from rural Kentucky communities where intensive pediatric hospital care, such as for premature infants, is limited.

Supporting RMHC is a way we demonstrate our commitment to the cooperative principle of “caring for the community.” Last year, we joined with other volunteers who accomplished more than 40,000 hours of work at the two houses.



Jackson Energy Office Supervisor Renita Fox, right, and Member Service Representative Lynne House prepare breakfast for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Lexington. Photo: Tim Webb

“Volunteering at the house is another way I help to distribute energy,” says Jackson Energy’s Beattyville Office Supervisor Renita Fox. “Not worrying about a place to stay or food to eat allows parents to put all their energy into helping their children get well.”

Co-op employees visit the houses three to four times each year to spruce up landscaping and deep clean interior spaces. We’ve prepared meals and snacks for the guests as well.

Every co-op member and employee has an opportunity to get involved during the annual Wish List Drive. We collect food,

drinks, cleaning products and other supplies to donate to the Lexington house.

A favorite RMHC project occurs in November. Co-op employees deck the halls for the holidays by hanging lights and decorating multiple Christmas trees at the houses.

“It brings a lot of joy and literal light to the house at a time of year when it’s even harder for these families to be away from home,” says Chelsi McDonald, director of development and communications for RMHC of the Bluegrass, Lexington. We know we can always count on the co-op team to be there when we need them.”

SPOTLIGHT

Lisa Baker, Editor
Published by Jackson Energy

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Jackson Energy

Working for You

A cause to celebrate

October is National Co-op Month

This has been a tough year to celebrate much of anything. Graduations and birthdays became drive-thru experiences. Events that bring the most people together have been the ones most targeted for cancelation because of social distancing guidelines. Yet, it's more important than ever this October to invite you to celebrate National Co-op Month with Jackson Energy. This year's theme is "Power On"—and that's what we'll continue to do.

Admittedly, National Co-op Month does not command the same attention on a calendar as holidays or anniversaries. You won't see a firework display or a parade to mark this occasion. Instead, the significance of this month can be found in simple accomplishments. Our commitment to the members, who rely on us to safely power local homes and businesses, is unwavering and consistent.

Technically speaking, this service is powered by electrons that travel through transformers and power lines of Jackson Energy. But the only way this can happen is through the cooperative relationship that defines who we are. Our 51,550 members empower Jackson Energy's commitment to community. Through economic development and support of local initiatives, we are dedicated to improving our members' quality of life.

In other words, when we celebrate National Co-op Month, we are not just recognizing the accomplishments of the people who work at the co-op, we are thanking you for feeding the cooperative spirit which powers all of us.

Being a co-op is not a marketing slogan that any utility can

place on its letterhead. If you receive service from Jackson Energy, you are not just a customer, you are a member and a part owner of this not-for-profit, locally owned and operated business. Each member gets a vote to decide which members serve on the board of directors.



Jackson Energy 1st Class Line Technician
Brandon Keyton. Photo: Lisa Baker

The same cooperative principles upon which we were founded in 1938 continue to guide us today. Yes, this is a very challenging year, and a fitting time to celebrate National Co-op Month—
#PowerOn.



Carol Wright
President & CEO

Then. Now. Always.

The concept of bringing electricity and modern conveniences to our local farmlands in 1938 was something unfamiliar, but yet, a real possibility. The rural electric cooperative was incorporated by a group of community leaders who banded together to tap in to the resources that had been made available as a result of the passage of the Rural Electrification Act in 1935.

Seven men met at the Jackson County Courthouse on July 28, 1938, to officially incorporate Jackson County Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation. At that time, only 3% of the farms in Kentucky had access to electrical service.

In April 1939, the first Jackson County RECC pole was set—and as they say, the rest is history.

Surveying and construction crews worked daylight to dark, spending weeks at a time in an area as they set poles through fields and rugged terrain. Farmers were offered \$1 per pole if the linemen could use their horses to skid poles to certain rural areas.

In addition, families were offered \$1.50 per day for each lineman for a place to sleep and three meals a day, which was a welcomed supplemental income as cash was hard to come by in the era of World War II.

Since 1938, Jackson County RECC has grown from a few employees providing electric service to less than 400 members in 1939 to become Jackson Energy, currently serving more than 51,550 members and maintaining more than 5,755 miles of line.

Those electric lines brought a different way of life to our region through a new technology that made life a little simpler and safer. Today, they continue



Linemen Jessie Johnson and Tye Lainhart were among the early Jackson County RECC employees. Photo: Jackson Energy Archives



1st Class Line Technician Colby Nicholson, left, Working Foreman Brandon Angel, Apprentice Nick Freeman and 1st Class Line Technician Justin Henson are one of the co-ops crews currently working out of the London district office. Photo: Lisa Baker

to transform the way people live and work. Jackson Energy continues to embrace state-of-the-art technology to meet the needs of our members from online service options to real-time electronic payment choices.

Looking back, it's evident that a great deal has changed since

the founding of Jackson County RECC. However, one thing that still holds true today is Jackson Energy's commitment—to our members and our communities to continue providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity that powers their homes and businesses—then, now and always.

