

# Craighead Electric celebrates 80 years of service

Craighead Electric Cooperative was incorporated on Aug. 13, 1937, the second electric cooperative in Arkansas to do so under the Rural Electrification Act signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the 80 years that have passed, the co-op has grown by leaps and bounds.

On Nov. 28, 1938, about 75 miles of line in the Valley View area south of Jonesboro were energized. There was no ceremony to herald the coming of electricity to rural Craighead County. No big gathering. No speeches. Instead, a lineman climbed a cooperative pole near the meter point and closed a switch. No one even remembers who the lineman was. By the end of 1938, Craighead Electric had 170 miles of line energized serving 712 members. By 1940, Craighead Electric had just 20 employees.

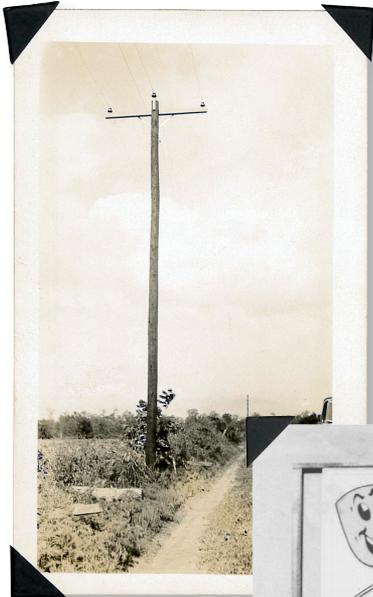
Today, nearly 100 employees make up the payroll, meters-served has surpassed 30,000, and miles of line maintained is 4,800 and growing. In July 1997, the cooperative's headquarters was moved from 325 Southwest Dr., where it had been for 46 years, to 4314 Stadium Blvd. Full-service district offices have been opened in Walnut Ridge and Paragould and 22 substations serve eight counties across Northeast Arkansas.

Craighead Electric's 80th year has been a great one: bill payment fees were ended, prepay was introduced, the HELP program was kicked off, and operations upgraded to a new mapping software and radio system. In addition, about \$1.4 million in capital credits were returned to members last year, bringing total capital credits returned to \$19 million.

The next 80 years looks bright for Arkansas' electric co-ops. As information technologies become more integral to the cooperative mission, new and exciting opportunities promise to reinvigorate the rural cooperative spirit. Alternative and renewable energy sources are becoming a bigger part of the energy portfolio. Innovations in energy efficiency, electric vehicles and smart home technologies will give electric utility companies more opportunities than ever to interact and connect with the people they serve.

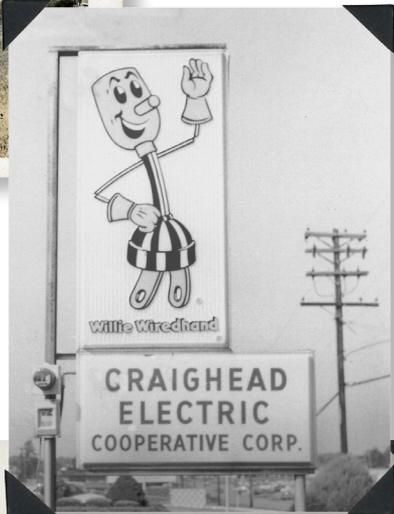
As a member of Craighead Electric, you own an electric company, and we thank you for being a part of it. Here's to another 80 years.

Construction crew poses in front of their work trucks, dressed in overalls. 1940s.



One of the first poles to be set by Craighead Electric. Valley View area 1938.

Willie Wiredhand sign at 325 Southwest Dr. in Jonesboro.



## Craighead Electric Cooperative Corporation

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Member Driven • Service Focused • It's what we do everyday

*An equal opportunity employer and service provider.*

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