



SCHEDULE *(subject to change)*

TUESDAY, MAY 8

7:30 am – 7:00 pm **Registration Open**

9:00 am – 1:00 pm **Pre-Conference Workshops** *(View descriptions on cooperative.com)*

How to be an Adobe Superhero – SOLD OUT

Instructor: Mark Lehr, Adobe Certified Trainer, Easel Solutions

Assistant: Steve Burns, Graphic Designer, Federated RE Insurance Exchange

Registration Fee: \$450 (CCC/CKAE: \$350)

Class size limited to 25

Unleash Your Co-op's Inner Strength with Internal Communications – SOLD OUT

Nancy Plemens Mayes, APR, Managing Director, Mayes Communications Inc.

Joan O'Fallon, APR, Director of Communications, Polk Burnett Electric Cooperative

Holly Wetzel, Director of Marketing and Member Communication, NRECA

Registration Fee: \$450 (CCC/CKAE: \$350)

Class size limited to 30

From Mic to Megaphone: Media Training for Electric Co-op Communicators

Roy Heffley, Communications Coach, 20-year ABC News Network Journalist

Registration Fee: \$450 (CCC/CKAE: \$350)

Class size limited to 30

Take to the Sky: Help Your Marketing Strategy Take Flight with Drones

Presented by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Jason Klenklen, Progressive Rail Account Executive - Perspective Technology Division

Van O'Cain, Director of Public and Member Relations, The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina

Jason McGrade, Strategic Operations Program Manager, Touchstone Energy

Registration Fee: \$450 (Touchstone Energy Members: \$300)

Class size limited to 25

Electric Vehicles: Coming Soon to a Co-op Near You

Presented by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Alan Shedd, Director, Energy Solutions, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, vehicle manufacturers, charging networks, and participants in the Drive to Connect Event

David Ranallo, Marketing and Member Services Manager, Great River Energy, Maple Grove, MN

Kylah McNabb, Manager C&I Marketing, Western Farmers Electric Co-op, Andarko, OK

Francesca Wahl, Business Development and Policy, Tesla Motors, San Francisco Bay Area, CA

James Ellis, Senior Director of Utility Solutions, ChargePoint, Campbell, CA

Registration Fee: \$450 (Touchstone Energy Members: \$300)

Class size limited to 40

Key Accounts Master Course

Presented by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Erick Rheam, VP, Business Development, Automated Energy, Inc.

Scott Bialick, Business Development Senior Program Manager, Touchstone Energy

Registration Fee: \$450 (Touchstone Energy Members: \$300)

Class size limited to 30



TUESDAY, MAY 8

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

First Time Attendee Mixer

This fun informal session is a networking warm-up that will help you get started on the right foot. You'll meet the CONNECT advisory group members and make some fast friends as you head into the Opening General Session and Welcome Reception that kick off the conference.

Before the conference, you'll receive information that will help you navigate the conference as a first-timer. At the mixer, there will be stations set up where you can get assistance with the mobile app and get advice on everything from how to choose the breakout sessions best for you and where to go for lunch.

If this is your first time attending or if you need a CONNECT "refresher" please be sure to join us!

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

General Session 1

- **Welcome Remarks**

Phil Carson, President, NRECA

Jeff Peterson, Executive Director, Utah Rural Electric Association

Emcee: Tracey Steiner, Senior Vice President, Education & Training, NRECA

- **Keynote: Jonathan Sprinkles, *The Power of Connection***

The author of 13 books, including two international bestsellers, Jonathan Sprinkles is a proven thought leader on the psychology of Connection—the force that drives engagement, loyalty, and profitability. Jonathan's specialty speaks directly to our cooperatives: building a Culture of Connection in which employees have a strong commitment to the organization, to each other, and to those they serve.

Jonathan delivers straight talk, 'sprinkled' with laughs. His high-energy presentations go against the grain of traditional thinking and challenge you to reconnect people to their mission and key initiatives. After just a few minutes with Jonathan, his quick wit and down-home style of "teaching beautiful people to act like it," will make you feel like you've known him your entire life. His own life is one that we can all celebrate as proof that success isn't about where you start, but where you choose to finish!

- **Presentation of the J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award**

- **Presentation of the Edgar F. Chesnutt Award for Best Total Communication Program**

4:45 pm – 5:30 pm

Spotlight on Excellence Awards Winners Reception

Invitation only

Sponsored by Federated Insurance Exchange

2018 Spotlight on Excellence Award winners and members of their cooperatives will gather to celebrate the Spotlight program awards. Scott Peterson, SVP for Communications at NRECA, will offer brief remarks. Along with enjoying a special Spotlight Ale and hors d'oeuvres, winners can have their photos taken with their awards and mingle with other Spotlight recipients before heading into the courtyard for the Welcome Reception.



5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Welcome Reception

Sponsored by NRTC, CrowdFiber and Pivot

What better way to reconnect with your co-op friends and make brand new ones than a casual reception in the gorgeous courtyard at the Grand America? Come enjoy libations and heavy hors d'oeuvres while gearing up for the next two days of learning and fun. It's a great way to get a head start on your networking as we kick off CONNECT '18!

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Registration Open

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast

Sponsored by HomeServ

8:30 am – 10:00 am

General Session 2

Presented and sponsored by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

- **Keynote: Zach Mannheimer, Principal Community Planner, MEC Placemaking**
Our communities are at the heart of everything we do, but what is at the heart of our communities? Hear from Zach Mannheimer, who focused on the retention and recruitment of young people in one of the most rural states in the country. By using unconventional and unprecedented perspectives, he built a community of the future, which he calls "creative placemaking." By boldly opening the Des Moines Social Club in the center of town, Zach was able to attract over 1,000,000 creative minds to his local community. Discover new ways of thinking that can power your community.
- **Keynote: Downtown Comeback**
Josh Nowell, Owner/CEO of Operations, Laurel Mercantile Co.
Jim Rasberry, Owner/Chairman and Mallorie Rasberry, Owner/VP of Procurement, Laurel Mercantile Co.

This keynote will feature HGTV's "Home Town" co-stars, Jim and Mallorie Rasberry and Josh Nowell. Jim and his crew will share how they helped create a vibrant atmosphere to instill preservation, promotion and economic development efforts community wide, and explain how those efforts led to the creation of a TV show that has now been seen by more than 15 million viewers. They tell the story of bringing pride back to a small town and how the future of America depends on rural communities.

- **Presentation of the Brand Champion Awards**
Lynn Moore, Executive Director, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

The Touchstone Energy Brand Champion award is presented to brand leaders who have made exceptional contributions to building the brand locally and regionally. The brand wouldn't be where it is today without these individuals.

10:00 am – 10:30 am

Networking Break

Sponsored by AM Conservation Group

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Breakouts: Super Sessions

Engaging Your Members with Emerging Technologies

You turned on the lights 75 years ago. But how are you “wowing” and engaging your members today? Technologies like those related to broadband and the connected home demonstrate your pioneering history, enhance member engagement and help you be more efficient. Learn about the consumer trends driving demand for technology solutions, how you can educate members, capture that demand and build a cooperative culture ready to deliver an unmatched customer experience!

Moderator: Chris Martin, VP, Member & Industry Relations, NRTC, Herndon, VA

Jeremy Graves, President, Pivot, Portland, OR

Bailey White, Co-Founder, CrowdFiber, Rome, GA

Brad Davids, Head of Demand Response Partnerships, Google/Nest, Boulder, CO

DeeDee Laramore, VP of Administrative Operations, CarolinaConnect Cooperative, Inc., Gilbert, SC

In Over Your Head InDesign?

Come to this session if you are an occasional user of InDesign and need a solid refresher and overview of some great shortcuts. Basic concepts such as file resolution file formats (jpeg, png, tiff, eps, svg) and how you should use them will be covered. You’ll learn how to enhance InDesign files with paragraph shading, and how to work with numbered and bulleted lists. You’ll walk away knowing how to import Excel data to create tables and add shading and graphics to enhance them. A generous Q&A segment will help you keep your head above water and get answers to your burning InDesign questions.

Mark Lehr, Adobe Certified Instructor, Easel Solutions, Minneapolis, MN

The Newcomer’s Guide to the Electric Cooperative Industry

What is an IOU, a muni, PUD, IPP and ISO and what do they have to do with your electric co-op? You’ve heard of the “cooperative way” but what exactly does that mean? Are you a bit mystified about capital credits? What is Operation Roundup? If you always wished that someone could help you with the language and the acronyms of our business, but don’t want to ask your boss, come to this session and learn (or refresh your memory) on the basics you need to understand the cooperative electric utility business and what sets us apart.

Jimmy Autry, CCC, APR, Fellow PRSA, Autry Cooperative Communications, Rock Hill, SC

After the Storm: Outfitting Your Response Strategies

From fire and ice to once-in-a-generation hurricanes, Mother Nature has tested our co-ops’ restoration capabilities and communications strategies to respond to these challenges. How are statewides, G&Ts, distribution co-ops and NRECA teaming to prepare for and respond to these dramatic events, and what are the lessons from 2017 that we should be incorporating into our planning and tactics? Join the resilient communicators who managed their co-op’s public and member response for insights into how you can prepare for your next challenge.

Moderator: Scott Peterson, Senior Vice President, Communications, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Lindsay Bridges, Vice President, Communications and Member Services, Georgia EMC, Tucker, GA

Kim Broun, CCC, Communications Specialist, Tri-County EMC, Gray, GA

Nina Campos, Manager of Human Resources & Communications, Victoria Electric Cooperative, Victoria, TX

Kathy Richardson, CCC, Manager of Communications, Clay Electric Cooperative, Keystone Heights, FL

C-Suite View of Communications

Several CEOs and executives (including representatives from the J.C. Brown and Edgar F. Chesnutt Award winning co-ops) will share their perspective on how effective communication connects people to each other and to an organization’s mission and purpose. The panelists will provide insight as to

what they are looking for in a strong communications operation and how communicators can provide value to their leadership team. A Q&A session will follow.

Moderator: Jerri Imgarten, CCC, Vice President of Communications, The Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Dodge City, KS

Shane Laws, CEO, The Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Dodge City, KS

Patrick Higgins, Director, Communications & Member Services, Ohio's Electric Cooperatives, Columbus, OH

COO of 2018 Edgar F. Chesnutt Award winning team (to be announced at the opening general session)

Blazing the Trail for the Cooperative of the Future

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

Great organizations can reinvent themselves to exceed member expectations by fully embracing change at all levels. It's not just innovation that makes being best in class possible. It's knowing how to positively influence and bring others along in the change process. Join us to see best practices come to life and learn how to create a case for change that promotes the Cooperative Difference throughout your community.

Moderator: Lynn Moore, Executive Director, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA

Janet Rehberg, Director, Cooperative Development, Ohio's Electric Cooperatives, Columbus, OH

Kelly Hester, Communications & Corporate Events Coordinator, Carroll EMC, Carrollton, GA

Rob Book, Vice President, Member Services, Delaware Electric Cooperative, Greenwood, DE

Anne Harvey, Director of Member Relations, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Lunch On Your Own

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Breakouts: Classic

Tools, Tips, and Tricks for Proactive Media Outreach

Engaging your local and regional media outlets can take co-op storytelling to the next level. It starts with crafting an effective pitch, maintaining relationships with local journalists, and finding an effective news hook. Learn from three co-op media professionals as they share their successes, failures, and lessons learned.

Stephen Bell, Director of Media and Public Relations, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Joe Arnold, VP Strategic Communications, Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, Louisville, KY

Beneficial Electrification

As we step into the future, it's important to embrace technologies that will successfully position your co-op as its community's source of power and information. At the 2018 NRECA Annual Meeting, members approved a resolution to "communicate the benefits of increased electrification of the economy," often referred to as "environmentally beneficial electrification." The use of high-efficiency electric technologies helps consumers save money, it reduces pollution and increases electricity sales for co-ops. More benefits are emerging as we combine "Smart Home" technology with energy storage and distributed energy resources. Join us for a discussion of beneficial electrification and its most visible and exciting element – electric transportation. We will cover technology trends and take a look at how co-ops are embracing them and helping their members embrace them as well.

Alan Shedd, Director, Energy Solutions, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, Arlington, VA

Keith Dennis, Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, BTS Division of NRECA, Arlington, VA

Andrea Pendergast, Communications Coordinator, Great River Energy, Maple Grove MN

Internal Communications Beyond the Co-op World

Profiling the positive work cultures of well-known organizations such as Starbucks, USAA, and Zappos, this session will highlight best practices in internal communications outside of the co-op industry. From these organizations and others, you'll discover successful activities and concepts that can be scaled and replicated to enhance your co-op's internal communications program.

Nancy Plemens Mayes, APR, Managing Director, Mayes Communications Inc., Springfield, VA

Pretty Pictures in Photoshop

Despite peoples' best efforts, some photos just turn out bad. But what if the bad photo in question is that one in a million or it's the only photo you have? This session won't help you turn a bad photo into a well-shot photo, but it will provide key techniques in Photoshop that will help you turn it into something usable. This session will also explore layer masks. You'll learn how to blend layers of images together and create soft transitions between elements, apply changes to a very specific portion of an image, and isolate parts of an image from the background to replace the background and/or wrap text around the object in Adobe InDesign.

Mark Lehr, Adobe Certified Instructor, Easel Solutions, Minneapolis, MN

Maximizing the Value of Solar

What are the factors that ensure successful community solar programs at co-ops? Learn how to design a solar marketing program that fits with your program -- and your members. Using brand new research findings from programs at 24 co-ops, Megan Lorenzen, with the San Francisco-based clean energy marketing firm 3Degrees, will talk about how to boost subscriptions and how to avoid pitfalls that hamper participation.

Megan Lorenzen, Associate Director, Utility Partnerships, 3Degrees, San Francisco, CA

Immerse Yourself in the Service Excellence Experience: Creating an Ideal Cooperative Culture

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

Connecting to others is a process that starts with relationships and building effective teams that deliver solutions. Service Excellence is an opportunity to engage employees by connecting your business strategy to everyday interactions. Join us for this interactive session to learn how to create a culture that encourages stronger member experiences and empowers employees with a renewed sense of ownership.

Lynn Moore, Executive Director, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA

Josh McGhee, Strategic Communications Manager, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA

2:50 pm – 3:20 pm

Breakouts: Express Skills

Managing Up – A Key Leadership Skill

You're required to juggle various management responsibilities daily – managing your time, your projects, your direct reports, and your personal life. But what about managing your boss? Is it possible? Attend this session to learn how to gain the confidence of your superiors and effectively influence their actions, with the end result of strengthening your leadership skills and your own at-work value.

Nancy Plemens Mayes, APR, Managing Director, Mayes Communications Inc., Springfield, VA

Networking Know How: Crash Course in how to Create CONNECT-ions

The saying often goes, "It's not what you know but who you know". So how do you capitalize on your time at conferences like CONNECT and meaningfully expand who you know? Attend this session to

learn strategies on how to quickly create purposeful relationships and substantially expand your network. Walk away with confidence and networking goals for the remainder of the conference.
Hayley Leatherwood, Multimedia Specialist, Oklahoma Living, Oklahoma Association of Electric Co-ops, Oklahoma City, OK
Autumn McMahon, M.Ed., CCC, Manager, Marketing and Member Relations, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, Norman, OK

In the Crucible: Communicating Governance in an Evolving Industry

Many co-ops are facing increased scrutiny from member groups and other activist organizations demanding greater transparency, diversity, openness and other governance related changes. This session will provide you with three things you need to know about co-op governance and provide tips on how to communicate them.

Pat Mangan, Director, Governance Education, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Form 7: Easy as Pie?

This crash course will go over some of the basics of your co-op's financial statement of operations (Form 7) and why it's important to understand it. Participants will work through a pie-graph exercise that will help you interpret and translate these crucial numbers for the benefit of your member-owners. You'll walk away equipped with tips, tricks and resources for communicating your co-op's statement of operations.

Laura Hengstenberg, CCC MIP, Manager of External & Internal Relations, Crawford Electric Cooperative, Bourbon, MO

Reach Your Members in an Instant with Instagram

With Instagram growing in popularity among social media users, does your co-op have a strategy in place to make the most of this platform? Learn about creative ways to use Instagram to showcase photography, video and graphics. See ideas on how to engage with your members, and learn best practices for Instagram Stories.

Katie Allen, Digital Managing Editor, Communications, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Go Beyond the Card with Co-op Connections

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

Co-op Connections has undergone a seismic shift to become better than ever! You now have access to a vast web platform, a state-of-the-art smartphone app, hotel savings, event ticket offers, improved dining and event options and more than 400,000 new discounts. Join us to learn how to go "beyond the card" and unlock a world of trackable savings, as well as introduce or rejuvenate your Co-op Connections program.

Scott Bialick, Co-op Connections Senior Program Manager, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA
Brad Renzelman, President, iBennie, Colorado Springs, CO

3:20 pm – 3:45 pm

Networking Break

Sponsored by EnergyOrbit

3:45pm – 4:45 pm

General Session 3

- **Remarks**

Scott Peterson, Senior Vice President, Communications, NRECA, Arlington, VA

- **Keynote Presentation: Michael Maslansky, CEO, maslansky + partners**

The Lexicon Project

It's not what you say, it's what they hear.® Over the last six months, Michael Maslansky and his team have worked with NRECA and electric co-ops across the nation to strengthen the cooperative lexicon. The resulting "words you can use" guide provides messaging suggestions when communicating on priority topics with your members. Join Michael for the lexicon's unveiling and a dynamic look at what members are hearing you say.

- **Engaging Young Adults at Your Cooperatives**
Holly Wetzel, Director for Marketing and Member Communications, NRECA, Arlington, VA
- **Cooperative.com's Newest Features**
Jessica O'Neal, Director for Digital Strategy, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Evening On Your Own to Explore Salt Lake City

THURSDAY, MAY 10

7:00 am – 3:00 pm **Registration Open**

7:00 am – 8:00 am **Breakfast**

7:00 am – 7:45 am **Overview of the Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) Program**
Grab your breakfast and join the CCC program board to learn all about how to join the ranks of Certified Cooperative Communicators. Ample time for Q&A will be provided.
Mary Kate Pedigo, Communications Specialist, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, Livingston, TX

8:00 am – 8:30 am **Co-op Case Studies**
Sponsored sessions where vendors team up with co-ops to share their stories about successful collaboration.

Turning High Bill Complaints into High Bill Compliments

When was the last time your cooperative received a call from a member thanking you for a higher bill? Bob Kornegay, Manager of Marketing and Member Services at Tri-County EMC is experiencing just that. He is successfully turning high bill complaints into high bill compliments from his members. Learn how Tri-County EMC launched a powerful outbound marketing and communications strategy that is increasing member satisfaction and reducing calls to the call center.

Bob Kornegay, Manager of Marketing and Member Services, Tri-County EMC, Dudley, NC
Cindy Smallwood, Sr. Account Manager, Apogee Interactive

Nominations, Petitions, Elections, Oh My!

Learn how cooperatives across the country manage candidate nominations, petitions and voting. Join Adams Electric Cooperative, Consolidated Electric Cooperative and Survey & Ballot Systems as they share the tools and strategies for effective cooperative governance in 2018.

Pam Hawk, Chief Human Resources Officer, Consolidated Electric Cooperative, Delaware, OH
Tony Hoff, Marketing Manager, Survey & Ballot Systems
Kami Noel, Communications Coordinator, Adams Electric, Gettysburg, PA

NISC Tools for Annual Meeting Member Engagement and Management

The goal of this session is to show even the smallest of co-ops that there are useable NISC tools to help encourage member engagement. The co-ops in the room can decide to use one or multiple options to reach more of their membership. Stephanie Johnson will engage the audience by relaying her first-

time experience with integrating new technology into their co-op's Annual Meeting and show samples of messaging sent to the members. Her 30+ years of marketing experience and anecdotal stories, will leave the audience thinking, "Hey, our co-op can do that!"

Stephanie Johnson, Marketing/Member Services, Jasper County REMC, Rensselaer, IN

MORE Powerful Together: Branding for Today's Consumers

We deliver MORE than energy. We offer solutions. People at the end of the line are MORE than customers. They're partners. Do your staff and consumers know how we are **MORE Powerful Together**? Ruralite Services and the Northwest Public Power Association teamed up to create fresh, research-backed and inspiring engagement tools branding utilities for today's consumer. Learn how Blachly-Lane Electric Co-op and other utilities are changing the way the community thinks about public power with this powerful, consumer voice-driven effort.

Megan McKoy-Noe, CCC, Content Development Manager, Ruralite Services, Hillsboro, OR

Brenda Dunn, Editor, Northwest Public Power Association, Vancouver, WA

Pam Spettel, Member and Public Relations Manager, Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative, Junction City, OR

#NotFakeNews: The Truth about Social Media in 2018

A discussion on algorithm changes, and social success strategies proven to work in the #RuralElectric world.

Melissa Shaw & Gus Wagner, Partners ARC Media

Mandy Barth, CCC, Communication Manager, Indiana Electric Cooperatives, Indianapolis, IN

Rob Ford, Communication Director, Tipmont REMC, Linden, IN

Amanda Wolfe, Senior Political Affairs Advisor, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Allow Members to Engage Your Cooperative Through SEDC Applications

Many members want to engage your cooperative, but they are not sure how. Your SEDC system offers applications for member services and communications professionals which open channels for your members....on their terms and timing. These applications are available now. Come and see how Flint Energies in Georgia leverages its SEDC Utility Power Net system to provide exemplary member service.

Marian McLemore, Vice President, Cooperative Communications, Flint Energies, Reynolds, GA

Jimmy Autry, CCC, APR, Fellow PRSA, Autry Cooperative Communications, Rock Hill, SC

Look Great, Reduce Stress, Save Lives

MiEnergy members know their cooperative cares about their safety. It's evident in all of their communications, from compelling newsletter and web content to social media graphics, radio messages, and more. Their commitment reflects the priority many cooperatives place on safety education and risk management, yet few have the time or resources to treat member safety as a priority. Learn how MiEnergy gets all of their safety content, visuals, and more from Safe Electricity, saving time, money and lives. See how powerful personal stories, images and messages create safer consumers and protect your co-op's bottom line — while you and your cooperative look great!

Molly Hall, Executive Director, Energy Education Council – Safe Electricity

Brenda Tesch, Director of Public Relations, MiEnergy Cooperative, Rushford, MN

8:45 am – 10:15 am

Breakouts: Super Sessions

The Lexicon Project: A Deeper Dive

You heard him on the main stage, now dive in for a deeper look at the Lexicon project. Join Michael Maslansky for an in depth conversation about the project as you review focus group footage and poll results. Steps you can take to integrate the electric co-op lexicon at your cooperative will be discussed.

Michael Maslansky, CEO, maslansky + partners, New York, New York

Resource Bootcamp for Cybersecurity Communications

What cybersecurity threats does your co-op face? If the unspeakable happens, are you prepared to communicate? Do you even know what the unspeakable *is*? Join NRECA's Cybersecurity Program Manager Cynthia Hsu and Tracy Warren, NRECA's Senior Communications manager, for a deep dive into the relevant cybersecurity issues co-ops might face and learn how to respond to a variety of cybersecurity incidents. You'll walk away with new tools, tips and practical worksheets that you can implement at your co-op.

Cynthia Hsu, Ph.D., Cybersecurity Program Manager, BTS, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Tracy Warren, Senior Communications Manager, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Energy Efficiency the Arkansas Way

Energy efficiency programs in Arkansas run the gambit from time-tested energy efficiency measures and approaches to innovative financing, program structures, and technologies. Join us for an open and honest discussion on best practices in energy efficiency implementation wherever you may be.

Mark Cayce, General Manager, Ouachita Electric Cooperative Corporation, Camden, AR

Mitch Ross, Energy Efficiency Manager, Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, Little Rock, AR

Kris Williams, Manager of Energy Services, Ozarks Electric Cooperative, Fayetteville, AR

Critical Communications - Reputation Management when the Media Calls

One of the top rated sessions from the New Co-op Communicators Orientation makes its CONNECT debut!

Media reports frequently revolve around three central characters – the victim, the villain, and the hero. How you are portrayed depends on truthful, timely and accurate responses. Join us for a lively interactive session focused on protecting your co-op brand and effective communications during times of crisis.

Stephen Bell, Director of Media and Public Relations, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Mike Wilson, Vice President of Member and Community Relations, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Paxton, IL

Taking Magazine-Quality Photos with Your Phone

Sponsored by the Statewide Editors Association

Professional Photographer Mark Hirsch earned worldwide recognition for his "That Tree" project, a stunning year-long series of images of a single tree shot entirely with an iPhone. In this 90-minute session, you'll get Mark's wisdom and hands-on advice to help you transform your phone photos into magazine-ready masterpieces.

Mark Hirsch, Photojournalist, Platteville, WI

Bring Big Data to Life

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

To create superior member value, we must anticipate our members' needs and proactively communicate *with* them, not *at* them. Join us to learn the secret of harnessing the power of big data at your co-op to develop superior communication, marketing and service strategies. After the session you will know how to proactively communicate with members headed for high bills, connect them with products and services they may not even know they need, and generate meaningful dialog over the channels they prefer.

Tom Laing, Vice President of Research and Member Insights, North Carolina EMC, Raleigh, NC

Scott Saff, Manager of Research Services, North Carolina EMC, Raleigh, NC

Marty Haught, Assistant GM/COO, United Cooperative Services, Cleburne, TX

Nurdan Cornelius, Director, Consumer Marketing, Cobb EMC, Marietta, GA



10:15 am 10:45 am Networking Break
Sponsored by inLighten

10:45 am – 11:45 am **Breakouts: Classic**

Energy Access for All

Cooperatives serve 94 percent of the nation's impoverished counties. Learn how co-ops are using new technologies and innovative program designs to help reduce the energy burden for low- and moderate-income members. Hear how these programs have benefited members and co-ops alike.

Moderator: Tracy Warren, Senior Communications Manager, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Neal Brown, Manager, Member Services & Marketing, Garkane Energy Cooperative, Inc., Kanab, UT

Patrice Jordan, Coordinator, Community Relations & Engagement, Roanoke Electric Cooperative, Ahsokie, NC

David White, VP, Member Relations, Poudre Valley REA, Fort Collins, CO

How to Make Boring Photos More Interesting

Sponsored by the Statewide Editors Association

You'll never look at that award presentation ceremony the same way again! Professional Photographer Mark Hirsch knows what it takes to make the routine look unique. Get great insights into how you can use lighting, camera settings, apps and angles to turn even the most time-worn shoots into compelling photo ops.

Mark Hirsch, Photojournalist, Platteville, WI

It's More Than Just Voting: Political Engagement and Co-ops Vote 2018

Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan political engagement effort, is about making sure our 42 million members' voices are heard by local, state, and federal elected officials throughout the year. NRECA's 2018 Co-ops Vote effort focuses on strengthening the connection between the co-op, its employees and members, and elected officials at all levels. Join a discussion with co-op communications experts to find out how to keep your members engaged in the political process, learn about the most effective political engagement tactics and how your co-op can be more involved with the Co-ops Vote program.

Moderator: Amanda Wolfe, Senior Political Affairs Advisor, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Michael Rovito; CCC, Director of Member and Public Relations, Alaska Power Association/ARECA Insurance Exchange, Anchorage, AK

Andrew Vehorn; Legislative Director, Virginia's Electric Cooperatives, Glen Allen, VA

Make Strategic Planning a Reality

We talk a lot about communication culture and strategy, but where do we start? Are you utilizing a mix of tactics to communicate with your members? What about with the employees at your co-op? What are your most important messages, and what is your strategy for reaching all audiences with those messages? How do you go about creating a culture of communication throughout your co-op? If you're searching for answers to some or all of these questions, join this session to hear from communication leaders who have implemented effective strategic communication plans. You'll walk away with fresh ideas and tangible tools to help you develop a communication culture and a successful strategy.

Moderator: Keith Stapleton, Chief Communications Officer, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, Livingston, TX

Mike Birkeland, Director of Member Services & Community Relations, Lake Country Power, Kettle River, MN

Abraham Quiroga, Business & Employee Development Division Manager, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., Mercedes, TX

Renee Whitener, Director of Public Relations, Blue Ridge Energy, Lenoir, NC

Operating on a Shoestring

Are you expected to single-handedly produce an annual report? Are you tasked with rebranding your cooperative? Two award winning communicators will share best practices and answer audience questions on how to get your projects done on a budget, whether you are a staff of one or several. Walk away with valuable tips on communicating, branding and marketing on a tight budget and small staff.

Moderator: Erika Neff, Communications Coordinator, Kootenai Electric Cooperative, Hayden, ID
 Jeff Marshall, Communications Specialist, Clearwater Power, Lewiston, ID
 Katie Pfennigs, Marketing & Communications Supervisor, Flathead Electric Cooperative, Kalispell, MT

Co-op Web Builder 3: The Definitive Edition

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

Looking to migrate your website to the latest Co-op Web Builder platform? Want to hit the warp drive button into the future of web design? Then don't miss this session where you will get an exclusive tour through the platform's newest features and component design tools. The session will include an open table discussion from co-op panelists and audience members. Bring all your questions to go home packed with the answers you need.

Sean Walker, Senior Web Developer, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA
Kara Boyle, Marketing & Business Development Specialist, Midland Power Cooperative, Jefferson, IA
Amy Blunck, Communications Director, Poudre Valley REA, Fort Collins, CO

11:45 am – 1:15 pm

Lunch On Your Own

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Roundtable Discussion Sessions

Here's your chance to exchange ideas, strategies and solutions worthy of taking back to your co-op. The best part is that YOU get to decide on the topics! Grab a sticker and vote for your favorite topics by 10:30 a.m. on Thursday. The winning six will be selected and room locations will be announced on the mobile app.

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Breakouts: Express Skills

Ten Ways to Communicate a Rate Change

Communicating a rate increase can be a delicate balance of getting members the right information without drawing unnecessary attention. Learn how employees at Kootenai Electric Cooperative communicated a significant increase in the cooperative's basic charge to fully recover fixed costs and received fewer than ten complaints from members.

Melissa Newcomer, Business Development Coordinator, Kootenai Electric Cooperative, Hayden, ID

Making Your Digital Content Shareable – and Findable

The challenge of online content is catching the attention of busy members leading busy lives, who are consuming information on the go with many sources to choose from. So what's the best way to catch their attention? It's all about creating engaging content, making use of alternative story forms, and knowing when and how to best reach your members. We'll go over what makes content "shareable" as well as best practices for search engine optimization (SEO).

Katie Allen, Digital Managing Editor, Communications, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Integrated Communications Programs for Any Size Co-op

Whether you work for the biggest statewide or the smallest distribution cooperative, you can be a high-performing communicator and use leading practices in your communications efforts. Several

Edgar F. Chesnutt Award winners will share their insight and methods for creating innovative and engaging communications programs, and how you can do the same, regardless of budget.

Renee Whitener, Director of Public Relations, Blue Ridge Energy, Lenoir, NC

Melissa Segrest, Manager of Marketing and Communications, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, Bastrop, TX

Bill Design Theory

Learn how one co-op is using a new take on their monthly energy bills to increase member-owner engagement and foster program adoption. You'll be equipped to use the theories and templates provided to lead a similar bill design rejuvenation effort at your co-op.

Brad Gibson, Chief Cooperative Business Officer, Middle Tennessee Electric Cooperative, Murfreesboro, TN

The Art of DIY Videos

Videos are a fantastic way to tell a story, reach your members, and increase your social media engagement. Are there times when you are the one who needs to be both behind *and* in front of the camera? Come to this session to find out the best way to set up and record your message and get tips that will help you easily edit it.

Alexis Matsui, Multimedia Producer, NRECA, Arlington, VA

Vintage Fresh: A Creative Approach for Engaging Every Generation

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Session

When engaging with members across all generations, it's essential to have visual and written messaging that intrigues, uplifts and connects member-owners to the Cooperative Difference. Learn how to use Vintage Fresh, the latest advertising campaign designed for Touchstone members, to aesthetically combine your co-ops' traditions and history with modernistic styles and tones that effectively bridge the generational gap. You'll walk away with tips and tricks for downloading and customizing Touchstone's latest print and digital materials to better connect with your member-owners of all generation.

Cyrus Crossan, Brand and Creative Strategies Manager, Touchstone Energy, Arlington, VA

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Networking Break

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

General Session 4

- **Closing Remarks**
- **Concern for Community Presentation**

- **Veteran Engagement Campaign**

Michelle Rostom, Director, Workforce Development, NRECA

- **Mike Rayburn's "What IF Keynote Experience"**

Every major invention, accomplishment and victory in human history began with the simple, almost childlike curiosity of a "What If...?" question. What would happen if you asked this question on a daily basis? After Mike's transformational keynote you'll look at problems and impossibilities in a whole different light. You'll be mesmerized by Mike's amazing guitar work and hilarious comedy as he illustrates three tools designed to help you harness your unrealized potential, create and lead change, and become a virtuoso performer.



Mike is a TED Talk presenter, an innovative entrepreneur and Hall of Fame speaker who uses world-class guitar and comedy to teach change and innovation to organizations world-wide. He has headlined Carnegie Hall, headlined in Las Vegas, and performed more than 5,000 presentations in 20 countries on five continents. Rayburn is a regular on Sirius/XM and morning radio nationwide. No one does what Mike Rayburn does.

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Closing Reception

The Leonardo
209 East 500 South, Salt Lake City

What better way to celebrate a week of intensive education and networking than at a museum that celebrates curiosity, innovation and the pursuit of art and science? Wander and wonder throughout the interactive exhibits while enjoying dinner, music and dancing from 6-9 p.m. And best of all, the museum is located just blocks away from the Grand America, so you can simply stroll on over for this fun event.

The Leonardo is less than a ten-minute walk from the hotel. Turn right onto W 500 S/Cesar E Chavez Blvd, then make your second left onto S 200 E/Rosa Parks Blvd. The museum is on your right. A shuttle will be provided for those who need transportation assistance.

Please note: Conference registration includes one ticket to the reception for all attendees. Additional tickets for your guests can be purchased for \$15 with pre-registration or \$30 onsite. You must be 21 or older to join us for this reception.