

## Georgia Power



### Business Outcomes

- Hiring ratio decreased to one hire for every three applicants from 1:42
- 18% increase in retention rate to 94%
- Decreased hiring costs by more than half

### Employee Impact

- 144 hired at Georgia Power
- Career tracked in apprentice program
- Earning income while training

### Lineworker Bootcamp

- 900 graduates earn Electrical Lineworker Apprentice Certificate
- Eligible for apprentice program

# Hiring Ratio and Hiring Costs Decreased Through Technical College Partnership Georgia Power

Electrical Lineworker Apprentice Certificate increases quality of applicant pool, decreases hiring costs. Program developed in partnership with Technical College System of Georgia.

Georgia Power is the largest subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the nation's largest generators of electricity. The company is an investor-owned, tax-paying utility with rates well below the national average. Georgia Power has provided electricity to the state for over 100 years and currently serves 2.3 million customers in all but four of Georgia's 159 counties

Georgia Power has received numerous awards for contributions to the state's economic development. Credited with playing a key role in pulling almost \$2 billion in new capital investment projects and more than 10,400 new jobs into Georgia in 2009, Georgia Power's Community and Economic Development organization was ranked as one of the best in the world for the 11th year in a row by Site Selection magazine.

## Electrical Lineworkers Bootcamp Produces Skilled Entry-Level Workers

In August, 2007 the National Energy Skilled Workforce Summit was held in conjunction with the Southern Governors Association and included the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and over 350 industry leaders. The executives were asked to discuss issues and concerns about future energy workforce. The number one issue for Georgia was the struggle to hire linemen. The practice of simply "hiring from the street" resulted in a hiring ratio of 1-in-42 for Georgia Power. This meant the company went through 42 applicants to hire one qualified lineworker. After recruiting, selecting and training, they still suffered poor retention rates, resulting in excessive recruiting and hiring costs.

In a quest for a better applicant pool, Georgia Power and other industry partners developed an entry-level lineworker training program with the Technical College System of Georgia in 2005. At start-up, employers worked closely with the college system to assure that training met skills and competency requirements of the industry. Employers continue to support the program, now located in four technical colleges around the state, by providing equipment, materials, curricula input, and trainers who administer abilities testing for the program. The 8-week course, referred to as

### PERSONAL STORY

Andre Person, a senior in high school the spring 2007 in the Atlanta area, was frustrated with the job search process. He was repeatedly told that he needed experience to get a job. Andre tested into the Skilled Labor Summer Internship program and upon graduation worked full-time, earning a paycheck as well as a slot in the 8-week bootcamp at SGTC. After completing the program and earning the Electrical Lineworker Apprentice Certificate, Andre was hired by Georgia Power. The opportunity was timely for Andre and his family as his mother lost her employment when the Ford plant closed and she and Andre's younger brother lived with him for some time. Now, well into an apprentice program, Andre considers himself on a career track with opportunities to move up, which keep him encouraged to stay with the company and motivated to keep progressing.

## About Corporate Voices

Corporate Voices is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders.

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-467-8130

Fax: 202-467-8140

Blog: [corporatevoices.wordpress.com](http://corporatevoices.wordpress.com)

Twitter: @corporatevoices

[www.corporatevoices.org](http://www.corporatevoices.org)

## Find Out More

Corporate Voices is committed to identifying and spotlighting businesses supporting postsecondary completion while making significant contributions to internal company goals. “Best practice” talent development models that increase access to career opportunities through education and training are being examined for characteristics that are transferable and replicable to other employers. This research is being conducted with the guidance of the Corporate Voices Learn and Earn Business Leadership Team consisting of business executives leading promising models and those interested in peer-to-peer learning. If you are interested in joining, contact Peggy Walton at [pwalton@corporatevoices.org](mailto:pwalton@corporatevoices.org). Team members include:

- Verizon Wireless
- Bon Secours
- Pacific Gas & Electric
- Expeditors
- Convergys

“Electrical Lineworker Bootcamp” is designed to convey required mechanical abilities, general electrical safety skills, and positive work ethics to participants as well as an understanding of the physical demands of the position.

Graduates earn the Electrical Lineworker Apprentice Certificate (ELAC) which prepares them to compete for an entry level lineworker position. Once successfully hired by one of the Georgia energy companies, they enter a registered apprenticeship program with an average wage of \$15 to \$16 per hour, putting them on the path to journeyman with salary closer to \$25 per hour. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the state is home to over 5,000 power lineworkers and repairers, of which 50 percent are eligible to retire today, creating a strong demand for qualified candidates.

For Georgia Power and other utility employers, the program has eliminated a great deal of hiring risk that previously existed. If ELAC students are not a good fit for line work, they generally self-select out of the course, avoiding a “bad fit” hire for the companies. Those who complete the course receive a clear understanding of the rigors of the job as the program includes one week observation-based training within one of the utility partner companies. The program has created a pipeline of qualified apprentice candidates providing Georgia Power a substantially better hiring ratio of 1-in-3 and has increased retention rates from 76 percent to 94 percent. Current recruiting and hiring costs have decreased by more than half from the 2005 level.

## Focus on High-Need Atlanta Area

Attracting lineworkers who live and want to stay in the Atlanta area is a challenge for Georgia Power. Through a partnership between Georgia Power, South Georgia Technical College (SGTC) and the DeKalb Department of Labor, a Skilled Labor Summer Internship program was created to introduce students to the energy sector, targeting linework. Students from metro Atlanta high

schools were nominated, with 14 selected the first year (2007) from fairly rigorous criteria. The students spent 8 weeks earning a salary while working with an operating crew at Georgia Power. Eight students successfully completed the internship and were sent to the 8-week bootcamp at SGTC. All eight successfully completed the bootcamp and were offered full-time apprentice lineworkers jobs, with five continuing employment.

“Through a collaborative effort between the Georgia Energy and Industrial Construction Consortium and the Technical College System of Georgia, we have developed a successful certificate program for training linemen. This program has improved recruitment and retention efforts and provided a cost-effective benefit to our company when hiring these candidates.”

Leslie Sibert, Distribution VP,  
Georgia Power and Georgia Energy and  
Industrial Construction Board Chair

## Education Partner

The innovative ELAC program originally launched at South Georgia Technical College. In partnership with Technical College System of Georgia, it has grown to four locations strategically placed around the state and has produced over 900 graduates, 144 of which have been hired by Georgia Power. Participants, whose average age is 26, are able to cover costs of the program through the Georgia HOPE grant if eligible and can apply for additional funds if applicable from Department of Labor.

This highly successful program has garnered national attention from the energy sector and from educational institutions searching for exemplary industry partnerships. The Lineworker Bootcamp was recently identified by the Center for Energy Workforce Development as a workforce readiness model to be replicated. Plans are in place to initiate the program in North Carolina, Ohio and Washington states with others considering implementation.

For more information about Georgia Power, visit [www.georgiapower.com](http://www.georgiapower.com).

**SECTOR:** Energy/Public Utility

**EMPLOYEES:** 8,205

**HISTORY:** 100+ Years