

# NEWS



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## **Local lineman helps bring electricity to Bolivia**

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BOURBON – More residents in a remote village in Bolivia will soon experience the life-changing moment when electricity is brought to their homes, thanks to the efforts of a team of Missouri cooperative linemen that includes Crawford Electric journeyman Joe Cartwright.

Cartwright recently undertook the 30-hour journey from Missouri to Chapisirca, Bolivia, a tiny community in the Andes Mountains of South America. He is part of a team organized by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives (AMEC). The project in Bolivia was made possible by NRECA International, a non-profit 501c3 charitable organization, whose mission is to increase individual and community access to electricity in all parts of the world. This is the third trip for Missouri line workers to Bolivia in the past three years. It's the first to include a lineman from Crawford Electric.

“Co-ops first brought electricity to remote parts of this country in the 1930s and ‘40s,” said Tony Mallory, Crawford Electric’s CEO/General Manager. “The Brighter Bolivia project allows today’s linemen to feel the same sense of purpose that our pioneering line workers had 80 years ago. The project helps them feel even more connected to the cooperative spirit that helps us power communities and empower rural people to improve the quality of their lives.”

The linemen in Bolivia now are following up on the work of a previous team of Missouri line workers who built 3.5 miles of line and placed almost 80 utility poles.

“Villagers in Chapisirca were so hungry for power, they helped dig all the holes for the poles during the last project,” said Paul Newton of AMEC.

Chapisirca is located at the top of a mountain at more than 13,000 feet of elevation. By comparison, the highest point in Missouri is 1,772 feet above sea level. During their several-week stay in Bolivia, the linemen will spend some time in Cochabamba, the town at the bottom of the mountain, to allow for rest and relief from the altitude.

Cartwright, who's worked at Crawford Electric since 2005, volunteered to be a Brighter Bolivia team member. AMEC selects team members, runs the construction project, and handles transportation and lodging costs. Regular updates about their work may be found on the Brighter Bolivia Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MissouriElectricCoops/>. Learn more about NRECA International at <http://www.nrecainternational.coop/>

Before leaving for Bolivia, Cartwright attended team meetings at Jefferson-City-based AMEC, where he got to know his fellow team members from other electric cooperatives in the state. He also had to get travel documents, a number of vaccinations and took medicine to help him better acclimate to the journey's drastic change in altitude.

Crawford Electric co-workers sent Cartwright on his journey with donated equipment, promises of care and assistance for his family and \$300 to purchase toys and school supplies for the Bolivian children.

Crawford Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of locally owned, community-minded electric co-ops with high standards of service. Crawford Electric serves almost 20,000 meters along more than 3,000 miles of distribution lines in Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Washington and Dent counties.



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