

PROJECT

INDIANA

# BEARING LIGHT & HOPE

Clark County REMC lineman Kevin Porter gives a "thumbs up" with two Guatemalan boys as he takes a break while building a power line near their home. In March, 16 Indiana linemen and three supervisors built 31 miles of line in southwestern Guatemala.



## Indiana electric co-op line workers continue mission in rural Guatemala

Indiana's electric cooperatives put boots on the ground — and into the clouds — to bring electricity to a remote and mountainous village in Guatemala in March.

"Project Indiana: Empowering Global Communities for a Better Tomorrow" electrified a part of the Central American country where no electricity was available as part of an international initiative. The crew of 16

Indiana co-op lineworkers and three supervisors, supported by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's International Foundation, electrified the village of El Zapotillo near Guatemala's southwestern border with Mexico.

Working sometimes as high as 10,000 feet in the mountains, the team electrified 60 homes, a school, a church and a clinic with

31 miles of power line — all built by hand and without the aid of modern conveniences such as bucket trucks.

This was the Indiana electric cooperatives' third trip to Guatemala. In August 2012, 28 Hoosier lineworkers spent four weeks working in the same mountainous area. In April 2015, 14 lineworkers battled heat and rugged terrain in the northern part of the country. **EC**



A perch with a view: NineStar Connect lineman Jamie Bell assembles hardware atop a pole in the Guatemalan mountain village of El Zapotillo — with the country's southwestern mountains and the mountains of southern Mexico in the near and far distance.

PHOTOS BY RON HOLCOMB



An electric corn grinder waits for power. This machine will take a 5-hour daily task and reduce it to about 10 minutes. Villagers will also be able to store the ground corn in a refrigerator and not have to do this task every day.



Kosciusko REMC lineman Isaac Harp presents gifts his daughters made to two young girls in the village.



A caravan of women carry jugs filled with water to the village cistern from a well farther down the mountain. The cistern normally collects rainwater. But when there is not enough for cooking and bathing, a group of 30-40 women makes the trek to the well once or twice a day. The jugs are made of a relatively light plastic. With the electric power brought by Indiana's co-op line crews, an electric pump may some day do this necessary chore.



As with both previous trips to Guatemala, the local men provided most of the most physical demanding labor, such as lugging the 77-pound poles up the steep and rocky mountains on foot.

On this trip to Guatemala, Indiana's line crews had to set only one pole; all the others had been previously set by the local villagers. But without the modern conveniences of digging trucks with augers, hoists and booms, the holes are all dug by hand and the poles are lifted with ropes and pushed into place using long sticks.



First light: A young girl stands outside her home as a lightbulb cuts through the loom of mountain mist and descending darkness. Indiana crews had just closed the fuse on the transformer nearby to bring the flow of electricity to the home for the first time. The family stepped out to see what was going on.



### PROJECT INDIANA CREW

The crew of 16 Indiana electric cooperative linemen, supported by Indiana Electric Cooperatives supervisors **Gayvin Strantz**, **Terry Adkins** and **Scott Willett**, served in Guatemala March 12-26.

**Scott Adkins**  
WIN Energy REMC  
**Tyler Asbell**  
Dubois REC, Inc.  
**Jamie Bell**  
NineStar Connect  
**Michael Bowman**  
Boone REMC  
**Jesse Fisher**  
SCI REMC

**Jerry Garcia**  
Noble REMC  
**Jason Gates**  
Tipmont REMC  
**Travis Goffinet**  
Southern Indiana Power  
**David Guthrie**  
Jackson County REMC

**Isaac Harp**  
Kosciusko REMC  
**Josh Maggart**  
Miami-Cass REMC  
**Duane Monroe**  
Jay County REMC  
**Derrick Mullins**  
Whitewater Valley REMC

**Kevin Porter**  
Clark County REMC  
**Mike Wagner**  
Southeastern Indiana REMC  
**Robert White**  
Orange County REMC



Visit this story at [ElectricConsumer.org](http://ElectricConsumer.org) for more photos and to revisit the two previous trips in 2012 and 2015.