



Hurricane Helene 2024

# Here for Georgia

Community Restoration  
and the Power of Hope





## DEDICATION

In the year since Hurricane Helene carved its path through our state, much has been made of the fact that it was the most destructive hurricane in Georgia Power history. But while the events of September 27, 2024 were indeed unprecedented in the history of this company, Georgia Power's response was equally historic.

In the hours, days, and weeks after the storm's impact, thousands of Georgia Power employees—no matter where they were or what their role in the company's day-to-day operations are—dropped everything to serve their communities. As we commemorate one year since this historic storm upended life across the state we call home, we wanted first and foremost to try and capture a sense of the breadth not only of the storm's damage, but of our company's response, both from a power restoration perspective as well as that of our communities.

In attempting to represent the full story of this watershed moment for our state, we spoke with a wide range of people whose actions and leadership during these days and weeks typified our mission to be A Citizen Wherever We Serve. There are thousands more stories to tell, but we hope that by presenting this snapshot, we can get to the heart of what we know to be true—that Georgia is our home, and we are proud to be in its service. This book is dedicated to each and every one of our employees, partners, communities, and family members—without whom we would not be able to tell this story.

## Here for Georgia

Community Restoration  
and the Power of Hope







FOR THE GOOD OF SERVICE, SAFETY, AND SACRIFICE





**TROPICAL STORM HELENE** became the eighth named storm of 2024 on September 25 after being monitored for more than a week by the National Hurricane Center. The next day, Helene would enter the Gulf of Mexico as a hurricane – the fifth of the season – and establish its path toward the west coast of Florida and beyond.

By the time it reached shore just outside Perry, Florida, Helene had strengthened to a Category 4 Hurricane, the strongest storm on record to strike Florida’s Big Bend, and eventually the deadliest hurricane to strike the U.S. mainland since Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on the Gulf Coast in the fall of 2005. With sustained winds of over 140 mph, Helene began to cut a swath nearly 420 miles wide from Florida into southern Georgia, where it remained a Category 2 Hurricane as it entered the state near Valdosta and tore its way north—devastating communities along the central and eastern regions of the state from Lowndes County through Coastal Georgia and into Augusta and the Central Savannah River Area before continuing on to cause unprecedented damage in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee.

From the moment it entered The Peach State, Helene moved like an unstoppable force—decimating seemingly everything it touched. The storm dumped rain on nearly every part of Georgia, with both Atlanta and Columbus recording rainfall records despite not being in its direct path. The City of Atlanta declared its first ever flash flood emergency as flooding was so intense that more than 20 people had to be rescued as nearly a foot of rain caused creeks and rivers throughout the metro area to breach their banks.

The worst of the destruction was concentrated inside the storm’s direct path. Cities like Valdosta and Augusta saw unprecedented damage as Helene brought its carnage to bear along Georgia’s eastern side, uprooting trees,





flooding creeks and rivers, and toppling infrastructure at a remarkable scale. It's estimated that property damage from the storm topped \$1.5 billion statewide, while agricultural losses are estimated to have exceeded \$5.5 billion. More than 200,000 homes were damaged, and washed-out roads and bridges rendered some communities completely inaccessible and entirely without running water or electricity.

Georgia Power customers and employees alike awoke on the morning of September 27 to a new reality. Overnight, the fast-moving cyclone had toppled trees and downed power lines and transmission infrastructure along a 500-mile stretch from Florida to Southern Appalachia, spending most of the early morning hours leaving a trail of darkness through Georgia. As the storm passed and teams began to assess the damage, it became clear that Hurricane Helene was unlike any storm to ever impact the state of Georgia.

As the sun began to peek its way out of the dissipating clouds, Georgia Power crews and contractors across the state got their first glance at the task that lay ahead. Helene had left in its wake an unprecedented amount of destruction. In addition to the flooding that plagued the state, Helene had uprooted hundreds of thousands of trees, more than 3,000 of which were now resting

across power lines. Nearly 12,000 power poles had been broken in the storm, taking with them more than 5,800 transformers and more than 1,500 miles of wire –enough to stretch from Atlanta to Tucson, Arizona. Georgia's transmission infrastructure was affected as well, with more than 300 structures needed to be repaired or rebuilt. In all, more than 1.5 million outages were reported as a result of the storm, and some parts of the state's power grid would need to be rebuilt from the ground up.

An event of this magnitude demanded a response of equal measure, and Georgia Power teams in every corner of the state acted accordingly. In the week that followed, more than 20,000 personnel would be called in to restore power to every affected community. Assistance would come from across the Southern Company system as well as from more than 35 partner companies across the country, with crews from as far away as New Jersey, Oregon, and even Canada assisting Georgia Power crews around the clock as they worked to get Georgia's lights back on. Georgia Power employees from every inch of the business dropped everything to support crews on the ground. More than 30 base camps were erected to house and feed the thousands of lineworkers, vegetation managment personnel, contractors, engineers, and others who had

descended on Georgia to play their part in this all-hands-on-deck response.

It was a coordinated effort unlike any in the company's history, and within a week of Helene's arrival, Georgia Power had restored power to more than 95% of all affected customers—more than 1.3 million Georgia homes and businesses.

**In addition to the unprecedented ground response, Georgia Power quickly moved to help rebuild communities by donating to the American Red Cross's Helene relief fund, matching employee donations to community organizations, and facilitating volunteer projects around the state.**

The company also suspended service disconnects, waved eligible late fees, and paused collection activities through the end of 2024—even creating an installment payment plan to help communities take the time they needed to get back on their feet.

The storm is long past, and communities around the state continue to rebuild brick by brick, but as we reflect on the one-year anniversary of Helene's devastation, we are reminded of our mission to be A Citizen Wherever We Serve. Hurricane Helene has been referred to as a "100-year-storm," but Georgia Power is not resting on its laurels in its wake. And whether the next storm comes in one year or one century, we are committed to our mission and ready to weather any event. Through careful planning and investment, we remain dedicated to our state, our communities, and our customers. We are here for Georgia, no matter what storms may come.







Hurricane Helene brought unprecedented damage to Georgia Power's service areas, affecting countless communities, customers, and our fellow teammates.

**"I WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY  
THE RESILIENCE, DEDICATION  
AND COMPASSION  
DEMONSTRATED BY OUR  
EMPLOYEES. THEIR HARD WORK  
AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT  
TO OUR CUSTOMERS AND  
COMMUNITIES WAS NOTHING  
SHORT OF INSPIRING."**

They showed how we show up for our customers and each other at Southern Company, and the state of Georgia has emerged stronger and more united than ever.

**CHRIS WOMACK**  
Chairman, President and CEO  
Southern Company





## Leadership for an Unprecedented Response: A conversation with Georgia Power Chairman, President and CEO Kim Greene



**You have a long history of leadership in the Southern Company system, what lessons did you bring from your previous roles into leading Georgia Power during Hurricane Helene?**

The most important thing is listening, learning and recognizing that the role of the leader is to lead and not necessarily do. As much as I would have enjoyed maybe using a chainsaw and trying to help employees clear trees and put tarps on roofs, it's really my job to understand the magnitude of the tasks that we were facing across the entire state, remove barriers if they exist, support our teams, and communicate with our partners. We had so many important partners—our governor, the Department of Transportation, Georgia Emergency Management Agency and many local officials. When one agency might have needed support, we were there for them and vice versa. Again, the role of the leader is to be engaged enough to know what's happening, ensure that our teams are getting the support they need and to stand back and let them do the jobs that they were trained to do. It's my job to be that communicator and the face of the company at times, with the stakeholders who are curious and need to know about what's happening across the state.

**The Family Services Unit—our internal team that provided support to Georgia Power employees who were personally impacted by the storm—was a crucial piece of our response across the state. Can you speak to that?**

While our lineworkers and support folks were out restoring power, they were often leaving their own families with damaged homes and no power. When I got out into the field, I started hearing concerns that some of our employees had about their family members. In one case, there was a gentleman who had a child with some special needs. They needed refrigeration for certain kinds of food, and they did not have a generator at his home. He was trying to get one, but all the stores were sold

she assembled a team of incredible people. They immediately went to work, beginning to gather the needs of our employees in the field. They established what ended up being a robust Family Services Unit that provided very critical resources and products to our lineworkers and support personnel, so that they could have peace of mind about the wellbeing of their own families while they were out in the field restoring power.

**You've mentioned that you spent a lot of time in the field responding to the hurricane, can you talk about your reasons for wanting to respond in this way?**

It was really important for me to see firsthand the damage and the situation that our line workers and

**“A LOT OF FOLKS WERE WORKING IN VERY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS, VERY HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, AND THE FACT THAT NOBODY WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED IS SOMETHING THAT I’M VERY THANKFUL FOR. IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME THAT ALL OF OUR PEOPLE GO HOME SAFELY AT THE END OF THE DAY.”**

out. I hated that that employee, who was out in the field working in a very hazardous environment, might have been distracted by the understandable concern of his family. I immediately called a friend of mine who works at Home Depot, and I asked her about the availability of generators. She was very kind and generous, and said, 'Yes, we can get you generators. Where do you need them?' That was sort of the first call I made. Then I thought, I know the needs are greater than this one person, and I know I can't do this on my own. So, I enlisted the assistance of Lindsay Hill, our Human Resources leader, and in the matter of about four to five hours,

our field personnel were facing, and that just helped me understand more about what we needed to do as a company to respond and importantly, be able to communicate to all stakeholders in the most knowledgeable and credible way. Also, talking with people in the field about what they needed helped me recognize the needs of our employees' families given that they were experiencing such major damage to their own homes. That's really what led to establishing our family services organization in a major way.



**The response to this storm obviously went way beyond just Georgia Power. Do you have any standout community or company stories from this experience?**

There are stories of employees who couldn't get to the office and couldn't get there because there were trees down everywhere. Trees in their driveway, trees across the roads, and these employees would use a chainsaw to cut the trees down so that they could get through and get to the office. Many would go pick up their colleagues as well. People walked for long distances, just so that they could get to the office where they could get the tools and the truck to restore power. It's very clear to me that when people have lost everything, including

their business, including damage to their homes, it is impossible to start thinking about putting the pieces back together and recovering until you have power. When you don't have power, you really can't think about the future. You can't do anything. I think the stories that stuck out were just the stories of perseverance by these communities that in some cases, such as Valdosta, had been hit over and over again. Then, just the commitment by our employees to do whatever it took to get to where they could provide help to our customers. It's really just an amazing thing to watch.

So many employees of Georgia Power, who worked throughout the state, have such strong relationships



with local officials and customers. We had the trust and credibility of a lot of really important partners, and that doesn't just happen overnight. So when it did, in some communities, take longer than we had hoped to restore power, people had confidence in us that they knew we were working as hard as we could and they were supporting us. In Vidalia, even on day 11, as our bucket trucks were coming into the staging area where they were eating dinner and spending the night, there was a marching band from Vidalia High School welcoming them and children with signs saying thank you and we love you and be careful. That is something quite remarkable.

There was a huge feeling of selflessness that permeated wherever I traveled. It was coming together collectively to bring services that were needed for the community.

**What are you most proud of from Georgia Power's storm response?**

I am most proud of and grateful that none of our employees was seriously injured during this unprecedented restoration effort. We had tens of thousands of employees, contractor partners and other utility partners on the ground helping us. We had assistance from utilities from more than 30 states who came to help us. A lot of folks were working in very different conditions, very hazardous conditions, and the fact that nobody was seriously injured is something that I'm very thankful for. It is the most important thing to me that all of our people go home safely at the end of the day.

People who've been here for 30, 40 years, they've never seen damage like this—anywhere. They were out there working as hard as they could. They needed support, and one part that was also so beautiful is that a lot of our employees who work in the corporate office wanted to do something to help. They asked to go from Atlanta, for example, to Augusta, to Savannah, to Valdosta, to



Vidalia or wherever the needs were the greatest and just go help. They weren't even sure what exactly they were going to do or how long they were going to be gone, but they just had this huge desire to be part of the team—be part of the effort. I think to me, that learning and appreciation of how great this company is and how strong our culture is, just made me even more proud to be a part of it. Again, I'm just incredibly honored to watch these folks do their amazing work.

**As a CEO during this historic storm and our response, how did you ensure that our company and employees maintained high morale?**

This is a part of what we do, and I think there is a lot of pride that comes in our team's ability to get lives restarted by getting power back on. I wanted to make sure that they knew that I'm listening, I hear you, I'm with you,



and I support you. I also continued to communicate, as we always do here at Georgia Power, the importance of their safety. I know that they want to work as quickly as possible, but the most important thing is that this work is done safely and that everybody goes home to their



families at the end of the day. The devastation was just unimaginable, and I wanted to make sure they heard that I had their backs as they engaged with our customers or community leaders in terms of the schedule.

We were working as quickly as humanly possible, but the most important thing is that we were working safely. Hopefully, our employees who understand that this is the way I believe and the way our leadership team believes, that made them feel more confident in being able to do the work in the right way. Hopefully, our employees who understand that this is the way I believe and the way our leadership team believes, that made them feel more confident in being able to do the work in the right way.

**What do you think you learned from the experience of leading Georgia Power during this time, and what advice do you have for future leaders?**

It was something that nobody ever wants to go through, but if you have to go through it, I think we did an amazing job. Yes, we learned lessons, and we immediately started thinking about how we could even do better, going forward. Family services, for example. We'll be ready to stand that up more quickly and be even better prepared for whatever may happen in our future. But it wasn't anything we did alone. We had a lot of help, and I think that in times of need, raising your hand and saying that we need help is a sign of strength. I'm very thankful we did that, and that just allowed us to get our customers on even quicker.







**FROM THE GEORGIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**



**A**s the most destructive storm in Georgia's long history, impacting every single part of the state, Hurricane Helene tested families and communities like never before. With historic rainfall and mudslides in North Georgia, record flooding in Atlanta of over 11 inches in just two days, and a massive amount of damage across much of the Southeastern United States, Helene devastated homes, whole communities, our farmers and timber growers, and hundreds of thousands of Georgians directly impacted by its disastrous force.

It also tested our great utility provider partners, including Georgia Power and our EMCs. With over 11,800 power poles broken and over 5,800 transformers damaged for Georgia Power, alone, no other weather event has had such a destructive impact on our state. And yet the response to this tragedy of both the people and businesses of our state—including Georgia Power—proved yet again that tough times don't last, tough people do.

Georgia Power called up over 20,000 people who worked around the clock to restore power, and on behalf of a grateful state, Marty, the girls, and I are truly thankful for their heroic and historic achievements during that painful time. We visited with some of the linemen who did backbreaking work from

before the sun rose to well after it set to thank them firsthand. Their dedication and endurance during those first days and weeks of recovery continue to inspire us a year later and will do so well into the future.

Marty and I also toured 16 of the hardest-hit counties in Helene's wake as they began to rebuild their communities and livelihoods. In every community, we saw utter devastation that would impact that area for generations. But in the face of grief and unbearable loss, we also saw everyday heroes.



**“A YEAR LATER, GEORGIA IS STILL REBUILDING. BUT HARDWORKING FAMILIES, BUSINESS LEADERS, COMMUNITY OFFICIALS, ENTREPRENEURS AND NONPROFITS, CHURCHES, AND EVERYDAY HEROES ARE CARRYING OUT THAT WORK WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE WILL BE STRONGER THAN WE WERE BEFORE THE STORM... AND THAT THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOR WILL BE YET ANOTHER REMINDER THAT TOUGH TIMES DON'T LAST. TOUGH PEOPLE DO.”**



**BRIAN AND MARTY KEMP**  
Georgia's 83rd Governor and First Lady





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— Governor Brian Kemp and  
First Lady Marty Kemp



We saw neighbors helping neighbors, lending a hand or a chainsaw, even when their own homes and farms were in need of attention. We saw brand new church outreach programs feeding whole towns, and we saw first responders who put the lives of others above their own. Brave men and women like them had to literally cut people out of their homes and, sadly, had to recover the bodies of those killed by the storm.

The people of Georgia faced these heartbreaking scenes and challenges with steady strength, with the power of prayer, with the support of their loved ones, and with the assurance that can only come from almighty God. That incredible demonstration of endur-

ing faith and perseverance are what elected officials of all parties and backgrounds remembered as they came together to pass relief measures on the state level and to call on federal officials to provide the support needed for Georgia's communities, businesses, farmers and producers, and timber growers.

A year later, Georgia is still rebuilding. But hardworking families, business leaders, community officials, entrepreneurs and nonprofits, churches, and everyday heroes are carrying out that work with the knowledge that we will be stronger than we were before the storm... and that the fruit of their labor will be yet another reminder that tough times don't last. Tough people do.







**W**e were at home and monitoring the weather reports like everyone. We wanted to make sure we were in a safe spot and if the storm hit our local area, we were fully prepared. I think we all realized it would be really damaging when the projected path shifted.

I think it was remarkable how everyone came together. Neighbors helping neighbors, and we even met a family from California who came to help in the Vidalia region. It was a couple and their twin sons. They were handing out water and food. It was appreciated by the local community more than anyone could say because someone from across the country was there to lend a helping hand. It just proves that when we all come together, we will come out stronger than before. That is just the Georgia way, neighbors helping neighbors. When everyone rolls up their sleeves and helps, it makes recovery and rebuilding easier. We are thankful for all Georgia Power did and continues to do.

**“THERE WAS A LOT OF SHOCK AND FEAR, BUT ALSO A LOT OF PERSEVERANCE AND DETERMINATION TO REBUILD. EVERYONE CAME TOGETHER TO MOURN THE VICTIMS, WHILE ALSO HELPING EACH OTHER FROM BRINGING WATER AND SNACKS TO HELPING CLEAN UP AND GET THOSE TRAPPED IN THEIR HOMES OUT.”**



**BURT JONES**  
Georgia's 13th Lieutenant Governor





**“THIS IS GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST ONE  
I’VE EVER SEEN.”**

**TAMI BARRON**  
Senior Vice President,  
Distribution, Georgia Power



**Georgia Power prides itself on storm readiness.** But nearly as soon as teams began tracking the strength and path of what would become Hurricane Helene, it became clear that this storm could be different. While Helene would not make landfall in Georgia, its path and the strength it was gathering in the Gulf outside Florida’s Big Bend region were creating a potential nightmare scenario for the state. As Helene crawled its way onto land just east of the mouth of Florida’s Aucilla river, thousands of Georgia Power employees waited to see just what she would do.

**Tami Barron | Senior Vice President, Distribution:**

We start tracking this thing as soon as the disturbance comes off the coast and it starts forming. This was probably two days before the storm. We’re in the storm center, and Kim’s in there. She said, ‘How bad is this going to be?’ I said, ‘This is going to be the biggest one I’ve ever seen,’ and I can’t tell you why. It was just a gut feeling.

**Fran Forehand | Former Senior Vice President,**

**Transmission:** We had started planning days before the storm. You pull all of your storm directors together and you pull together what you think is going to be a suitable plan based on the current forecast—and forecasts change from day to day whenever you’re looking at hurricanes. About a day out, listening to our contract storm forecasters, I knew we needed to bring in more resources from a transmission perspective—more resources than we probably ever had on our system before.

**Joseph Brownlee | Region Executive, Valdosta:**

We knew it was going to be bad. I’ve been here 43 years and it’s the worst one I’ve seen. I live almost downtown, in an older home built in 1947, with a lot of big trees around it. So I knew I didn’t want to be at home. My mother lives fairly close to me—she’s in her 80s. So we got a room at the Mackie Hotel right across from the old courthouse in downtown Valdosta. It was a brick and steel building built in the 1920s, and it’s five stories. I think we got a room on the third story. I thought we were fine but when it hit, the windows were blown out, air conditioners were lifted off the roof and thrown into the street and water poured

in. While we were physically safe, it was scary. Being there, in my mind, I knew what it was doing to our system, and I knew that probably for the next week I wouldn’t sleep much.

**Calvin Ellington | Manager, Budget:** I don’t think anybody thought it was going to be as bad as it was. I definitely did not expect that. I think we started working in the Storm Center on the 24th of September. Three or four days prior to impact. We’re trying to figure out where to put base camps, so it’s not completely different from any other storm. It’s always a little unnerving, you know, you get a little concerned the day of. The night prior to impact, I’m downtown working. We stayed overnight because we didn’t really know what was going to happen since the storm passed through Georgia overnight. Leading up to it, I’m not with my family so I’m a little concerned because there’s a hurricane coming. Usually I would go back home, but since it was happening in the middle of the night, we wanted to be downtown and prepared the next morning.

**Evan Slagle | Line Crew Leader, Distribution:**

The day prior, I remember we had a good bit of trouble. Lot of trees down. It rained all day long, and I just remember there being like inches of water in the bottom of the bucket. They sent us home. We probably worked 15 or 16 hours that day. I’ve got a wife and three little girls. I tried to get them prepared for anything that could possibly happen. The girls were sleeping in the bedroom with us that night, you know, we were all pretty tight. Woke up in the middle of night, and it was coming down. It was pretty crazy.

**Woody Rozier | Crew Leader, Distribution:**

The news was talking it up, but this time was different. Every media station was talking about getting prepared, hurricane awareness—things you need to do. I told my wife, if it hits like they say, it’s going to be pretty bad. We might be gone for at least a couple weeks, maybe come home for a week or two and go back down, which is exactly what happened. Then we heard from friends down south that it was real bad—no cell phone service, no communication at all because all the towers were down. That’s when we realized it was going to be a long road ahead, and pretty much the whole service area was going down there in Augusta.

**Danny Robinson | Supervisor, Environmental**

**Affairs:** Because of what our team does on a routine basis, we were already planning for this to be a major storm, probably five days out. We’re working with the storm center pretty closely, especially during this time of year to look at storms as they’re developing, where their path could take them.

**Shelby Bice | Former Manager, Stakeholder**

**Engagement:** I was getting on the calls with the SEE, the Southeastern Exchange, making sure that we had all the crews that we needed. When we were still kind of ramping up, I was part of those negotiations and getting us more folks, making sure the logistics teams had what they wanted and needed to support all of those people.

**William Mock III | Region Executive, Savannah:**

I grew up in Savannah, Savannah’s home, and for the last 10 plus years, I was the plant manager of our Georgia Power coastal plant. Over the past several years, we’ve experienced a number of storms and so preparing for storms wasn’t something that was new to me, but this one felt different.

**Kerry Bridges | Region Executive, Augusta:**

I started seeing some models that showed it’s veering further and further east. And so I really got concerned the afternoon of the Thursday before, and went home to my wife and daughter and started preparing for them to be without power and for me not to be there, because I knew I was going to have to go to work for several days.

**Hollis Rish | Former Distribution Manager,**

**Savannah:** It’s hard to believe we’re nearing the one-year mark since Hurricane Helene. In the days and months that followed, I came to fully appreciate the magnitude of what we faced—and overcame.

**Rick Anderson | Senior Vice President and Senior**

**Production Officer:** I remain inspired by the strength and spirit of our Georgia Power Generation team, whose efforts continue to earn my deepest admiration and gratitude. Faced with extraordinary challenges, our teams rose to the occasion with preparation and resilience, prioritizing safety and maintaining operational reliability throughout the storm.

**Asa Weems | Plant Operator, North Georgia Hydro:**

We knew Hurricane Helene was coming. We were expecting it to go east of us a little ways, and that would have pushed the rain east of us quite a ways. So we did a lot of the normal stuff—we lowered the lake levels to make room for the extra rainfall, went around the plants to make sure everything was secured, tied down, or moved inside. You don’t want stuff flying around. A lot of us have generators, so we filled up gas cans, had our chainsaws and tractors ready, sharpened blades, and staged trucks in different places so we could get to them even if the weather was bad.







I went to Augusta with my office to deliver water and supplies as I was traveling the state to survey the damage from Hurricane Helene. It was there I met Wayne Lanier, owner of Lanier's Fresh Meat Market, giving out free food and water to the community. It was that classic Georgia generosity on display in a moment of crisis, and it strengthened my resolve to secure the federal funding for recovery support and resources they needed.

Public and private partnership is critical after a devastating storm like Hurricane Helene, and we saw that as state and federal agencies and Georgia Power worked to bring power and purpose back to our communities. Georgia Power's partnership in disaster recovery efforts was critical for saving more lives and getting power back to people. I know when the next storm hits, Georgia Power workers will be standing ready to serve again.

**“GEORGIANS WERE DEVASTATED BY THE LOSS OF LIFE AND THE DESTRUCTION TO THEIR HOMES, AND THE EMOTIONAL TOLL LEFT ON THOSE IMPACTED WAS PROFOUND. BUT I SAW HOW THESE COMMUNITIES CAME TOGETHER TO HEAL, NEIGHBORS HELPING THEIR NEIGHBORS, AND I WAS REMINDED HOW THE WORST OF TIMES OFTEN HAVE A WAY OF BRINGING THE BEST OUT OF US.”**



**RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK**  
U.S. Senator





One year ago, Hurricane Helene swept through Georgia with winds exceeding 125 miles per hour, leaving behind a trail of destruction with flattened homes, shattered infrastructure, and over a million Georgians without power. The storm tested us. Entire communities faced unimaginable loss and disruption.

In the face of that devastation, we witnessed the best of Georgia. Within hours, linemen from across our state and a dozen others mobilized. They braved flooded streets, hazardous debris, and grueling shifts to restore power and bring light back to our homes. I saw it firsthand in Clinch County: families who had lost everything, and linemen who left their own families behind to help them rebuild.

We’ve learned hard lessons about preparedness, infrastructure, and the critical importance of coordination. But we’ve also learned how strong we are when we stand together. As we commemorate this anniversary, we’ll continue to invest in that strength. Let us honor the linemen, first responders, and neighbors who rose to the occasion, and rededicate ourselves to ensuring Georgia is even stronger for the storms yet to come.

**“THE RESPONSE TO HELENE WASN’T JUST IMMEDIATE, IT HAS BEEN ENDURING. OUR STATE HAS WORKED HAND IN HAND WITH UTILITY PROVIDERS TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES MORE RESILIENT THROUGH RESTORING THE GRID AND STRENGTHENING BROADBAND. IT’S A MODEL OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AND A TESTAMENT TO THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE THAT DEFINES GEORGIA.”**



**JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
Georgia State Senator, District 18



**Marie Bertot | Crisis Communications Lead:**

A good 24 hours out we saw the shift in the forecast, so we were ready. We were prepared. We knew it was a historic storm and we were anticipating a good number of outages. We had seen the devastation it had caused going into Florida when it made landfall. So we knew it was going to be serious.

**Ben Morris | Distribution Operations Manager, Savannah:**

Even the day before it hit, we were on a call all feeling like we were going to pack our bags and potentially go elsewhere—maybe a little bit further west in the state—thinking we were out of the direct impact for the storm. Late that evening, we got an update that the course had shifted and we were suddenly in the path. Panic started to settle in, and we communicated with our crew resources, engineering resources, and contract resources to shelter in place.

**Ashley Koby | General Manager, Materials Management:**

We are nonstop, like every week we look at our storm inventory to make sure we are at our benchmark levels, so no real surprises there. We knew we were in good shape, and I'll say, one of our strengths is that during a storm, we treat Southern Company's inventory as our inventory. It's not just Georgia Power's, we have access to Alabama and Mississippi Power.

**Walter Dukes II | Former Distribution Manager, Augusta:**

When Hurricane Helene struck, more than 95% of customers in the Augusta area were impacted by widespread outages. Despite some personal losses, power outages at their own homes, and significant storm damage, the Augusta Distribution team demonstrated an unwavering dedication to the mission of restoring power to our CSRA community.

**Fran Forehand:** We brought in our native contractors before the storm ever hit. I can remember making a



call at 4:32 in the morning to one of our major contractors, saying, "Send me every transmission lineman you have." And because of the great working relationship we have, there was no hesitation—they sent everyone they could get their hands on.

**William Mock III:** There was just this uncertainty of where the storm was going. There were some models that were showing it avoiding our area. There were some models saying it would kind of brush our area, and there are other models saying that it had the potential to be very impactful to our area. And I remember him [the weatherman] saying we'll wake up tomorrow morning and we'll know what we got. That morning, I logged in to the outage maps and saw the numbers. Eighty percent of the customers in our service territory had no power. So I knew at that point that we had gotten pretty substantially hit.

**Enif Morris | Supervisor, Customer Service:** We worked closely with the Storm Center to monitor the storm, but when I heard the category and the size, that's when it became serious to me. Especially because I kept hearing the wind outside. Customers started calling and you could hear it through their phone calls.

As things started escalating it became apparent that this is not just your typical two-to-three-day storm. This is something more serious.

**Ben Morris:** It was very surreal, the amount of damage that was done. Early in the morning it sounded like a train was going through the house. I had my family shelter in a safe space until it passed. It didn't last long, but it did its damage quickly.

**Sydney Tuttle | Engineer, Savannah:** I know the week leading up before it, they said it may hit, it may not hit. You know, we weren't exactly sure about the weather forecast, but I went ahead and got prepped. I went to Walmart and I stocked up on water bottles. I stocked up on canned food and I was ready. When it hit, it was so loud. I thought my building was going to fall over.

**Jill Fonville | Former Director, Stakeholder Engagement & Operational Communications:**

It's 3:00 in the morning, it's pitch black, and we heard the first crack and tree fall. After that it was just like crack, pop, fall, fall, fall. You couldn't see anything—all you could do was hear it. The best way I can describe the wind is it sounded like a freight train coming at you. It would be eerily quiet, and then all of a sudden you would hear the wind, and stuff would just start hammering the side of our house.

**Shelby Bice:** My family understood I would be gone until restoration was complete. This wasn't my first storm at the Storm Center, so I prepared to ensure my husband had everything needed to care for our three-year-old while I was gone. I ended up being away for 18 days, the longest I've ever been apart from my child, which was challenging. The night I finally got to go home to my family after 18 days is a memory that will be burned in my brain forever.







I was watching the news and saw that the storm was heading to Atlanta. I thought Atlanta was going to get hit hard. Then all of a sudden, the announcer said, “Well, it looks like the storm is heading east.” I am thinking to myself, well, east, well, that is us. When the storm hit, I remember hearing the wind and looking out my window, seeing the tree limbs breaking off, praying that the tree would not fall on the house.

The initial mood of the community was shock. As you drove around and surveyed the damage it was unbelievable. I remember thinking how this could ever be cleaned up. The lights were ripped entirely down, and the power poles were completely down.

There were many memorable moments. Two come to mind. I remember working food lines and seeing people coming together to help others, but the folks serving the food didn’t have power; they were still out there, though, assisting others. Another memory is seeing the staging area start to form at Augusta Mall, with all the power trucks coming to help the community. It was like hope was descending upon the city.

The response means that we can come together to improve people’s lives. That crisis brought everyone together, demonstrating our ability to work together and providing a blueprint for how we can set aside our differences to improve the community.

Georgia Power was a tremendous partner for the community. They help lead the efforts to get this city back on its feet. Organizing all of the different power companies to come to aid our city was something I will never forget. They are an invaluable resource for our community and the state of Georgia.

**“IN PREVIOUS STORMS, YOU WOULD HAVE LINES THAT WERE DOWN, BUT WITH HELENE, ENTIRE POLES WERE DOWN. AS YOU DROVE THE NEIGHBORHOODS, WHOLE SWATHS OF TREES WERE DOWN, AND TREES WERE LITERALLY INSIDE OF PEOPLE’S HOMES. I THINK MOST PEOPLE WONDERED, “HOW WILL THIS EVER BE FIXED?”**



**HAROLD V. JONES II**  
Georgia State Senate, Minority Leader,  
District 55





**“IT WAS CRUCIAL TO GET LIFE AND LIMB TYPE CUSTOMERS BACK ONLINE QUICKLY, LIKE THE WATER PLANTS AND HOSPITALS. WE ALSO FOCUSED ON SETTING UP STAGING SITES TO ACCOMMODATE THE THOUSANDS OF LINEMEN AND SUPPORT STAFF COMING IN.”**

**KERRY BRIDGES**  
Region External Affairs,  
East Augusta, Georgia



**Hurricane Helene carved its way through Georgia** in the early morning hours of Friday, September 27—crossing the state’s southern border as a Category 2 Hurricane before being downgraded to a tropical storm just east of Macon. The storm moved quickly over land, accelerating as it moved toward Coastal Georgia. Wind gusts of over 100 mph were recorded throughout the state as Helene churned its way up Georgia’s eastern flank, wreaking havoc in the southern and eastern regions of the state and taking the lives of 28 Georgians. As the sun rose on Friday morning, residents of those hardest hit regions looked out onto a drastically altered landscape, while crews and support staff across the state prepared to respond.

**Joey Barrett | Area Manager, West Macon:** I woke up, you know, immediately grabbed my phone, looked at the outage numbers and saw that my area had been totally devastated.

**Danny Robinson:** I got kind of nervous at my house because I live in the woods. It rained for 48 hours beforehand, and we knew the winds were going to be high. We all slept in the basement that night, and it went through during the middle of the night. The creek behind our house was really high. I think that’s when I realized—early that morning—that Augusta had been hit as hard as it was. Our team met that morning and there was a lot of shifting. Our whole piece that was going to manage Macon shifted over to Augusta.

**Cleve Fann | Former Vice President, Strategy and Support, Distribution:** We were thinking the storm was going to be closer to Atlanta, and it kind of jogged 80 miles east of what the forecasted track had shown. So we knew we were going to have our hands full, but just the devastation. I stayed in the hotel right across from our operating headquarters that Thursday night. When I woke up Friday morning the numbers weren’t terrible, but we knew the storm was still moving and creating problems for us.

**Evan Slagle:** You know, the next morning, there wasn’t too much sleep going on. But when it finally saw daylight, I went outside, and it was still storming

pretty good. Wind was blowing, still raining, and there were just trees down everywhere. I’ve got a pretty long driveway, and there were probably 40 to 50 trees, big pine trees, oak trees, just laid across it. I’m a crew leader, so I was getting phone calls from the time I got up from the guys on the crew that were trying to get to work that they couldn’t. We went straight for the chainsaws. Had two tractors running. It took probably two hours just to cut a path out of my driveway to where I could get to my road. Once I got to the road, I pulled out, hung a left, and made it about 150 yards before I found an oak tree across the road. Turned around. Went the other way, and there were power lines and trees across the road. So I went back to the house and grabbed another saw. We pretty much cut our way to work.

**Ben Morris:** That morning, waking up and going outside, I saw the amount of trees that were down and the damage in my neighborhood. Roads were blocked—there was no way to get out. It became a harsh reality quickly that if Savannah was anything like here, we had a lot of work to do.

**Asa Weems:** We honestly went home that night thinking it wasn’t going to be as bad for us as it ended up being. The eye of the storm ended up coming right over us. We actually set records for the most water flow we’ve seen over Tallulah Falls Dam since they’ve been recording it. We had every gate we possibly could open at Tugalo—I think we had seven gates open.

**Latanza Adjei | Senior Vice President, Customer Experience & Chief Customer Officer:** We really had to communicate. Customers had to trust that we were coming at every step along the way, especially since many of them went days before they saw line trucks working in their community.

**Walter Dukes:** Team members set aside personal hardships to serve others—some shortened or canceled vacations, while others walked to work or even cut fallen trees along their routes just to make it into the office.



**Danny Robinson:** It was a little bit of shock. I don’t think that most folks, especially in the Augusta area, really anticipated stuff like that. I feel like because I live in Atlanta, we generally look at where we live here as a safe haven from hurricanes. I have family that lives in Panama City and Myrtle Beach, and they all come here when there’s a hurricane. I think it was this eye-opening thing that, hey we’re this far inland and Augusta just absolutely got devastated, and because of how fast it moved, I think there was kind of that initial shock that hit the Augusta area. I think there was a widespread lack of preparedness out there, and it could have been because they didn’t anticipate being in that heart of the storm.

**Walter Kirk | Photographer:** When we got to Valdosta, they were still cutting trees out of the road. The area was hit extremely bad—the worst I’d seen since Michael. I realized by early afternoon we weren’t going to stay there; I felt we might end up sleeping in the car that night, although I didn’t tell Daniel.

**Daniel Loggins | Video Producer:** It looked like a war zone. There are trees down everywhere, trees on power lines, people’s roofs destroyed. It took us an hour to drive from one side of Valdosta to the other.

**Joey Barrett:** Once the sun came up that morning and you could see the devastation, it was solemn. I would probably use that word to describe the demeanor of most people because, you know, it’s been well documented. It’s the worst event in Georgia Power history.

**Fran Forehand:** This was the largest amount of transmission damage in our company’s history. Our transmission grid was literally on the ground. We had 1,200 spans of transmission lines impacted, which is the most in our history. All of the 230 kV transmission system in the Augusta area was out. That had never



happened before. But our goal was clear—get the transmission grid back up first so we wouldn’t be the roadblock to restoring service to customers.

**Kerry Bridges:** I would almost characterize it as borderline panic. You know, sitting there, trapped between trees, my phone began ringing. I worked in and out of this region for 10 years. So have a lot of great contacts that I built through my different jobs here at Georgia Power in the community, and I was receiving phone calls from elected officials that were trapped in their homes, that were, you know, trapped in their yards, in their driveways.

**Jill Fonville:** Between our yards, there were probably 60 trees down. They were just pancaked across everything. The whole neighborhood was out with chain-





saws and machinery just so we could clear people out of their driveways.

**Fran Forehand:** I’ve never in my 35-year history received that many transmission lockout notifications.

**Joseph Brownlee:** The first three days, it was probably 20 hours a day, if not more. Basically 24/7. My office is right here at headquarters. I’ve got a shower right outside, so I really didn’t sleep at all – maybe dozed off for 10 minutes watching the news just to see what was going on. My house is right in the middle of town, almost on campus of Valdosta State University, and it was nine days before we got lights on.

**Sydney Tuttle:** I think the initial mood we felt was shock because we don’t think anyone expected it to be that bad.

**It was total destruction. I’ve really never seen anything like that.**

— Evan Slagle



**Calvin Ellington:** It was just really devastating. I’ve been through storms before and it’s always devastating somewhere, but just how widespread it was compared to what we had seen historically—just to think about how many people were impacted. We had employees living in all the most affected areas. You want to do what you can to help.

**Danny Robinson:** The hurricane was that Thursday night into Friday morning. I was reaching out to folks there on Friday. I went out there Saturday or Sunday to work with supply chain to figure out where they were going to start setting up staging areas and how many staging areas they were going to set up. I had all my crews and vendors, except for one, show up Monday morning, and that started the next six weeks of being there. We had two really large staging areas that worked at the Augusta Mall and the fairgrounds out there.

**Kerry Bridges:** Our role in the first couple of days was really about communication and coordination. We worked closely with our key leaders and elected officials, coordinating with GEMA, FEMA, the water department, hospitals, and Key Account customers

who were providing essential services to the general population. It was crucial to get life and limb type customers back online quickly, like the water plants and hospitals. We also focused on setting up staging sites to accommodate the thousands of linemen and support staff coming in. It was a monumental task, and our team was at the center of ensuring that all the moving parts worked together seamlessly to get the power back on for our community.

**Evan Slagle:** There were very few people at the shop. Just me and the other crew leader who works in Augusta. Nobody could get there. We knew the lights were out everywhere. I mean, everything, as far as we were concerned, was out. So as soon as we got there, me and the other crew leader hopped in a truck, and we were riding around just figuring out what we could do to get the lights back at the shop on so we could have a little command center. And we just started working on figuring out what we needed to do, with broke poles, wire down or whatever, just to get the shop back on. That was what we did until other line crew members showed up.

**Calvin Ellington:** I was in the Storm Center, supporting logistics from there. Our goal was to set up base camps, identifying the sites we were going to use and initiating vendors so that they would go set up. If we needed a camp set up for 1,000 people, we would call a vendor. I think we used roughly four different vendors during Helene for support. They would go set up the camps where people were going to sleep. We also brought in caterers that would feed them, so it was basically like building a small city. We would initiate that, and then our goal was to find groups of employees to go help run those camps. We were finding volunteers to help support from Georgia Power, Mississippi Power, Alabama Power and Southern Company, as well as Gas. We had volunteers from every OpCo, which was the first time, to my knowledge, that that had ever



happened. We had so many base camps—there were 34 that we set up across the state. We had so many camps that we didn’t have enough people to staff them, so we really leaned on our Southern Company partners.

**Danny Robinson:** We were still adding basecamps up until October 3rd. I was able to make it out to Augusta later during storm restoration, but for most of the days I stayed in the Storm Center adding base camps and staying in constant communication with the team out there. The grind of that daily, you know, 16 hours in there, staying downtown at night, sometimes coming back home just for a little while is pretty grueling.

**William Mock III:** It’s long road to restoring what people and the community need and getting their power back is like the first step in the recovery process. You know, their home may be damaged, but when they

have their power back on, there’s some level of comfort that that can provide.

**Joseph Brownlee:** The uniqueness of a hurricane was kind of gone on this group, so it was just like, “Okay, here we are. Let’s go get it.” The enormity of the staging areas we had. There was a staging area at the old Valdosta High School that a little over 1,000 people were staying in. We got that set up pretty quickly.

**Ashley Koby:** This one being as big as it was, you could tell in the communities that people were suffering. Folks were feeling helpless. They’d lost everything. It’s really what drives our culture because our folks know and understand that they’re the first glimpse of hope that these folks see. We’re usually the first ones there, rebuilding things. It drives our people, and I think it drives some positive emotion in our customers.

I think it’s one of the reasons our folks are willing to sacrifice like they do.

**Cleve Fann:** I never saw any panic. I mean, we have, I think, the best folks in the business at doing this, and a lot of confidence in our ability to take care of our customers. Now, it was stressful, and there was a serious sense of urgency about securing resources and places and hotels or staging sites to house them. You know that we had a good plan in place, thanks to all the preparations leading up to the storm over that you know, those first few days of that week, folks like Eric McIntyre and Jason Stott, Shelby Bice and Chris Boyer all working to make sure we were in as good of a place as we could be.

**Shelby Bice:** A few days into restoration—we realized this would be a two-week storm, not just a couple of days. Everyone was really feeling the weight and pressure, so we held a safety stand-down in the storm center. We discussed the mental load on our team, acknowledging that while we weren’t facing physical hazards like those in the field, we were driving strategy and logistics. We needed to be in the right mindset, and operating around the clock wasn’t sustainable, so we decided to implement shift work, allowing everyone to rest, which reset the tone and culture in the storm center, encouraging people to speak up if they were too tired or needed a break.

**Jill Fonville:** In the neighborhood, it was that sense of, “Oh my God, this really happened.” But more than that, it was the community rallying around each other. Generally, what you felt in the community was this sense of, “This is going to take a while.” Georgia Power is working hard, we could see them out there, but everyone recognized the damage was so bad. They didn’t expect it to be on within a day or two, which was kind of refreshing.



“GEORGIA POWER’S IMMEDIATE AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT, COMBINED WITH THE DEDICATION OF LINEMEN, UTILITY WORKERS, AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL, RESTORED HOPE FOR THOSE WHO WERE FACING ONE OF THEIR DARKEST HOURS. ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE, AND ON BEHALF OF EVERY GEORGIAN, I EXTEND MY GRATITUDE TO THE BUSINESSES AND UTILITY PROVIDERS THAT STOOD BY THE CITIZENS THEY SERVE AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY CALL HOME.”



**JON G. BURNS**  
Georgia Speaker of the House,  
District 159

In September of 2024, Hurricane Helene made landfall, leaving behind unprecedented destruction and generational damage to homes, property, and farmland across the Southeast, and claiming the lives of more than 250 of our fellow Americans. Despite the immense loss and grief we experienced, my faith in the strength and goodness of mankind has never been stronger.

The day before the storm was expected to pass through, Dayle and I, like countless other Georgians, were busy making preparations around our home and farm. What none of us could prepare for was Helene’s sudden shift to the east, nor the extraordinary severity of the storm as it swept across Georgia.

The next morning, we woke up to heartbreaking damage—trees that had been on the property for generations were uprooted, and debris was scattered across the farm. Yet we knew we were among the fortunate ones. Many of our neighbors faced devastation far worse than ours. Our family, along with members of the Georgia House, immediately joined in clearing driveways, removing trees from homes and buildings, and working alongside first responders, emergency management agencies, and utility crews to identify where help and resources were needed most.

While Hurricane Helene reminded us of the strength of nature, it also revealed something even greater: the resilience of our state and the generous spirit of Georgians. I witnessed local charities organizing food drives, faith leaders offering prayer and comfort, volunteers from every corner of the state and nation cleaning up storm debris, Georgia Power linemen working around the clock to restore power, and medical professionals delivering compassionate care. Even in the midst of complete devastation, Georgians did what we do best—lend a helping hand to our neighbors in need.

Robin and I went to bed at 10:30pm with the latest reports expecting the storm to go down I-75. At 4:30am the next morning, we lost power and moments later a tree hit the roof of our home in Augusta. We quickly went downstairs to wait out the rest of the storm. This was our first time experiencing 100 mph winds. At daylight, we went outside to assess damage. We had no communication, no cell service, and no internet. I got in the car and weaved my way around downed trees and powers lines, heading north on I-20 until I had cell service. I made calls to community leaders and first responders and later visited every corner of the district to survey damage.

The shock and heartbreak in our community was apparent. We have never seen devastation like this. But we quickly came together as neighbors to help each other in any way we could. We also had law enforcement from surrounding counties come together to ensure our safety.

Power was initially restored at my home in Augusta after a few days. While I was on the road traveling the district, Robin called me and said the power had gone out again. Georgia Power showed up the next morning to see what the issue was—turns out a snake had crawled up the power pole and into the transformer—frying itself and the power.

I visited the linemen who worked from sun-up to sun-down and I am amazed by how quickly they restored power. My granddaughters wrote them thank you notes as well. The response from Georgia Power was unlike anything I have ever seen, and we are forever grateful.



“I’M TOLD WE HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED A HURRICANE LIKE THIS IS NEARLY 150 YEARS. HURRICANE HELENE WILL FOREVER CHANGE OUR COMMUNITY, BUT NEARLY ONE YEAR DOWN THE ROAD, WE ARE STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT.”



**RICK W. ALLEN**  
Georgia U.S. Congressman,  
District 12





After Hurricane Helene passed through South Georgia, people were hurting. Some lost their homes, others were cut off from family, and everyone was just trying to wrap their heads around what happened to our community. There was this mix of shock and sadness, but most importantly, quiet determination. In South Georgia, community is incredibly important to us, and we are built for moments like this. In the aftermath, everyone immediately started checking on each other, clearing debris, gathering supplies, you name it. We knew we had to support one another, and we did.

The community response was overwhelming and honestly brought tears to my eyes. Seeing how people just showed up to help, when no one told them to and no one asked them to, was incredible. They just came. Folks were flying in supplies by plane—food, clean water, clothes—using their own time and their own money just to help people they'd never met. Others drove in from hours away, even out of state, bringing whatever they could and asking where they were needed. God says love your neighbor, and I've never seen that lived out more clearly than I did in those days.

As our community was trying to pick up the pieces, Georgia Power was out there on the front lines, working around the clock not only to restore power, but also to ensure people were safe and comforted. It wasn't about publicity—it was about people. You could tell they genuinely care about the well-being of the communities they serve.

The way folks came together showed the true heart of Georgia. We're truly stronger when we lean on each other, and even in the worst of times, there's hope. This storm reminded us that when everything else is taken away—the house, the car, the possessions we think matter—what remains are the most important things in life: God, family, and community.



**“THERE WAS THIS MIX OF SHOCK AND SADNESS, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, QUIET DETERMINATION. IN SOUTH GEORGIA, COMMUNITY IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO US, AND WE ARE BUILT FOR MOMENTS LIKE THIS.”**



**BUDDY CARTER**  
Georgia U.S. Congressman,  
District 1









A week leading up to Hurricane Helene, I received a call from Don Hutchinson with Georgia Power about the potential damages and his desire to work closely like we have in the past to ensure people would be fully aware of what could take place and ongoing efforts for restoration. Days before the storm my family and I were closely monitoring weather reports and staying in touch with local emergency officials. I knew from the early forecasts that this was going to be more than just a passing storm. Helene had the potential to cause widespread damage. As the warnings became more urgent, I ensured my family was safe at home while I stayed in constant communication with local leaders, law enforcement, and utility providers to prepare for what was ahead.

Immediately after the storm passed, there was a mix of shock, concern, and determination. People were assessing damage to their homes and businesses, checking on neighbors, and trying to figure out the next steps. Despite the challenges, I saw a spirit of resilience, neighbors helping neighbors, churches opening doors, and volunteers stepping in wherever they could. Responding to a storm like Hurricane Helene is a monumental task. It takes a significantly high level of coordination amongst state and local agencies and our private partners to effectively respond. As Georgia Department of Agriculture’s Emergency Management team coordinated the state’s agricultural response, Georgia Power was an invaluable partner, and I’m incredibly grateful for the work Georgia Power did to help us restore power to critical agricultural infrastructure and farms across the state to prevent further losses.

Hurricane Helene was a reminder of how vulnerable we can be in the face of nature, but it also showed the strength of our people. For our community and for

Georgia, it highlighted the importance of preparation, rapid response, and strong partnerships. It reinforced that when we stand together, we can recover faster and stronger. I’m grateful for the work our state and industry leaders have done to support Georgia farm families as they recover from the storm, and I’m committed to supporting our state’s farmers through every step of the recovery process to ensure our state’s number one industry can bounce back stronger than before.

**“ONE MOMENT THAT STANDS OUT WAS WHEN I RECEIVED A CALL FROM A LOCAL RESIDENT WHOSE POWER HAD BEEN OUT FOR DAYS DUE TO FALLEN LINES. THEY HAD A FAMILY MEMBER WHO DEPENDED ON MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, AND THEY WERE BECOMING DESPERATE. THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS WITH GEORGIA POWER WE WERE ABLE TO GET THEIR POWER RESTORED WITHIN HOURS. SEEING THE RELIEF AND GRATITUDE IN THEIR VOICE REMINDED ME WHY IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND COLLABORATION MATTER SO MUCH.”**



**DEXTER SHARPER**  
Georgia State Representative,  
District 177









On the morning of Friday, September 27, 2024, thousands of families across Georgia woke up to find that their worst nightmare had become reality. Overnight, Hurricane Helene had ripped through the eastern half of our state, leaving in her path damage so devastating it is difficult to put into words. In its entirety, Hurricane Helene caused nearly \$5.5 billion of economic damage to Georgia’s #1 industry and the farm families who fuel its success. No community or commodity was spared.

I’ve heard countless stories of farmers, many whose operations sustained catastrophic damage, who got in their trucks, tractors, or skid steers, and started cutting and clearing roadways to get to their friends and neighbors or deliver supplies. That resilience and generosity is foundational to Georgia’s agricultural community, and it is one of the many reasons that I am humbled to have the privilege to work on behalf of Georgia farm families every day.

Responding to a storm like Hurricane Helene is a monumental task. It takes a significant level of coordination amongst state and local agencies and our partners to effectively respond. As GDA’s Emergency Management team coordinated the state’s agricultural response, Georgia Power was an invaluable partner, and I’m incredibly grateful for the work they did to help us restore power to critical agricultural infrastructure across the state to prevent further losses.

This storm and the recovery effort are deeply personal for me. My family’s farm in Irwin County was damaged along with those of my friends and neighbors and thousands of farmers across Georgia. I’m grateful for the work our state and industry leaders have done to support Georgia farm families as they recover from the storm, and I’m committed to supporting our state’s farmers through every step of the recovery process to ensure our state’s #1 industry can bounce back stronger than before.



**“AS I VISITED DOZENS OF IMPACTED COMMUNITIES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE STORM, WE SAW DAMAGE BEYOND COMPREHENSION – GENERATIONAL FARMS AND LIFELONG HOMETOWNS LEFT COMPLETELY UNRECOGNIZABLE TO THEIR OWNERS AND RESIDENTS. BUT WE ALSO SAW SOMETHING ELSE – THE INCREDIBLE RESILIENCE AND GENEROSITY OF OUR STATE’S FARMERS.”**



**TYLER J. HARPER**  
Georgia’s 17th Agriculture Commissioner





**“WE HAD EMPLOYEES THAT LOST POWER AT HOME, AND, WITHOUT HESITATING, THEY PACKED A BAG AND CALLED US AND SAID, “HEY, I LOST POWER, I’M ON MY WAY THERE. I’M JUST BRINGING MY CLOTHES SO I CAN SHOWER.”**

**ENIF MORRIS**  
Customer Service Supervisor



Unlike typical storm duty, which sees a localized effort

from line and trouble crews that work safely and quickly to restore power to a community or region, the response to the aftermath of Helene created an all-hands-on-deck environment for the company and its partners the size of which was unprecedented. Reinforcements were called in from across the country and into Canada, some 20,000 personnel ultimately responded to the event. From repair and rebuilding, to logistical support, to community outreach, everyone at Georgia Power had a job to do.

**Joey Barrett:** I normally live 5 minutes from here, but to get to work it took 45 minutes because I kept getting rerouted and turned around because the trees were all in the road and all the power lines were down.

**William Mock III:** I was at our operations headquarters first thing Friday morning.

**Ashley Koby:** I was here at my office, which is at the materials distribution center in Forest Park. However, once the Storm Center opens, I'll typically go there at least once a day. I won't spend all day there, but I check in with them, making sure that nothing has changed, regarding the storm's path or where we're planning on sending our people and where we're planning on setting down laydown yards.

**Sydney Tuttle:** It ended up being three weeks of 16-hour days working with the crews and assessing and then just trying to get as many people back on as quickly as possible.

**Woody Rozier:** We got sent to Vidalia and worked there for about 11 days. Some guys took a short break, then went back south again. A week or two later, I went with another crew down to Augusta and we stayed about 10 days—fixing things, cleaning up, getting things



back in order. Some stuff wasn't right on the system because we'd run out of materials before, so I just had to make it work at the time. But we went back in and got everything back to specs, to power specs.

**Enif Morris:** We were all hands on deck and our group of supervisors split the shifts into 12-hour rotations. So a group of supervisors would be 12 hours on, 12 hours off.

**Evan Slagle:** We were working 16-hour days, every single day. We showed up at six and we would finish around 10 that night. And we did that for 20-some days in a row.

In the past I've worked anywhere between maximum five to eight base camps, whereas in Helene, we had 34. It was a multiplier of everything.

— Calvin Ellington

**Tami Barron:** Our role is just to make sure we've got the right resources in place and that we are taking a statewide, systemwide or a mutual assistance wide view of the world.

**Joseph Brownlee:** My role is first off to basically be the region quarterback, making sure all the functions are talking to each other and working together. I would say the number one role in region executive external affairs is communication with our elected officials, EMA directors, county manager, city manager.

**Calvin Ellington:** There was a lot of communication and coordination with Helene. In the past I've worked anywhere between maximum five to eight base camps, whereas in Helene, we had 34. It was a multiplier of everything. I'd say during a normal storm





support, within two to three days you kind of have everything set up like you know how many sites you need. You know where they're going to be located. You have people working them, and your resources are kind of flatlined. So, after day two or three, after a storm impact, you kind of get into a groove. Whereas with Helene, I think we were still adding base camps seven days into it. The ramp-up was a lot more than typical. Things finally flatlined after day eight or nine when things were getting back online from an energy perspective.

**Danny Robinson:** When a hurricane hits, it takes down poles. It takes down lines, and what's also attached to those poles and lines are oil filled electrical equipment. You can have pole mounted transformers that are up in the air, and you can have ground mounted transformers. We're pretty used to cleaning those up on a routine basis, just with normal storms coming through, car wrecks and sort of things that are just failures. With Helene, we basically had to mobilize the entire environmental affairs department. What we were looking at was approximately 5,500 transformers down. Because they're an oil filled unit, they require some sort of assessment, or skilled clean up or both. The department worked with the Storm Center to figure out where we wanted to station our coordinators, the emergency response leads in environmental. We had one person in Valdosta, one in Tifton, one in Dublin, one in Statesboro and one person handling Atlanta overall, as a large-scale response.

**Ashley Koby:** I'm responsible for materials management at Georgia Power, for power delivery, so when it comes to storms, I represent all the supply chain. There's a lot of interaction with the Storm Center, a lot of preplanning, making sure that our inventory levels are where they need to be. There's a fine line between not having enough and having too much. If you have too much, it takes up too much space and it costs the company money. If you don't

have enough, then you're inhibiting the crews from doing the work they need to. Once the storm hits and things are rolling, you're dealing with hundreds of issues a day. If we've done all the prework ahead of time, you can kind of just let the machine work, so during Helene I was going around to different headquarters and laydown yards. Checking on things, checking on our employees, making sure that materials are there, that things are set up in an efficient manner, making sure folks are safe and just verifying and ensuring that things are as we think they are.



**William Mock III:** At the operations headquarters, I was in the room where they were making the damage assessment assignments, and they were getting information from the damage assessment teams. Me and other members of my Region External Affairs Group were in there handling the calls that were coming in from community leaders—that were coming in from critical accounts, special situations, assisted living facilities, to doctors and hospitals. That's the assistance that we tried to provide along with our key account teams and others to allow the power delivery folks to focus on their job, which was to restore power.

**Calvin Ellington:** Even though I'm not restoring power, I'm helping support that effort. That's the value I feel that I add.



**Sydney Tuttle:** Our assigned area was switched from islands to a swampy area. We walked out into the swamp and looked around and thought, "There are no poles down over here." Then we looked down and, sure enough, poles broken, down in the swamp. And it was just so memorable because there were so many lines down in the swap.

**Enif Morris:** I'm originally from Dominican Republic, and we don't really see storms like this over there. This was my very first time seeing a storm of this magnitude hit the state of Georgia and I've lived in Georgia for the last 23 years. The supervisors stayed behind and we identified customers that were without power and had life support equipment. We stayed at the CCC and we started calling each customer one at a time to make sure that they had power, or if they didn't have power. If not, we got them a generator. That was a proud moment for me.

**Joey Barrett:** I was asked to work on staging areas. That first day, I was asked to get us a staging area for 1,000 people. And then, you know, 30 minutes later I was asked, well, can I get a staging area for another 1,500 in Vidalia? I was over seven staging areas, and I could only communicate with three because the cell phone service was so bad.

**Sydney Tuttle:** I worked as damage assessment and also just anything that the crews needed. I was ready to go. I was paired with lineman over on the islands, we followed a printed circuit map riding the main lines.

**Woody Rozier:** Down there, it was pretty much what we do here day-to-day, but on a bigger scope—with a lot more debris and no power anywhere. There was a little more sense of urgency, trying to help people who had already been out for several days before we got there. We worked as a team, figuring out what materials we had, what we could get in quickest, and making sure we got the main lines back up first. For example, we had a cancer facility we worked on first to get them back in service.

**Hollis Rish:** The dedication and service shown by teammates—many whose efforts went unseen—made a profound impact on our restoration efforts. Our men and women on the front lines refused to quit.





**Fran Forehand:** We had a helicopter-mounted air saw cutting huge trees off a transmission line over a river crossing. The second the tree was cut, the line bounced right back up and crews could get to work immediately. Technology like that made days or weeks of work possible in hours.

**We utilized everything we could — sweat equity, helicopters, drones, airboats, marsh masters — to safely repair the transmission lines.**

— Fran Forehand

**Enif Morris:** I serve as the Supervisor at the Customer Care Center. My role was to make sure that not only employees feel safe, but that we have a plan in place to ensure how we’re going to support our customers and ensure the safety and care for our employees. If we need to secure hotels, meals, to and from transportation. You would come to me.

**Cleve Fann:** I spent a lot of time with the folks in the Storm Center, you know, trying to keep them grounded and make sure they were finding ways to decompress, because it was a super stressful situation. Typically we run a big storm that lasts a few days. You can push through without your typical sleep, diet, things like that, when you do it for a week, plus, it catches up with you. We really had to make sure we were giving folks an opportunity to mentally decompress and physically rest.

**Joseph Brownlee:** We did it safely. We were here for them, and the moment we could get out and work, we were out working. We did it smart. For the second time in my 43 years, I said, “Send everything you got.” I never thought I’d say those words, but through Idalia and Helene, I’ve said them more than once.











**“AUGUSTA, AN OLD CITY WITH MANY MATURE TREES, WAS HEAVILY IMPACTED. STREETS WERE IMPASSABLE, AND NEIGHBORHOODS WERE DEVASTATED. HOWEVER, A SENSE OF COMMUNITY EMERGED. PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES LIKE CHAINSAWS STARTED DIGGING OUT.”**



**GARNETT L. JOHNSON**  
Mayor, Augusta, Georgia

**L** eading up to September 27th, we had been monitoring the weather reports. The forecast for Augusta was 4 to 6 inches of rain and wind gusts up to 30 to 40 mph. We were preparing for that until the day of the storm. Before Hurricane Helene got close, we had already received 8 to 10 inches of rain. My daughter, who lives in Atlanta, decided to come to Augusta because the storm was predicted to go through Atlanta. My other daughter, a student at UGA, also came home.

The entire family was home. I was awakened at 3:47 AM by a loud banging noise. I looked out and noticed the winds were much stronger than predicted. Transformers were exploding, and power went out. At daybreak, I saw the shutters were blown off our house. I didn't realize the storm's devastation until sunrise.

Besides the trees, we had a serious challenge with our municipal water system. Uprooted trees and broken water mains put us at risk of losing our ability to produce water, which almost led to evacuating our hospitals. Augusta has a strong medical community, and access to clean water is essential for hospitals. Governor Kemp and the Biden administration were instrumental in providing resources. Our resilience in keeping our water system running was critical.

On September 27th, almost 100 counties were under an emergency declaration. The recovery shows how strong we are, how great our leadership is, and how everyone pulled together. There was no partisan division. Communities helped clean up and provide meals and support. Even though there were challenges with traffic signals, people started obeying the rules. The faith-based community helped provide hot meals and ice, highlighting the importance of simple comforts.

Georgia Power is amazing. When my regional contact, Mr. Kerry Bridges, realized the storm had turned east, he called and said, 'Mr. Mayor, we have the cavalry coming.' I helped identify staging sites, and within 24 hours, thousands of linemen were sent to Augusta. They started restoring power and ensuring safety. They rolled up their sleeves and came to work, growing in numbers never seen in this region. We had tens of thousands of Georgia Power contractors, employees, and partners helping us begin the recovery process.



**I** believe it became truly real when I found myself on the weather channel the night before its arrival. The mood was good and there was a real spirit of cooperation between friends and neighbors but we were all quick to realize that we had experienced a far greater level of devastation than what Idalia had brought just 13 months before.

Much of the devastation and recovery will be forgotten over time but there are three things Valdosta will always remember...the unbelievable mobilization by Georgia Power and their partners, the 'Bunyan trucks' and the debris removal effort, and the army of strangers and organizations that descended on our community to help perfect strangers in our time of need.

**“VALDOSTA/LOWNDES HAS ONE OF THE MORE COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS IN THE STATE BUT EVEN WITH THAT, THERE IS NO LEVEL OF READINESS THAT CAN HANDLE A STORM LIKE HELENE.”**



**SCOTT JAMES MATHESON**  
Mayor, Valdosta, Georgia











**“WITH HELENE, WE BASICALLY HAD TO MOBILIZE THE  
ENTIRE ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.”**

**DANNY ROBINSON**  
Environmental Affairs Supervisor



**While no one would choose for their community to experience destruction** and devastation like that of Helene, events like this storm help illustrate that the heart and soul of Georgia Power remains unchanged, even after nearly a century and a half. The call to be “A Citizen Wherever We Serve” goes above and beyond the restoration of customers, and in the case of Hurricane Helene, Georgia Power’s commitment to service shined through even beyond the tragedy of the storm. Across the state, Georgia Power team members stepped up in their communities in large and small ways, engaging with customers, community leaders, and partners to help ease the burden of this historic storm. Whether that meant checking on a Georgia Power retiree, helping feed the community, or helping partner utilities restore communications or rebuild their grids, Georgia Power’s commitment to the state it calls home was on full display. That mindset was shared across the Southern Company system and beyond, where the organization’s “One Team” ethos was clear. The response from the communities themselves was overwhelming, and helped to remind crews and other responders about the significance of both the event, and its response to the community.

**Jill Fonville:** It was super fun to see trucks from Canada or the West Coast, but as an employee, I got most excited when Alabama Power trucks rolled up in my neighborhood. They rolled in one day and the next day our power came back on. It was such a reminder of why Southern Company is a great company—because we are one team together.

**Kevin Queen | Director, Utility Relations:** As we started to wrap up our initial work, we were calling the EMCs every day asking, “Do you need help?” And they did, but their issue was they didn’t have any places to house any more folks. But I remember Cleve said, “Hey, we’ll figure out how to house ‘em and feed ‘em if they’ll take ‘em.” Satilla took, I think it was 50 personnel from Georgia Power, and Altamaha took 25. Our crews went down there and did a great job. Our folks are going to treat their customers just like they’re our customers.

**Joseph Brownlee:** I think it did more to build a local team, and when I say local, I mean the region. Our elected officials, first responders, the governor were down here within 24 hours having a press conference at the EMA Center. Kim Greene was there too when questions came about power. There were no political issues. The enemy was clear. It was getting the lights back on, getting clean water and the roads open for

the people that live here. Almost like a 911 event where everybody suddenly became common allies attacking a common enemy. We really came together as a group, and that paid dividends for this community.

**We’re bigger than our bottom line, and we are the foundation to a way of life. Economically, societally, health-wise; it impacts everything. Without power, things derogate very quickly.**

— Tami Barron

**Tami Barron:** What we do, we’re bigger than our bottom line, and we are the foundation to a way of life. Economically, societally, health-wise; it impacts everything. Without power, things derogate very quickly, and we take that responsibility with a great deal of pride and accountability. I think that’s what keeps those of us in operations going.

**Ashley Koby:** We quickly realized that our main distribution center here for materials was a bottleneck. We’ve never had to flow that much material through here, so our folks in Mississippi and Alabama suggested to us, “Hey, why don’t we take some of that workload off of y’all?” Really distributing the work across the Southern Company system was one of the ways we were able to keep up.

**Kevin Queen:** The City of Douglas was devastated. They were 100% in the dark and they had no means of communication. The director saw our guys communicating in one of the stations and asked them how. They told him it was Southern Linc. He said, “Can you put me in touch with somebody there?” I think he had to drive back to Macon and work with somebody to program probably 20 units—and then drove back down and met the gentleman at 5 a.m. the next day in a motel parking lot to give him the phones. And then they were back in business.

**Kerry Bridges:** At the moment, you don’t really think much about the gravity of the situation, the fact that it’s really a historic moment. You’re just surviving, you’re just getting the lights back on, you’re working safely, you’re trying to take care of your coworkers, you’re trying to fight fatigue, you know, all of those things. So, you know, looking back, it was just an incredible feat by our team to support our area and get the lights back on. I mean, it was, I keep saying it’s the most destructive storm in 140 years, right? And we got through that. And we got through it by relying on our network, relying on relationships, whether they were inside the company, outside of the company, and so all those relationships were enhanced, and they’re now stronger than ever before. I think that’s what it means to the community.

**Tami Barron:** We took a very proactive approach with Audrey King’s team and other region external partners to go proactively start calling the mayors, other councilmen and influencers in communities to help. We began this massive external outreach to the region external political machine because customers were calling them, and they had no answers. It was a very proactive approach to try and get communications out in a very targeted way, in a very detailed way, so they understood exactly what we were doing and why.



**Marie Bertot:** It shows and the feeling that we all have that Georgia Power is here for Georgians. It’s here for you. It’s here for us. You know, the feeling of support and dedication. A company is only as good as its people, and the way that everyone stepped up and how dedicated everyone was—it really showed what this company is made of.

**Evan Slagle:** It was very impressive, the amount of people that helped, the manpower, just, you know, all of Georgia Power coming together. Once we got to where people could get here, everybody just flooded in. I mean, we had equipment, we had everything we could want.

**Ben Morris:** By the third or fourth day, communication lines were open. We weren’t asking for help—people were coming to us saying, “We want to help you do whatever you can to make this successful.” Rotary clubs and other groups just showed up with supplies without us requesting them.

**Latanza Adjei:** We felt like a storm of this magnitude really called for extraordinary service. For example, we were really concerned about our medically fragile customers, so we reached out to them. We arranged to have whole house backup generators for those who were out of options. Afterwards, we knew that just because the lights were back on didn’t mean the storm was over for many customers, and we were able to suspend disconnects, waive late fees, pause collection activity, and offer payment plans so customers could get back on their feet.

**Danny Robinson:** The impact of this is huge. I’ve done a lot of emergency response. I’ve done EPA. I’ve done emergency response with the Atlanta Airport for about a decade. Seeing governmental responses and seeing FEMA responses, sometimes they can move a little bit slowly









and take a lot of time to ramp up. This storm was kind of the exact opposite. I was impressed by how quickly Georgia Power was able to activate resources. It was pretty amazing that stuff was in place.

**Ashley Koby:** No matter how big the storm is, we are just so resilient. I would have never thought that we would be able to procure as much material as we used in as short of a time as we did. We prepare very well. We have benchmark levels that we have set, but in a lot of cases, we double or quadruple the amount of material we are expected to use. To think that we can do that within less than two weeks, shows just how creative and hardworking our employees are.

**Kevin Queen:** One of the EMC’s challenges was where to house and feed their crews. We had these large staging sites, and we were leaving one as Calhoun EMC still needed support. We coordinated with them and they were able to utilize the site as we moved out. That helped them save money on a setup charge, which is huge. For a small EMC with 30-40 thousand customers, every bit counts. They have a smaller base to cover, and we were able to help them share resources there.

**Danny Robinson:** Folks want to come out, they want to talk to you, they want to kind of understand what you’re doing. They’re very thankful, thanking you for being down here away from your families. I think that sentiment was kind of even greater with the response that we saw for Helene. Statewide we showed that we can do it and people are just overly appreciative of that.

**Kerry Bridges:** On a daily basis, somebody’s thanking me on behalf of 7,000 Georgia Power employees and 20,000 people that came from 35 states and Canada to work here in Augusta and get the lights back on. And it’s very, very humbling. The level of resources that we got, the response that we had. Thank goodness. The weath-

er was good for two weeks after Helene, so we didn’t have one rain day. We were able to make progress every single day.

**Joseph Brownlee:** If you haven’t ever seen West Hall at Valdosta State University, it’s beautiful Rotunda. It’s about four stories. The president’s office is in there. The great rotunda where the VSU seal is in the floor. It’s very scenic. It’s where graduation occurs, lined with palm trees. It was dark, trees everywhere. We were able to get that circuit on, and the light came on at West Hall. I was able to send community members and the president of VSU a picture and said, “Old girl got beat up a little bit, but she’s back on tonight.” I could tell from the responses that it was a moving event for them because the president of VSU wasn’t able to get out of his house for, I think, four days.

**The team that was ultimately assembled to restore power across all the areas that were impacted, involved every one of our Georgia Power Company employees. It was a very concentrated, coordinated team effort. And I could not be more proud of the effort that was put forth by our company.**

— William Mock III

**Kerry Bridges:** We can’t control the weather. We know that, right? But what we can control is our response to the weather. We demonstrated that we can meet the challenge when it’s six times greater than anything we’ve ever seen in over 140 years. We’re going to meet the challenge, and we’re going to get it done.

**William Mock III:** Getting the lights back on starts the healing process, if you will. There’s certainly a physical healing from the building and power lines that need

repairing. And a mental healing component from going through something like that. I’ve heard from many people who have stayed in hurricanes in the past, that after Hurricane Helene, they’re not staying anymore. Because something during Hurricane Helene changed that perspective for them.

**Joey Barrett:** I think the community was surprised that really when we show up, how big we show up. So from a community standpoint, our efforts were very noticed and appreciated.

**Tami Barron:** Even all the way to the very end, customers did not, you know, drive up, hollering at our crews. I heard nothing but them being appreciative of our guys and girls out working. It was really kind of heartwarming and affirming of humanity a little bit.

**Daniel Loggins:** At one point we had a lady come and say, “Hey, I have an ice cream truck, can I come bring some ice cream for the line workers?” So it was really nice to see being A Citizen Wherever We Serve acted out, and seeing the community’s response to that was really great.

**Fran Forehand:** I couldn’t be more proud of my transmission team. I never once heard anybody complain. They all made it work. Our employees understood what the calling was—they secured their families as best they could and then came to work knowing they might be gone for days or even weeks. That’s the kind of commitment you can’t teach.

**Enif Morris:** Together we did it. Together we can work through it. Doesn’t matter how big of a storm or how big of the problem we may face. We came together and we stuck it out together.

**Walter Dukes II:** The restoration effort went beyond Augusta. I was struck by the teamwork across Southern Company—within a single day, I observed employees from each of our operating companies working side by side in the Augusta area. It was truly an all-hands-on-deck effort. Several regions sent employees for more than 30 days to ensure our customers were taken care of until the final lights were restored.

**Rick Anderson:** The character and spirit of our team shone brilliantly during this challenging time, and I remain profoundly thankful for every member of the Georgia Power family.



**Walter Dukes II:** Within just nine days, 95% of Augusta area customers had power restored. But that was not the end of the mission. Many customers required additional repairs before they could safely receive service, and our teams continued working for more than 30 days to restore every customer and support the community in its recovery.





**“WHEN YOU BRING POWER BACK TO A COMMUNITY  
AFTER A STORM LIKE THIS, YOU BRING HOPE BACK.  
AND THEY CAN START PUTTING THE PIECES BACK  
TOGETHER.”**

**CLEVE FANN**

Former Vice President, Strategy and Support,  
Distribution



**As the company and its team members reflect** on the storm a year later, it remains clear that, like the storm itself, the response from teams across the Georgia Power system and beyond was historic. Lessons learned from the sheer enormity of the event will inform Georgia Power’s storm response far into the future, but the feeling of connection among teams throughout the state, both with each other and their communities, will never be forgotten.

**Ashley Koby:** In Nashville, Georgia, we had a church who was doing a lot of work with some of their members and just the community in general. They were distributing a lot of water, just helping with anything they could. They were willing to open their parking lot for us to set up a kind of intermediate laydown yard where we could just store materials for restoration. You see so many people just doing whatever they can, whether it’s in a minor or major way.



**Tami Barron:** Storm work is miserable. Our folks are sleeping in trailers, or they’re going to their homes where they don’t have power themselves. Their families are dealing with it while they’re working, trying to get lights on for our customers. It’s not fun. It’s rewarding, but nobody would volunteer to do this. From those that were running water around to people, family services, to the guys up in the bucket, it’s all-inclusive. Everybody was working.

**Woody Rozier:** The storm honestly made our whole work group stronger. Most of our group were able to go together, and we faced the heat and different obstacles—waiting on tree crews, waiting on bobcats to clear the road. We had one major road where we restored power after dealing with all that, and I think everybody felt closer as a team afterward.

**Enif Morris:** Their experience was definitely much different than ours, but you know, just having that direct contact with customers and serving as not only their providers, but someone who was there to listen, someone that was there to empathize with the situation, someone who was there to connect with them and just listen to them. There’s a bond that you build. It’s trust—that sense of community that we build with our customers.

**Joseph Brownlee:** We had a great group. No team arrived and had to sit in a parking lot and wait for food or fuel. When they arrived, they were going out to work and their needs were taken care of, and that’s that. I think that really was one of the reasons we were so effective at restoration because the line crews knew their needs were being met.

**Kerry Bridges:** I think every Georgia Power person would say the same thing. I mean, it’s a fine balance between taking care of your family and taking care of

our customers, in so many cases across the state, here in the greater Augusta area and all across the state, the Georgia Power team stepped up and took care of our employees that needed to be out getting the lights back on, working to get the lights back on, and provided whether generators or roofing support or, you know, covered up a hole in the roof that a tree caused, or whatever. Georgia Power took care of that so that our team, our employees, could be out taking care of our customers. They just removed that burden in so many ways. And I think that will be remembered for a long time.

**William Mock III:** This was all-hands-on-deck. We were customer focused. This is the role that we play and you know, we say we’re a citizen where we serve and we’re privileged to serve the communities in which we do, and this is how we demonstrate. There were several days my family did not see or hear from me very often. I hope they know that my heart was with them while my focus was on restoration and doing the work of the Georgia Power Company.

**Sydney Tuttle:** The whole community got involved. There was a retired Savannah Electric employee who called and said, “We don’t have power and I know how it works. I’m going to go and see why my neighborhood is without power.” He said he’s been riding these lines for years and had an idea of where the damage was. It was something that stood out to me because as soon as we assessed the area, sure enough, he was right.

**Fran Forehand:** Our mission has always been clear: to serve and uplift our community.

**Cleve Fann:** I firmly believe, and this is why I love what we do so much, and what’s kept me in the utility business, we meet an essential need for our customers. And when you bring power back to a community after

a storm like this, you bring hope back, and they can start putting the pieces back together. And it just has such an uplift on you know, people who have been, have had their lives torn apart, in some cases.

**Tami Barron:** The communities were just amazing. unbelievably patient, gracious, kind and generous. I was sitting at a school with some of the crews and up rolled a truckload of kids, and they got out and brought in pictures that they had just drawn and some dropped cookies off. They would come by and honk the horn and wave to you when you’re setting up at a staging site where you’re doing work.

**Community organizations brought supplies like razors, deodorant, medicine, and Advil without being asked. Large customers provided meals. Local schools wrote letters thanking us, and we gave things back in appreciation. The police and fire departments made work sites safe so we could focus on restoration.**

— Ben Morris

**Joseph Brownlee:** Family Services did a phenomenal job of bringing tarps to our houses and hooking up generators so that we were able to keep our refrigerators and freezers on. They were able to run some box fans, keeping things bearable. That was really big on me with worrying about all the things I was worried about. Not to have to worry about my older mom or my little girl, that was great.

**Calvin Ellington:** The biggest thing to me was just the partnership between all of Southern Company. I really relied on folks from Alabama, Mississippi, SCS and the gas company to help us. Seeing everybody’s willingness to help us when we needed it was something that stood out to me.





**Joseph Brownlee:** The county manager here said, “If you stay ready, you don’t have to get ready.” Prior to the storm, she was able to bring some of her critical employees in with their families into secure shelters. The old courthouse has a big secure ground floor and basement, so she brought a lot of her employees that were critical to getting county services back up and running. That was moving and, you know, county employees don’t make a fortune. Friday, the night the storm was hitting, that was pay day. They saw it coming and they were able to do some early direct deposits for their employees, where their families would have money in the bank. Then they started providing hot meals because many of their employees had no power at home. Senior county staff, like County Commission Chair, County Manager, started delivering meals to employees. I think it was moving to see people you’d normally see in a coat and tie at a meeting at the courthouse, out there with blue jeans, a hard hat and a traffic vest out delivering a meal or running a chainsaw.

**Danny Robinson:** We had a lot of people stop by the staging areas. I was at the Augusta Mall a lot of the time and often I think people get out and drive around and see what’s going on. Being at the mall, they opened up relatively early, so it was a place that people could go. It had food and power, so we did get a lot of people driving by and asking us questions. We would give them food, water or whatever they needed.

**Ashley Koby:** I had several employees whose houses were damaged. Cars were lost, roofs were off, and our company took great care of them and gave some relief. The Family Services Unit allows our folks to come to work and to do what they do best. You’ve got to give credit to Kim Greene. She really drove that program to be different than it had ever been before. Yeah, we’d go put tarps on roofs and do that kind of stuff, but setting up the generator program, being willing to give financial

support, that’s different than we’ve ever done. It really paid off. I had a brand-new employee—he had only been here a few months—whose home was affected. He said he had never been treated as well by a company as he had by Georgia Power.

**Tami Barron:** If you don’t know anything else about Kim Greene, she’s going to make it happen.

**Joey Barrett:** I had several late night conversations with mayors who literally were breaking down and you know, I’ve done the best I could to tell them it’s going to be OK, we’ll get back to normal, but it’s just going to take a bit.

**William Mock III:** This highlighted to me how important preparedness is. Especially around vulnerable populations. Georgia Power wants to provide power, and we want to restore power safely and as quickly as we possibly can. But there are situations where we’re not going to be able to do it in a day. It may be many hours or maybe days, depending on the damage.

**Tami Barron:** I am proud of every member of this team that came in and showed up day after day and persevered through difficult and challenging times. They did it safely and they did it with the focus on taking care of our customers and each other. They represented us and our state very well. It wasn’t just our team, we brought in people from the entire country. We moved an army to rebuild a system in nine days.

**Calvin Ellington:** It’s a huge effort. When you think about it, we had 20,000 resources on the system helping to restore power. Just the coordination of all that is huge to get power restored back to all customers.

**Joseph Brownlee:** I think Kim Greene’s leadership, and you know this will sound like I’m just throwing a kudos

to the boss, but it was obvious when she walked through headquarters, work didn’t stop. She was just checking on her people, letting them know that we’re getting you the resources you need. Her caring and concern for their safety really showed, and I think that bled over when we had the press conference with the Governor. Kim’s sincere reaction to how we were going to work this storm made an impression on the entire community.

**Cleve Fann:** I’m just so proud of how our group worked, backed each other up, stood up things we’ve never done before, on the fly to make sure we could get the restoration done effectively. We had an incredible team in there that worked so well together and was extremely dedicated to taking care of our teams across the state, and our customers. So, yeah, I’m very proud of that.

**Tami Barron:** Sometimes when things aren’t good, that’s when you have the opportunity to really shine. I think we did that in a big way, and we didn’t do it because we wanted acknowledgement or recognition. It’s what we do. It’s how we’re wired and what we do every day.

**Fran Forehand:** Whenever you have a situation like Helene, to be able to have a lasting impact on helping our customers restore their lives back to normal—there’s no greater calling. It’s why we’re here. And to get to do it with people you’ve grown up with in the company, people you’ve learned from over decades, is a privilege. It doesn’t get any better than that.

**Marie Bertot:** My biggest takeaway was really the dedication of my team members. Many had not worked on an emergency that required this many days, and everyone stepped up in a way that really made me so proud of their dedication. And everyone was together as one team. I’m talking Southern Company, Alabama Power, Mississippi Power, Gas, Southern Linc—everyone.

**The dedication, sacrifice, and teamwork shown by the Augusta Distribution team and their partners during Hurricane Helene serve as a powerful reminder of our shared mission: keeping the lights on for our customers who depend on us.**

— Walter Dukes II





**Hollis Rish:** I witnessed a level of commitment to our customers and communities unlike anything I've seen before. In one of the most defining moments in our company's history, our teams delivered. Southern Company delivered. I've always been proud to wear the triangle, but Helene cemented my belief: I will always bet on the men and women of Georgia Power and Southern Company.

**Jill Fonville:** As an employee, I was already proud of the company I worked for. I already knew that when something like that hits, we know what to do—when

the weather's at its worst, we're at our best. This was just another shining example of that. For the community, it reaffirmed that lineworkers are heroes and Georgia Power knows what they're doing.

**Latanza Adjei:** The level of teamwork I observed was extraordinary. I hope our customers never forget that Georgia Power is here for our state and personally here for each one of them when something like that hits, we know what to do—when the weather's at its worst, we're at our best.

**Shelby Bice:** It demonstrated our ability to persevere through challenges, supported by strong backbones like government, legislative partners, the Commission, and utilities like EMCs. When times get tough, we all come together, regardless of usual differences, showcasing Georgia's strong backbone, which is truly amazing.

**We were able to truly be A Citizen Wherever We Serve.**

— Joseph Brownlee











**“I HAVE SEEN OUR CHAINSAW TEAMS MOTIVATED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS BY A LEAGUE OF LINEMEN STANDING READY TO RESTORE OUR COMMUNITY. SO MANY ORGANIZATIONS ARE FOCUSED ON TAKING CARE OF THEMSELVES BEFORE THEY HELP OTHERS, NOT GEORGIA POWER. THE SACRIFICE OF OUR LINEMAN PARTNERS AND THEIR FAMILIES DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED.”**



**PAIGE DUKES**  
Lowndes County Manager

Being that I work for Lowndes County and my husband works for the Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office, our family has been more focused on the safety of our community than preparing at home for many years. We have both worked weather events for days on end for more than 20 years. This year, we were blessed to have our daughter and three month old granddaughter sheltering at our home which added an additional level of personal concern. I knew it was going to be bad when while we were in the Lowndes County Emergency Operations Center, a representative from the National Weather Service called EMA Director, Ashley Tye, who was sitting right next to me and confirmed what we were seeing on the radar was in fact a direct hit that would include sustained wind speeds significantly higher than we had ever seen before. With this news, we moved our daughter and granddaughter to a secondary location with other family members knowing we would most likely not be going home for several days due to storm impacts.

The impact of Hurricane Helene was dynamic. Due to sustained wind speeds, public safety response had to be parked for almost two hours. When the wind subsided to the extent response could resume, Lowndes County had 115 entrapment calls holding. There was no time to think about impact, only time to respond. From the operations room of the emergency operations center I witnessed city and county public safety, utility, E-911 and public works leadership immediately set geographical boundaries aside to put a collective plan in action aimed at reaching everyone trapped as quickly as possible. I will admit there was a very brief flash of situational awareness indicating this was nothing we had ever seen before; however, our teams trusted each other and their training. On the worst day our community has ever seen, our responders were at their very best.

Our public information team sits to my left in the emergency operations center. As we transitioned into the response phase, they began to update media outlets and social media with specific messaging related to safety. I will never forget the immediate posts from our citizens that began to populate social media. Photograph after photograph of neighbors helping neighbors began to appear. People were clearing their driveways, cutting trees off neighbors homes, helping to clear subdivision streets, offering supplies, helping with generators, the list goes on. Those citizens will never truly understand the impact their actions had on our response teams as they saw in real time our citizens helping themselves as responders tackled the unsurmountable task of clearing hundreds of miles of roads, streets and bridges. While I witnessed our responders go above and beyond, they were doing what they are paid to do. Our citizens were the real heroes that day, stepping out of their comfort zones, cranking their own chainsaws, putting in the work to restore our community. It was heartbreaking, it was beautiful, it was something I will never forget.

Every challenge is an opportunity. An opportunity to communicate more, plan to a greater extent and focus on what we can do better. Hurricane Helene is the gift that keeps on giving. Similar to other counties in Georgia, Lowndes County is transitioning into long term recovery and an environment we have never experienced before. For me personally, I have an even greater respect for our departments, teams and responders. They were tested in a way no leader ever wants to see their people tested. On their hardest days they exceeded expectations and stayed focused on taking care of the citizens they serve, many while also being displaced from their own homes. Our community has pulled together to close gaps and ensure resiliency in areas we might not have previously identified as vulnerable. Our state is stronger because we now have a greater

understanding of how 159 counties are much more similar than we are different. It is hard to reflect on Hurricane Helene and not recognize the contributions of our regional partners. Our public safety neighbors showed up before being called and went to work without being asked. While I hope their communities are never impacted by a similar event, in the event they are our teams will be ready to return the favor.

Georgia Power isn’t a partner, Georgia Power is family. Family that sets the standard for community, care, response and service. I have seen our chainsaw teams motivated on numerous occasions by a league of line-

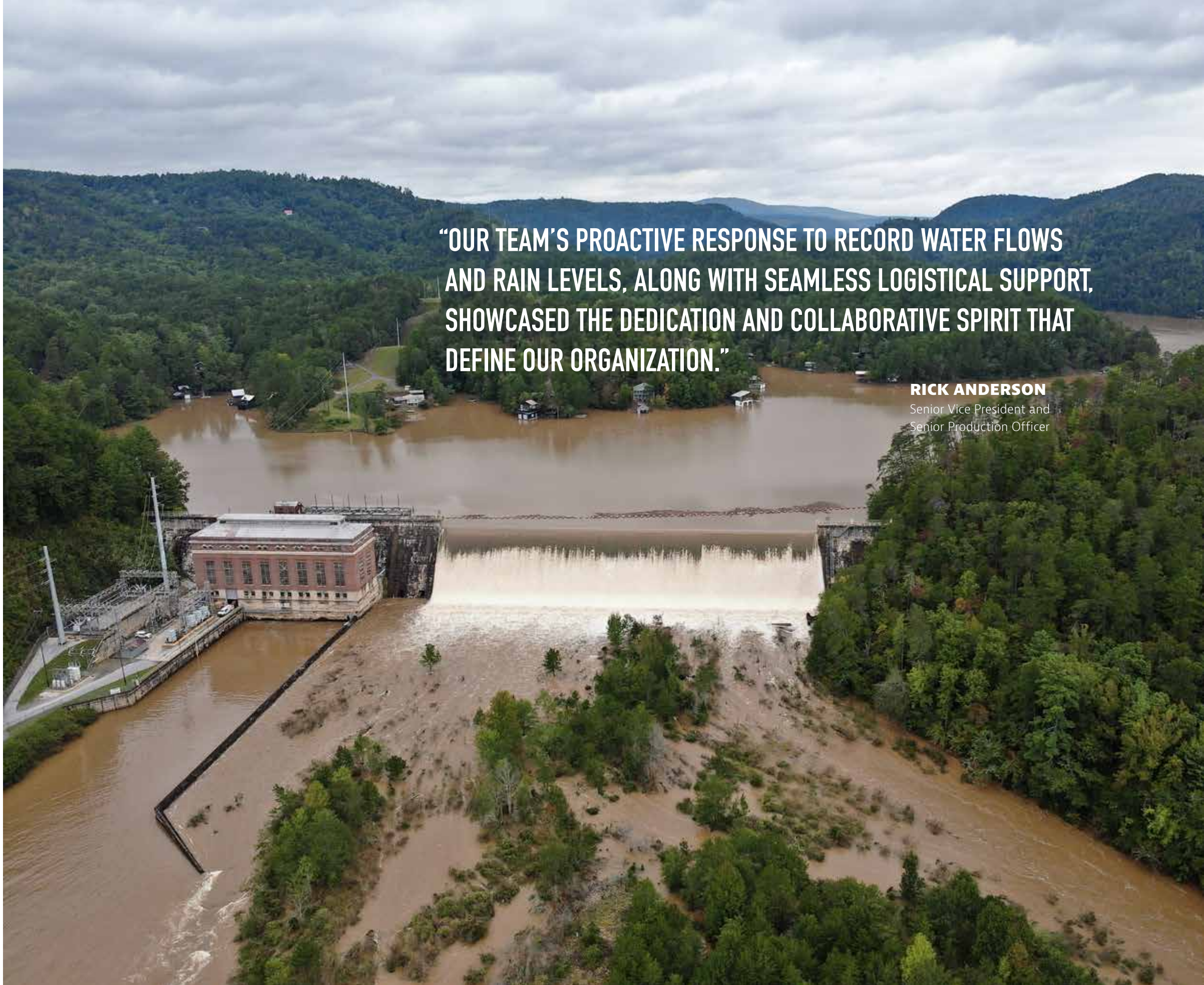
men standing ready to restore our community. So many organizations are focused on taking care of themselves before they help others, not Georgia Power. The sacrifice of our lineman partners and their families does not go unnoticed. We know that, like many of us, their families have willingly accepted service before self. Georgia Power leads by restoring so much more than power. The men and women of Georgia Power work tirelessly to champion communities across the state in a way that allows citizens to thrive, not just survive. For this, I will be eternally grateful and know that next time the wind blows trucks will roll, power will restore and in the end it will all be okay.











“OUR TEAM’S PROACTIVE RESPONSE TO RECORD WATER FLOWS AND RAIN LEVELS, ALONG WITH SEAMLESS LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, SHOWCASED THE DEDICATION AND COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT THAT DEFINE OUR ORGANIZATION.”

**RICK ANDERSON**  
Senior Vice President and  
Senior Production Officer





Leading up to the storm, I, like most people in the CSRA, thought the hurricane would be hitting the Atlanta area and just prepared for some rainy weather here in Thomson. Little did anyone know the storm would turn and the eyewall would go right over Thomson, leaving a devastating path of destruction. Personally, when the trees hit my house and I went outside to see how bad it was, and all I could hear was the snapping sound of trees crashing, I knew it was bad. The rain was torrential.

I serve two roles here in Thomson: as Mayor Pro-Tem for City Council, and Executive Director of MANNA, a faith-based non-profit food pantry, serving McDuffie, Warren and Wilkes counties. Without communications we were facing an up-hill battle in uniting the forces to start the assessment and recovery efforts for our city and county. City, county, fire, EMS, employees, key leaders, Georgia Power, Boswell Oil, and so many others came together with “what can we do to help.” Meetings were held twice a day with FEMA, Red Cross, the aforementioned organizations, and assessment and recovery began. Georgia Power was at all the meetings updating on power and offering other services to the community.

As the Executive Director of MANNA, I knew our clients and others in the area would lose their food and need help. Luckily we have generators to power our 21 refrigerators and freezers. When it was safe we began to serve our clients. MANNA was not only a place to receive food, but a place where our clients could share their stories and in doing so, feel some relief. Of course there were many other opportunities for all citizens in the surrounding area to receive food and water.

There are so many powerful stories of bravery, selflessness, service, and compassion. The story that resonates with me is when Georgia Power was breaking camp and leaving our area to serve elsewhere. The ‘base camp’ was a thing of beauty as Georgia Power provided for the employees working tirelessly. I knew this was not their “first rodeo” at disaster recovery! The average person would not know about the way Georgia Power sets up in a community when disaster strikes. Housing is critical and the “troops” can’t stay in hotels because they are full with evacuees and folks with no home left. Meals for all the folks working are critical. The camp has a dining tent to feed the many men and women. That’s where my story begins.



I received a phone call from Deanna Moultry asking if I could use food that was left from the Georgia Power base camp. Our supply at MANNA was running very low as we were serving our 500 plus families and anyone else in need. MANNA received over a thousand pounds of frozen, refrigerated, and dry goods from Georgia Power. This was a true blessing as all our reserves were depleted. The men and women helped us load and deliver all the food. MANNA also received a generous grant to purchase food and restore our food reserves.

**“WHEN GEORGIA POWER COMES INTO AN AREA FOR DISASTER HELP, THEY ARE NOT JUST RESTORING THE ELECTRICAL POWER, BUT THEY ARE RESTORING LIVES BY THEIR COMMITMENT TO BE A PARTNER WITH CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS, NONPROFITS AND SO MANY MORE.”**



**KERYL CORLEY**  
Thomson Mayor Pro-Tem and  
Executive Director of MANNA













In the days leading up to Helene, the forecast suggested the storm would track farther west, so the sudden shift east took many of us by surprise. I was at home with my family when I realized late that night that the storm would be far worse than expected. The TCSG Department of Public Safety kept us updated with official reports, coordinating closely with state emergency agencies. Their communication helped us prepare quickly, but like many in Statesboro, the reality hit hardest when the winds arrived after dark.

The immediate mood was a mix of shock and urgency. With power and communication down, neighbors and local leaders quickly shifted to checking on one another. The TCSG system office was actively coordinating the use of technical college facilities, including our own, for emergency responders across the state. You could feel the determination to come together and rebuild from the very start.

One of the moments that stands out most was seeing our campus. Many of our roadways were obstructed by debris and I knew we had a responsibility to help clear them so we could serve as a staging point for first responders as they worked to restore power and basic needs. It was a tangible reminder that we have a responsibility to support our community during crises. We saw firsthand how critical our role can be in times of need.

Helene revealed how connected and resilient we are as Georgians. The storm tested infrastructure and communication, cell service was down for over a day, and power outages lasted for a week in some areas. It also showed how quickly people and agencies can mobilize when it matters most.



Georgia Power was one of the first to respond, working tirelessly to restore electricity across the region. Their crews were more than utility workers, they were a lifeline, often working around the clock alongside emergency responders stationed at colleges across the state. Having Georgia Power as a partner means knowing we can rely on their expertise and commitment to help our communities recover, no matter how challenging the circumstances.

“OGEECHEE TECH IS MORE THAN A COLLEGE; WE ARE PART OF A BROADER NETWORK OF STATE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO SERVING AND STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS.”



**SEAN PAYNE**  
Executive Director for Public Relations  
& Marketing, Ogeechee Technical College

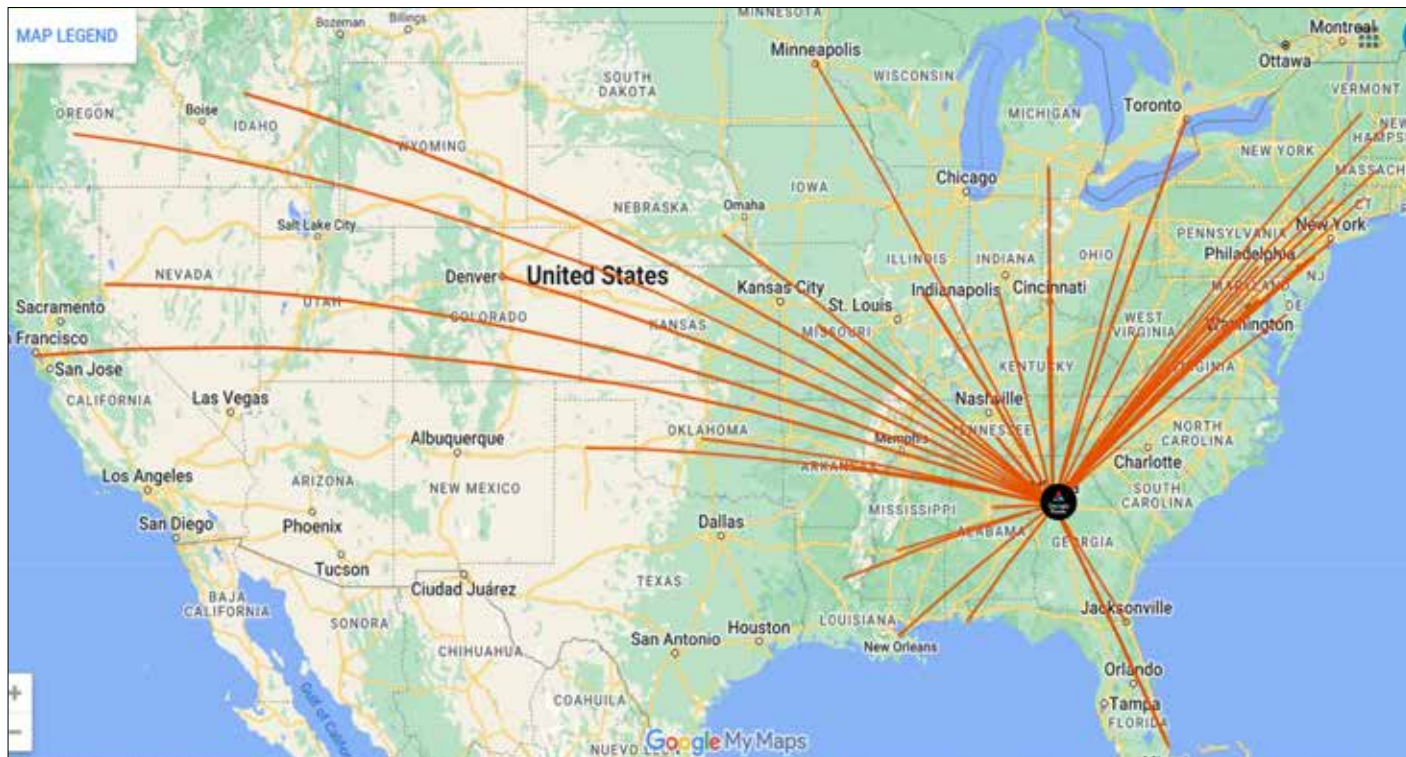












← More than 35 assisting partner companies, from coast to coast, including Canada, came to support the Hurricane Helene effort.





“WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE GEORGIA POWER AS A TRUSTED PARTNER. THEIR FORESIGHT IN INSTALLING A REDUNDANT POWER FEED TO EGRMC MEANT THAT WE NEVER LOST POWER DURING THE STORM, AVOIDING THE NEED TO SWITCH TO EMERGENCY GENERATORS.”



**STEPHEN PENNINGTON**  
CEO, East Georgia Regional Medical Center

The night Hurricane Helene shifted course, bringing stronger winds and more severe conditions than forecasted, it became clear our community would feel a much greater impact than originally anticipated. At East Georgia Regional Medical Center (EGRMC), we prepare for emergencies through our Emergency Response Plans and strong coordination with Bulloch County Emergency Management. Still, this storm startled even the most seasoned among us. Communication in the immediate aftermath was challenging, but our team quickly focused on identifying needs, supporting our patients, and encouraging one another with hope and compassion.

There were many moments of resilience and teamwork that I will never forget. When one of our emergency room physicians was unable to reach the hospital, Dr. Alan Scott walked through the storm to take his place and ensure uninterrupted emergency care. Dewayne Grice and the Volunteers Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) provided cots and bedding, allowing us to create a temporary space in the Radiology waiting room for discharged patients who could not leave the hospital due to unsafe conditions at home. This freed up patient rooms for those in need of admission. Additionally, Chief Quality Officer, Beth Simmons led an on-site “day care” for employees’ children, enabling staff to focus on caring for our patients while knowing their families were safe.

The storm tested us, but it also revealed the extraordinary strength of our community. Helene reinforced an important truth: when we come together with a shared commitment to serve, we can meet any challenge. I am confident that this experience has further prepared us for whatever the future may hold.

Georgia Power allowed us to stay fully focused on patient care and on finding solutions for staff and community members facing loss of power or housing. Their timely and transparent communication throughout the event was also invaluable to our operations and to the broader community.

At EGRMC, our mission is to provide safe, quality, and compassionate care to Every Patient, Every Time, Always. The response to Hurricane Helene reminded me that this commitment is not only upheld by our team within the hospital walls, but also strengthened by the collaboration and support of partners like Georgia Power and the people of Statesboro and Bulloch County. Together, we weathered the storm, and together, we will face whatever comes next.

I am Josh Stephens, one of the owners of Heart Wood Products in Warrenton, GA. We lost power the morning of September 27, 2024 and it was not restored until Thursday, October 3, 2024.

As the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Helene approaches, I remember the uncertainty, strength and unity that defined Warren County and the surrounding region. In the days leading up to Helene, all seemed calm. Like everyone else, I watched the forecasts, hoping they were wrong. I remember being at home trying to secure property and prepare as best we knew how to. We had never faced a storm such as Helene. It was when the warnings changed and the tone of emergency officials shifted that I knew we were facing a serious storm.

Friday, September 27, 2024 is a day I will never forget. There was damage everywhere—trees blocking roads, trees on homes and power outages everywhere. But what struck me most was the quiet determination. People were checking on neighbors, clearing roads, and offering help before being asked.

A moment that stands out was seeing linemen from Georgia Power, along with other power company linemen, working from day light into the dark, to restore power, day after day. I remember folks bringing drinks and food to the crews. It reminded me that recovery isn’t just about rebuilding structures; it’s about restoring the community.

Hurricane Helene tested us, but it also showed us the strength of who we are. I believe when we are faced with significant adversity, we can achieve things that are pretty special. Our community, like many across Georgia, proved that resilience isn’t just a word—it’s a way of life. We supported one another, helped each other, and got back on our feet together. The storm was powerful, but our unity and strength was stronger.

Having Georgia Power as a partner during and after events like Helene is invaluable. Their presence is more than restoring electricity—they restore normalcy. Their crews worked tirelessly, and their commitment to the people of Georgia, especially rural communities like ours, did not go unnoticed. Knowing we have partners like Georgia Power means knowing we’re not facing these challenges alone.

“FOOD AND WATER DISTRIBUTION SITES WERE IMMEDIATELY SET UP TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY. THERE WAS FEAR FOR SURE, BUT THERE WAS ALSO A DEEP CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. THIS IS SOMETHING I’LL NEVER FORGET.”



**JOSH STEPHENS**  
Co-Owner, Heart Wood Products  
Warrenton, Georgia







We were shuttling between high school band events when we first understood the potential impact on the South Georgia area and so I immediately called my family in the region. It took over 8 hours before my sister was able to activate her SOS and connect with me. In several instances, I called Georgia Power staff in different regions to have them check on friends and members when we couldn't get through. But honestly, none of us could have ever imagined the destructive force that was unleashed across the state and southeast.

“I THINK THIS EVENT HAS ILLUSTRATED THE LONG TERM IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING, PREPAREDNESS AND HOW THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY CAN AND SHOULD ENGAGE IN THE FUTURE.”

The day after the storm moved out of Valdosta and we understood the initial impact, our team began calling members, local chambers and family. When those calls couldn't go through, when emails and texts weren't returned and when there was so little posting on social media we realized the sense of the potential catastrophe that was unfolding and the need to engage.

My hometown of Fitzgerald was cut off from the outside world. So the local development authority director Jason Dunn would drive around town taking down family phone numbers and messages, driving through blocked highways to find a signal to call and relay messages. In community after community local chambers and development authorities filled in, volunteered, provide water, resources, hot-spots, equipment, housing and anything their communities and members needed. I think this event has illustrated the long term importance of training, preparedness and how the business community can and should engage in the future.

I think it shows first, the resiliency of Georgians and equally important, Helene highlighted the Georgia Way. This is a centuries old ethos that drives corporate citizenship and community stewardship by the business community. From Georgia Power's quick response to Coca-Cola's distribution of water to our food banks—activating their statewide network of retail and grocery stores—we saw the best of Georgia.

Honestly, Georgia Power is the gold standard of response, recovery and engagement. The communications, the

**CHRIS CLARK**  
President, Georgia Chamber of Commerce



personal engagement of leadership, the community coordination from Georgia Power provided hope for thousands of impacted neighbors and small businesses. Our ability to prepare, to respond and recover in any disaster or crisis is dependent on Georgia Power and our utility partners operating unselfishly with a servant's heart.



As we reflect on the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Helene, we at Bulloch Solutions are filled with pride and gratitude—pride in the unmatched resilience of our team and community, and gratitude for the partnerships and infrastructure that allowed us to serve when it mattered most.

When Helene made landfall, its powerful winds and torrential rains disrupted lives across the Statesboro area. Power outages were widespread, trees were downed, and entire neighborhoods faced isolation. Yet, amidst the chaos, Bulloch Solutions stood ready. Thanks to our 100% buried fiber network, our infrastructure sustained no damage—a critical factor that preserved the integrity of our services during and after the storm.

While traditional networks faltered, our customers with generator backup power were able to reconnect their Optical Network Terminals (ONTs) and re-establish full internet access—becoming vital communication lifelines for families, emergency personnel, and remote workers. In neighborhoods where mobile service and cable were down, our fiber network quietly but powerfully held its ground, enabling internet-based phone calls, access to emergency information, and contact with loved ones during an uncertain time.

In the wake of the storm, our entire team mobilized around the clock to support our customers and our community. While our fiber infrastructure remained intact, many homes and businesses needed assistance in re-establishing power to their ONTs. Our technicians, customer service representatives, and support staff worked extended shifts to troubleshoot connection issues, respond to outage reports, and guide customers through generator hookups.

We fielded a high volume of support tickets and calls, and each one was treated with urgency and care. Our field

crews made site visits where necessary, often navigating debris-laden roads and working in challenging conditions. Meanwhile, our operations center maintained a steady flow of communication to ensure all trouble reports were logged, prioritized, and resolved as quickly as possible.

This dedicated response ensured that once power was restored—even temporarily through generators—internet service followed swiftly. The efforts of our team not only reconnected homes, but helped bring stability, information access, and peace of mind to a community in recovery.

Beyond residential service restoration, Bulloch Solutions also played a crucial role in supporting the

“WE WERE PROUD TO HOST THE GEORGIA POWER TEAM AT OUR NORTHSIDE PLANT LOCATION, PROVIDING THEM WITH ACCESS TO GENERATOR-POWERED OFFICE SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY.”

broader recovery infrastructure. Our offices, equipped with generator systems, remained fully operational throughout the storm's aftermath. This allowed us to maintain uninterrupted communications—not only for our own team, but also for key partners involved in emergency response.

In particular, we were proud to host the Georgia Power team at our Northside Plant location, providing them with access to generator-powered office space and connectivity. This allowed their crews to coordinate response efforts efficiently and without interruption. Our facilities effectively became a command and communication hub, enabling critical service restoration to continue across the region. Collaborations like this underscore how reliable infrastructure and community partnerships can make a meaningful difference during crisis recovery.

Our team worked tirelessly to assist in reconnecting users and supporting emergency efforts. We deployed staff to help residents safely hook up ONTs to generators, educated the public on how to safely access the internet via backup power, and collaborated with local emergency services to ensure consistent communication tools were available in critical areas.

In the days and weeks that followed, we witnessed remarkable community strength. Neighbors helped neighbors. Churches, civic groups, and local businesses mobilized recovery resources. And throughout it all, our network remained a backbone of connectivity, supporting both immediate relief and long-term recovery plans.

**JOHN SCOTT**  
General Manager/CEO, Bulloch Solutions

The lessons of Helene reaffirmed our belief in resilient design and proactive infrastructure investment. More importantly, they reminded us of the importance of community-centered service—a value that lies at the heart of everything we do.

We are honored to contribute to Georgia Power's commemorative reflection and stand alongside fellow utilities and service providers in celebrating the solidarity, strength, and future preparedness that emerged from this historic storm.









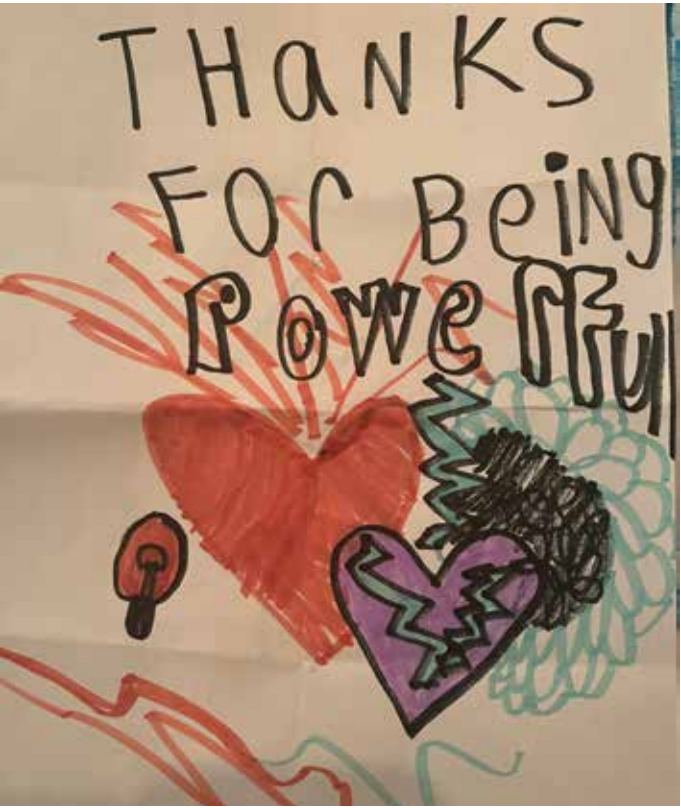
We collaborated with Georgia Power to ensure leaks were safely repaired before power was restored, proactively marking gas lines so damaged poles could be safely repaired or replaced, and sent teams to support power restoration efforts in some of the hardest-hit areas of the state.

**“WHEN CONDITIONS ARE AT THEIR WORST, OUR PEOPLE ARE AT THEIR BEST. ATLANTA GAS LIGHT CREWS, WITH THE SUPPORT FROM VIRGINIA NATURAL GAS TEAMMATES, RESPONDED TO NEARLY 1,000 EMERGENCY LEAK CALLS IN AUGUSTA OVER A FOUR-DAY PERIOD — MORE THAN IN THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 2024 COMBINED.”**



**PEDRO CHERRY**  
Former President and CEO, Atlanta Gas Light  
and Chattanooga Gas







When powerful storms tore through our region last year, their impact was immediate and deeply felt. Entire neighborhoods went dark, homes were damaged, and daily routines were upended. For many across our communities, especially those already struggling to make ends meet, the storm didn’t just bring wind and rain—it brought a wave of uncertainty, loss, and hardship. Families suddenly found themselves without power, without food,

lized volunteers and funding to repair damaged homes. This was, and continues to be, a truly collective effort. Throughout the crisis, we were reminded again and again: we cannot do this work alone. Our ability to respond and recover is rooted in partnership, trust, and shared responsibility. The strength of this community lies not only in how we prepare, but in how we show up for each other—especially in times of need. United Way of the Coastal Empire remains at the table

“THROUGHOUT THE CRISIS, WE WERE REMINDED AGAIN AND AGAIN — WE CANNOT DO THIS WORK ALONE. OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND AND RECOVER IS ROOTED IN PARTNERSHIP, TRUST, AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.”

and without a clear path forward. But in the face of crisis, our community did what it does best: we united.

In the immediate aftermath, we at United Way of the Coastal Empire activated our Disaster Relief Fund, and the community responded with extraordinary generosity. Individuals, businesses, and philanthropic partners gave selflessly to ensure families had what they needed to recover and rebuild. That immediate outpouring of support helped us provide critical relief—getting help to where it was needed most.

We partnered with an incredible network of nonprofits, businesses, faith-based organizations, and local governments to care for our neighbors. Together, we supported meal distributions, helped families replace food lost during extended power outages, and mobi-

lized volunteers and funding to repair damaged homes. This was, and continues to be, a truly collective effort. Throughout the crisis, we were reminded again and again: we cannot do this work alone. Our ability to respond and recover is rooted in partnership, trust, and shared responsibility. The strength of this community lies not only in how we prepare, but in how we show up for each other—especially in times of need. United Way of the Coastal Empire remains at the table

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**KIMBERY WALLER**  
Executive Director,  
United Way of Coastal Empire

We were tracking the storm and we were definitely still in shock and trauma from Idalia but when we saw it kick up and gain speed in that previous 36 hours and shift our direction we knew we were gonna be hit again. The wind was way more intense, but it also had less rain than Idalia. But all I could keep thinking was just “Not again.” When I got out the next morning, with only three gas stations operational and 99% of the power out across the county, we knew with United Way and another non-profit, we had to step up and get in action.

I remember Georgia Power looking at the devastation and gave a maybe two week, three week period response and thinking, “I don’t even know if they can do it in that time with the amount of power poles and trees and wires down,” but was impressed at how quickly Georgia Power did mobilize and start getting power restored to critical industry as the days clicked off. Georgia Power put all the resources they had along with the other EMCs to work as hard as they could to get power restored and then build out from there. We are thankful for their efforts. Georgia Power logistic operations is the best. The people that came in from all over the country to respond and to get us back operational really in just over a week.

I would say most of the community started feeling a little bit normalized. You know close to a month and other things but people were at least able to drive, shop and shower for the majority of the community after 7 to 10 days.

So thankful for Georgia Power.

**MICHAEL SMITH**  
Greater Valdosta United Way Director  
and Lowndes County Commissioner









Hurricane Helene was the second of three storms to affect Chatham County in 2024, and unlike Hurricane Debby before it, the storm tore through our area’s infrastructure, leaving many residents without access to power for weeks.

Helene came just as Chatham County was returning to normalcy following the record-breaking rainfall and flooding caused by Debby. The affected pockets of the county were still recovering. Residents who lived near the Ogeechee River were dealing with the flood damage, relying on the Disaster Recovery Center, a collaboration between Chatham County and many local

Weather Service in Charleston spotted tornado after tornado in our area.

In the EOC, Chatham teams amplified the NWS tornado warnings, passing them along to residents as quickly as possible. Outside, tropical storm force winds raged into the night. It went on for hours, with the County’s night shift receiving reports of downed trees and power lines into the early hours of the morning, sleepless.

During the height of the storm, Chatham County’s E-911 Dispatch Center received over 5,000 calls. Further south, the 911 centers in Glynn and Bacon County fell to Helene’s

“EVERY NEW STORM BRINGS NEW LESSONS TO LEARN, AND THE EXPERIENCE GAINED BY THOSE CHATHAM COUNTY STAFF WHO WORKED THROUGH DEBBY, HELENE, AND MILTON WILL MAKE THE COUNTY BETTER PREPARED FOR FUTURE STORM SEASONS.”

nonprofits and churches, for food, water, hygiene, and cleaning supplies. But hurricanes wait for no one.

A storm that would affect a much wider area of Chatham County had already begun churning in the Gulf. The same Chatham County teams who worked tirelessly during Debby’s 17-day Emergency Operations Center activation were called upon once again, just weeks later, to prepare for a new storm with an entirely different set of challenges.

Hurricane Helene tore through Georgia in the cover of darkness on September 26. The winds began to whip as night fell. The tornado sirens rang out over Chatham. Rain came in spurts, intense but short-lived. Phones buzzed with emergency notifications as the National

**CHAIRMAN CHESTER A. ELLIS**  
Chairman/CEO, Chatham County

winds, and emergency calls were redirected to Chatham. The calls just kept coming, and through the night and into the morning, our call-takers kept answering.

A total of six tornado warnings were issued in Chatham County between 8:42 p.m. and 11 p.m. The next day, Chatham County awoke to find roads covered in debris. Downed power lines and fallen limbs prevented travel along many major routes. Ancient live oaks that had weathered storms for over 100 years laid flattened across roads.

Helene’s hurricane force winds left over 110,000 residences without power, over a third of the county’s

population. The numbers were the worst in years: 336 roads were closed; 117 power lines were downed; and 304 trees had fallen.

Of the 23,954 structures assessed by Chatham County that Friday, eight were destroyed.

The storm had come and gone in a flash. Helene roiled through Georgia in the night, heading north, leaving behind a trail of damage through cities rarely affected by hurricanes.

It was the most destructive storm in Georgia Power’s 140-year history, grounding nearly 1,500 miles of power lines, and leaving over 1 million Georgians without power. Teams were called in from across the country, even teams from Canada were on the ground across the state working to repair the damage.

In total, over 20,000 technicians set to work on Georgia Power’s statewide recovery effort. Helene’s damage was felt across Georgia. From Savannah to Augusta to Atlanta, few places were spared.

Helene was devastating, but in its wake, the people of Chatham came together to help each other. Our community’s resilience is demonstrated in times of greatest need, and this storm was no exception.

Chatham County residents, many of whom were without power themselves, showed up to provide any support they could. From volunteering with local nonprofit organizations to performing wellness checks for their neighbors, the recovery work began almost immediately.

Chatham County’s critical workforce was operating at full capacity following Hurricane Helene. Phones at the EOC rang off the hook; social media and email inboxes filled with questions. Our Chatham County staff, who were



experiencing the same pressures as residents, worked tirelessly to coordinate efforts with our non-profit partners to ensure the community’s needs were met.

The day after the storm, Chatham County’s Engineering team was assessing the status of public roads and highways, and the data they collected was used to make a public map to aid residents in identifying traffic signals that were out.

Chatham County’s Public Works Department was removing trees and debris, clearing the way for damage assessment teams and community members with pressing travel needs.

With most Chatham residents without power, Chatham Emergency Management Agency coordinated two sites for ice distribution: Memorial Stadium and L. Scott Stell Park, through a disaster contract with Ash-Britt. A line of hundreds of cars snaked into Memorial Stadium’s parking lot as residents without power came looking for food and ice.

There, Chatham County staff, along with volunteers with The Salvation Army, Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia, and The United Way of the Coastal Empire were able to distribute over 8,500 meals, 14,990 bottles of water, 1,360 food boxes, and 1,000 hygiene wipes to residents of Chatham County.

The Disaster Recovery Center at Compassion Christian Church re-opened, supplying residents with a host of services provided by area non-profits to include essentials like food and water, as well as help with applying for FEMA assistance to deal with damage.

CEMA worked with community partners to set up cooling and charging stations for the many residents without power, providing air conditioning and access

to electricity. These churches, community centers, fire departments, colleges, and museums graciously opened their doors and donated their space and time to help the community recover.

These centers stayed open into October, as Georgia Power worked to restore power in Chatham County and across the state.

Helene raised a lot of new questions for Chatham County. With over a third of the county without power, how do we provide short term relief while Georgia Power performs nearly statewide maintenance? How can we get the word out when residents are without internet? How do we remain prepared in the face of highly active hurricane seasons in the future?

We will continue fostering our relationships with the many non-profits who stepped up during the 2024 season, and work with their leadership to ensure preparedness for future storms. We will better understand the processes put into place at each phase of our response efforts, from monitoring to recovery.

We will maintain the communications and planning efforts of the Command Policy Group, a collection of the mayors of all municipalities in Chatham County, led by County Commission Chairman Chester A. Ellis.

Our response relies on collaboration, and through constant coordination with local, state, and federal partners, we forge bonds that keep us connected when hurricane season begins.

Hurricanes are inevitable, but through preparedness, training, and experience, Chatham County can provide the community we serve with warning, direction, and relief in times of crisis. The lessons learned from Helene will inform our response for years to come.









In the days before Hurricane Helene made landfall, there was a familiar anxiety in the air. Many of us had already been watching the tropics closely due to Hurricane Debby’s recent impact. As Helene moved from the Gulf and made landfall, we thought that we would dodge the worst of the storm. However, as we listened to the wind howl and trees fall throughout the night, it became clear that would in fact be in the path of some of the strongest parts of the storm. While my family and I made our personal preparations at home, we were simultaneously beginning to stand up our VOAD partners and coordinating across churches and agencies to be ready for whatever daylight might bring.

The initial mood after the storm passed was a mix of shock, exhaustion, and a sort of quiet determination. Many people were still recovering from flooding related to Hurricane Debby when Helene dealt another substantial blow. Power was out across the county. Roads were impassable. Trees lay across homes and churches. But amid the devastation, there was also a deep, almost defiant hope that resonated throughout Statesboro and Bulloch County. We’d been here before, and we’d get through this together.

One of the most memorable moments came just days after the storm when trucks began arriving with water, food, and supplies coordinated by VOAD and powered by community donations. What made it extraordinary was not just the delivery, but how the community showed up to serve, with neighbors helping neighbors, Georgia Southern students and staff unloading pallets, and pastors clearing roads with chainsaws. It was raw, real, and sacred work. That same week, our local Georgia Power crews worked tirelessly to restore electricity, often cheered on with homemade signs and warm meals from grateful residents.

Helene reminded us that resilience isn’t just about resources—it’s about relationships. The storm tested our infrastructure, but more than that, it tested our trust in each other. Through our VOAD partnerships and the creation of Bulloch Strong, we moved from reactive response to proactive recovery. For Georgia, it’s a powerful example of what happens when local leadership, statewide coordination, the public sector, and private sector partnerships align with compassion and purpose.

Georgia Power’s role was more than restoring lines—it was about restoring hope. Georgia Power’s commit-

ment to service, communication, and care helped stabilize communities in chaos. And their support of recovery efforts has been vital. Knowing Georgia Power is with us before, during, and long after the storm makes a tangible difference in our ability to rebuild lives, not just utilities.

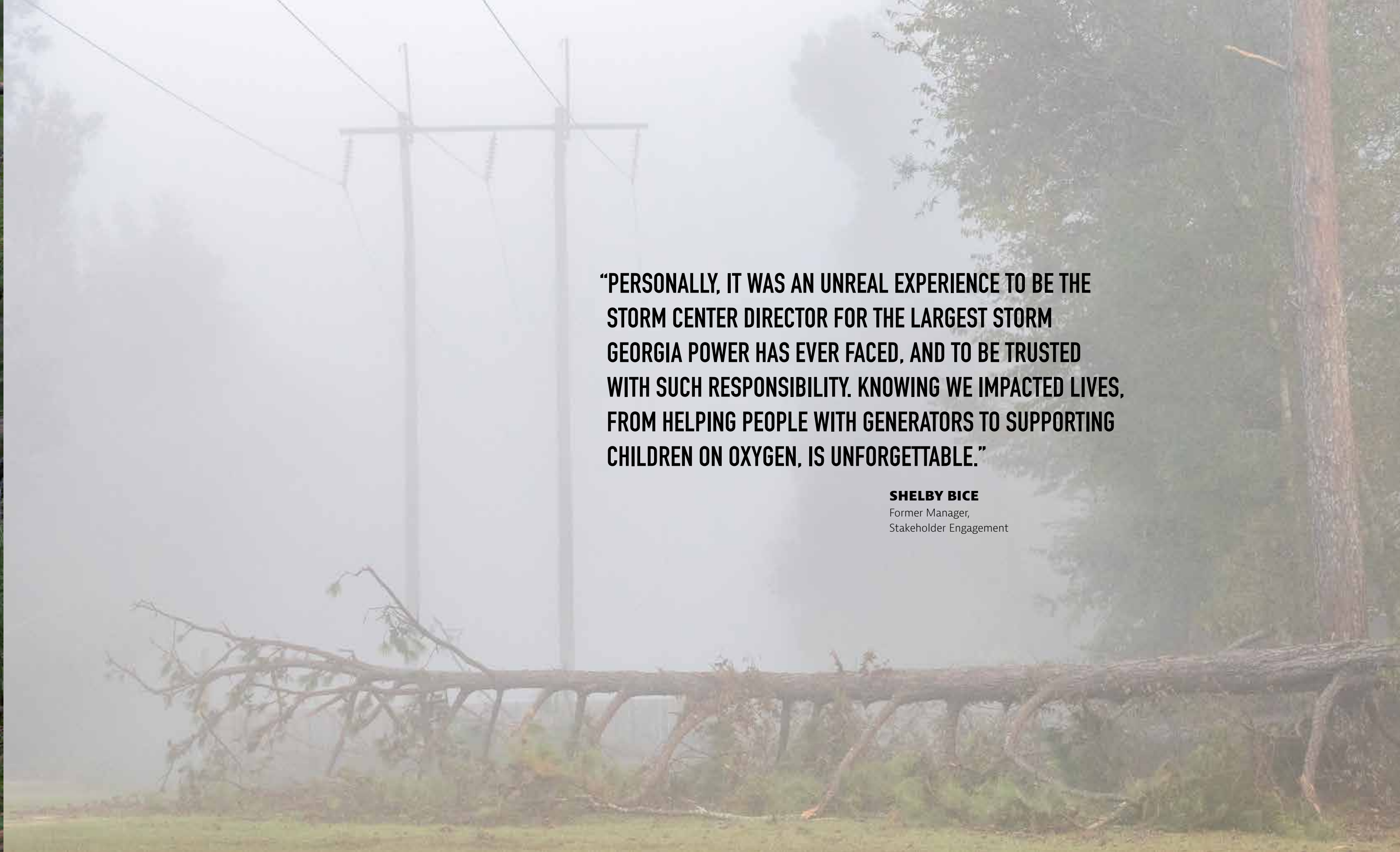
We are proud to stand alongside Georgia Power and so many others as we work together to help Georgia recover, rebuild, and grow stronger.

## “HELENE REMINDED US THAT RESILIENCE ISN’T JUST ABOUT RESOURCES — IT’S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS. THE STORM TESTED OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT MORE THAN THAT, IT TESTED OUR TRUST IN EACH OTHER.”



**REV. DR. JONATHAN SMITH**  
On behalf of Bulloch VOAD & Bulloch Strong





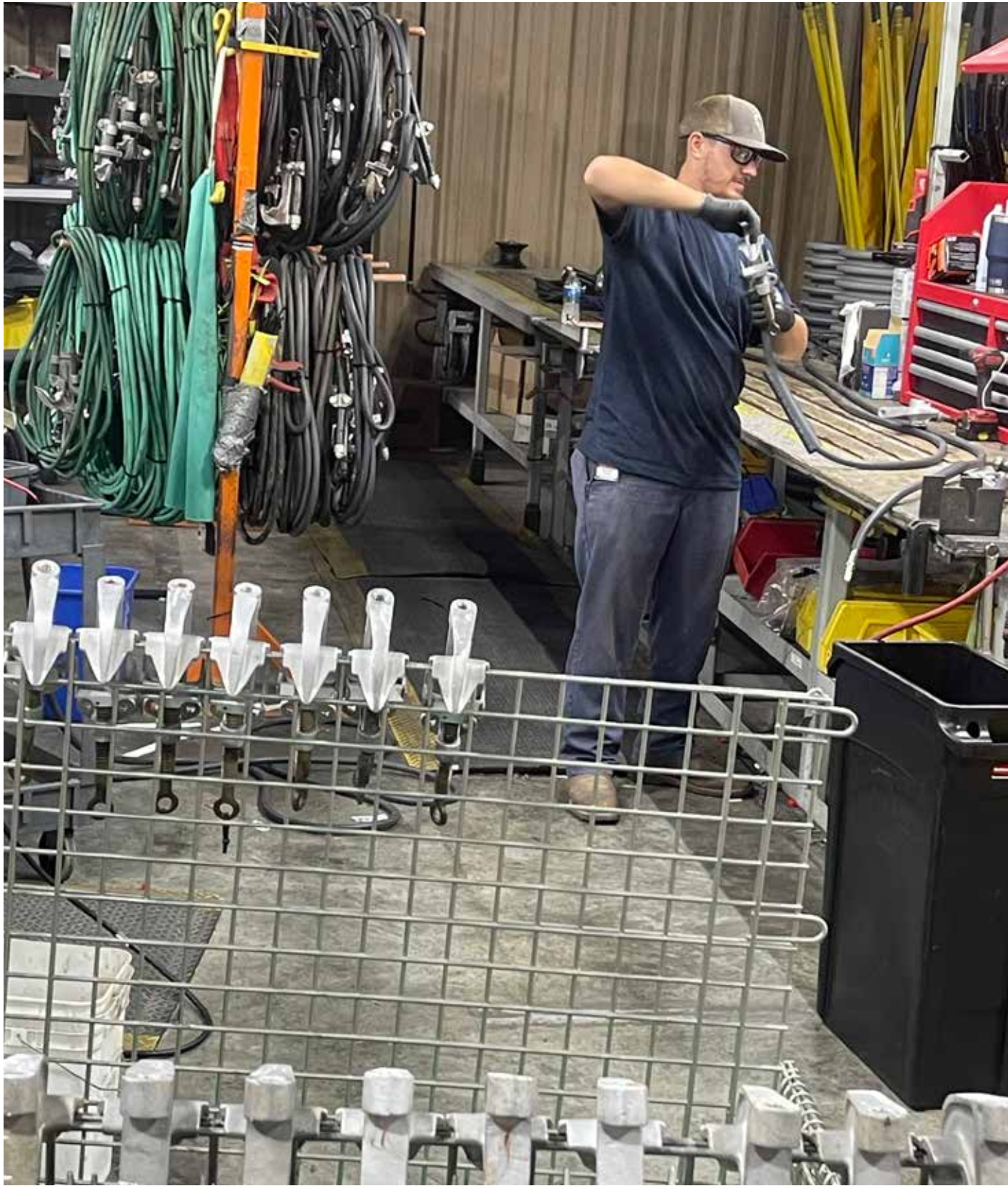
**“PERSONALLY, IT WAS AN UNREAL EXPERIENCE TO BE THE STORM CENTER DIRECTOR FOR THE LARGEST STORM GEORGIA POWER HAS EVER FACED, AND TO BE TRUSTED WITH SUCH RESPONSIBILITY. KNOWING WE IMPACTED LIVES, FROM HELPING PEOPLE WITH GENERATORS TO SUPPORTING CHILDREN ON OXYGEN, IS UNFORGETTABLE.”**

**SHELBY BICE**  
Former Manager,  
Stakeholder Engagement





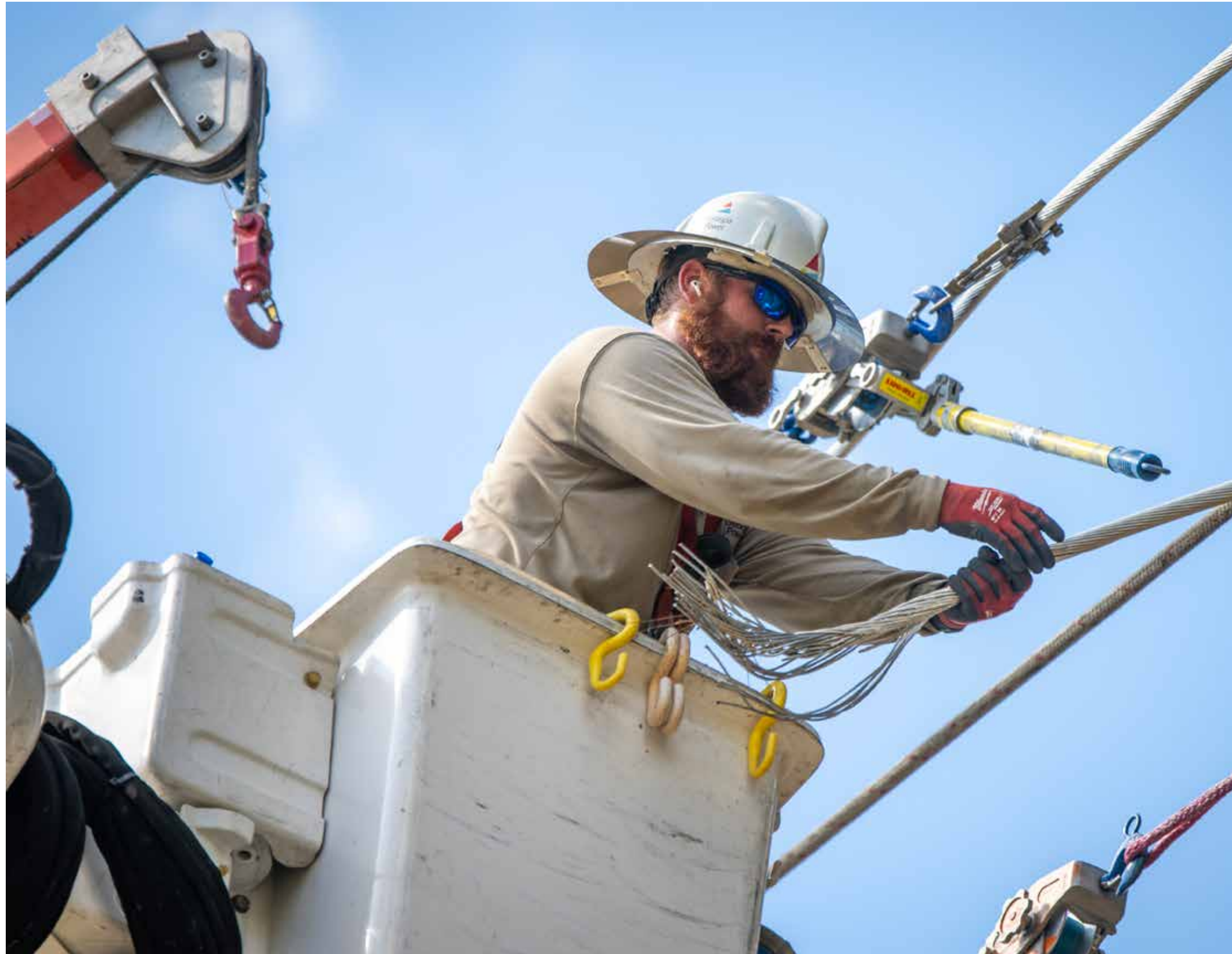
















































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