



®

NRECA

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW





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2025
YEAR IN
REVIEW



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Jim Matheson

2025: A Year of Success for Co-ops

2025 was a highly successful year for electric cooperatives, marked by achievements made possible through collaboration and unity.

More than 17,000 people participated in NRECA events throughout the year, many of which saw record-breaking attendance. NRECA's research and technology programs continue to help cooperatives address their most pressing challenges, including cybersecurity, serving large loads and adapting to a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

With the Trump administration taking office in January, electric cooperatives were at the forefront of discussions on reliability and resilience. Trump Cabinet officials engaged with electric co-op leaders almost immediately, and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins addressed thousands of cooperative leaders at PowerXchange in Atlanta within her first month on the job.

These new leaders aren't just speaking—they are listening to the needs of cooperatives and taking meaningful action. For example, just two weeks after NRECA met with EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, the EPA announced steps to reconsider regulations, including the power plant rule.

The strength of our collective influence was perhaps best demonstrated when Tony Campbell, president and CEO of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, stood alongside President Donald Trump to highlight how executive actions signed that day would help cooperatives continue delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Nearly a dozen other cooperative CEOs were present, underscoring the power of our unified voice.

On Capitol Hill, more than half a dozen cooperative leaders testified before Congress as expert witnesses. Bipartisan legislation to reform the Federal Emergency Management Agency includes key cooperative priorities thanks to the dedicated efforts of NRECA and electric cooperative leaders.

The successes of 2025 reaffirm that when cooperatives speak together, Washington listens. I look forward to building on this momentum and continuing our work together in the year ahead.

—Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO



T. Michael Partin

You Get Out What You Put Into It

I've been a farmer my whole life, and if there's one thing I've learned, it's that you get out what you put into it.

Time. Energy. Attention. Invest these on the front end, and you'll get a much better result.

NRECA is much the same way. Cooperatives that put a lot into this organization get a lot back in return. And by working together, we benefit all of the communities co-op members call home.

During my first year as president of NRECA, I've had the privilege to travel around the country and see firsthand all the ways this association benefits its members.

We come to the aid of co-ops that need help. We join together to provide resources and services that our individual co-ops could never pull off themselves. We keep our grid and our cyber resources secure.

We offer advice and encouragement to one another. And we fight for investments that will help us keep providing safe, affordable electricity and defeat legislation and regulations on both the state and national level that stand in our way. NRECA is an incredible resource for all of this, and I'm consistently impressed by the work it does to lift us all up.

From the very beginning, America's electric cooperatives have been deeply invested in our communities. This is where we live, work, worship and raise our own families. We're also deeply invested in each other's communities. When we strengthen one cooperative, we all benefit.

America's electric cooperatives are stronger together. When we stand together, and speak with one strong voice, we make things happen. You can see evidence of this all over this Year in Review.

Thank you for everything you do.

With gratitude,

—Mike Partin, NRECA President



From left to right: Ingrid Kessler, Mike Partin and Marty Littrel.

NRECA Officers

Mike Partin
President | Tennessee

Ingrid Kessler
Vice President | Oregon

Marty Littrel
Secretary-Treasurer | Kentucky

2025 NRECA Board of Directors (As of Dec. 31, 2025)

Tony Anderson | Michigan
Judith Anibas | Wisconsin
Tracy Bensley | Florida
Danny Berthelot | Louisiana
Jasen Bronec | Washington
Tom Brown | Delaware
J. Tyler Carlson | Arizona
Bryan Case | Idaho
Chris Christensen | Montana
Mel Coleman | Arkansas
Ed Crawford | Ohio
Marion Denger | Iowa
Kevin Doddridge | Mississippi
Don Douglas | Vermont
Crystal Enkvist | Alaska
Norris Fowler | South Carolina
Warren Goetsch | Illinois
Scott Hallowell | Maine
Chris Hamon | Missouri
David Hembree | Alabama
Dennis Herman | Colorado
Gene Herritt | Pennsylvania
Mark Hofer | South Dakota
David Iha | Hawaii

Lynn Jacobson | North Dakota
Nathaniel Johnson | Utah
Kerry Kelton | Texas
Ingrid Kessler | Oregon
Randy Kleaving | Indiana
Marty Littrel | Kentucky
Casey Logan | Virginia
Thomas Madsen | New Jersey
Madeline McElaney | New Hampshire
Jennifer Meason | Oklahoma
Gene Morris | Georgia
Patrick Morse | Kansas
Jessica Nelson | California
Mike Partin | Tennessee
Jeff Rathell | Maryland
Kevin Robison | Nevada
Dan Saulsgiver | New York
Donnie Spivey | North Carolina
David Spradlin | New Mexico
Greg Strehle | Nebraska
Tim Velde | Minnesota
Ron Watson | West Virginia
Jim Webb | Wyoming
Jeffery Wright | Rhode Island

Advocating for Reliable, Affordable Electricity

Engaging With the New Administration

NRECA and electric co-ops engaged the new Trump administration early and often in 2025 to forge connections and advocate for co-ops and rural communities.



Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins



CEO Jim Matheson met with new EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin in February, as Zeldin was still unpacking his boxes and moving into the agency headquarters.

FEBRUARY

In March, Matheson met with Energy Secretary Chris Wright and highlighted how Department of Energy infrastructure programs are crucial to building co-op projects that will ensure reliable power for rural America. Matheson gave Wright nearly 90 letters from co-ops selected to receive DOE infrastructure funding for a range of projects, including wildfire mitigation, the buildout of new transmission, microgrids and more.

That same month, new Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins addressed co-op leaders at NRECA PowerXchange and TechAdvantage in one of her first official acts.

MARCH

In April, electric co-op leaders joined President Donald Trump at the White House as he announced executive actions aimed at protecting always-available energy resources.

APRIL

The Environmental Protection Agency in June proposed to repeal burdensome power plant regulations that threatened grid reliability and affordability for electric cooperatives and their members. NRECA and co-ops filed comments in August in support of the move and urged the EPA to act quickly to repeal the 2024 Biden administration rule.

The Trump administration also announced in June that it would halt efforts to breach the Lower Snake River dams in Washington state. The move came after strong advocacy efforts by co-ops to preserve the four dams, which supply clean, carbon-free power to more than 50 electric co-ops in eight Western states served by the Bonneville Power Administration. They produce enough electricity to power 2.4 million homes.

JUNE



EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin and NRECA CEO Jim Matheson



East Kentucky Power Cooperative President and CEO Tony Campbell speaks alongside President Donald Trump.

Progress on Permitting Reform



NRECA CEO
Jim Matheson

After years of advocacy by electric co-ops, federal agencies in July released new National Environmental Policy Act procedures that will simplify and speed up the permitting of co-op energy and broadband projects. Previously, co-ops waited years to obtain federal permits to modernize their systems, deploy high-speed internet to rural communities or even perform routine vegetation management.

In February, members of Congress from both political parties spoke out in favor of permitting reform at a POLITICO event sponsored by NRECA. Despite deep political divisions, lawmakers said they believed Congress could reach bipartisan consensus on permitting legislation.

In December, that prediction came one step closer to reality when the House passed two significant permitting reform bills—the SPEED Act and the PERMIT Act. The bills would streamline the permitting process and reduce delays for co-ops seeking to make crucial improvements to their systems.

Fixing FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is a critical partner to electric cooperatives. NRECA and its members spent much of 2025 advocating for changes that would make FEMA stronger and more responsive.

With strong bipartisan support from Chairman Sam Graves, R-Mo., and ranking member Rick Larsen, D-Wash., the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in September passed the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025. The bill would streamline the agency and dramatically speed up delivery of funding to co-ops devastated by wildfires, hurricanes, ice storms and other natural disasters.

NRECA and electric co-ops successfully pushed for the bill to also make co-ops eligible to be reimbursed for the interest they incur on loans for emergency work and system rebuilds while they wait to receive disaster funds from FEMA.

Co-ops came out strong in urging the House to pass the bill. In 2025, grassroots activists sent more than 74,000 letters to their lawmakers through Voices for Cooperative Power. Co-op leaders sent nearly 2,000 letters as part of a concurrent “grasstops” advocacy effort.

In November, NRECA sponsored a Punchbowl News event focused on FEMA reform. In his remarks at the event, Rep. Graves said he was optimistic that the House of Representatives will soon vote on the FEMA Act.



Rep. Sam Graves



Learn more about co-op
advocacy around FEMA reform.



Reducing Wildfire Risks

The House voted overwhelmingly in January to pass the Fix Our Forests Act, bipartisan legislation that would make it easier for electric cooperatives to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. NRECA lobbyists and co-op leaders helped craft the bill and have been pushing hard to advance it through Congress. Voices for Cooperative Power activated grassroots networks in key states to support the legislation, which was approved in October by the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee.

NRECA and participating co-ops continue supporting the WARN (Wildfire Assessment and Resilience for Networks) consortium project to pursue infrastructure upgrades as a way of reducing the risk of utility-ignited wildfires and hardening electric grids against all types of wildfires.

Preserving Federal Funding for Co-ops

With NRECA's help, electric co-ops successfully retained access to billions of dollars from federal programs to strengthen the grid, modernize critical infrastructure and buy or build new energy systems. NRECA and its members successfully advocated for the preservation of key funding for co-ops, including Department of Energy infrastructure grants and the Department of Agriculture's Empowering Rural America (New ERA) and Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) programs.



Co-ops' Clout in the Nation's Capital

For an unprecedented third year in a row, NRECA was rated by federal policymakers as the most reputable and effective trade association in Washington, D.C. The findings come from annual research conducted by Penta, a Beltway research firm that studies the influence and reputation of nearly 150 prominent companies and associations operating in the nation's capital. Both Republicans and Democrats view NRECA favorably, the study showed.

“Electric cooperatives have an exceptional reputation in their local communities. That foundation opens a lot of doors for us.”

-Hill Thomas, NRECA vice president of legislative affairs

Bringing Co-op Voices to Capitol Hill

Eight co-op witnesses testified before Congress in 2025 on topics ranging from grid reliability to cybersecurity. In each case, congressional staffers reached out to NRECA and specifically asked for a co-op witness, a unique opportunity that reflects how much lawmakers value the opinions of electric co-ops.



Chris Jones, Middle Tennessee Electric



Buddy Hasten, Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp./Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Inc.



Todd Brickhouse, Basin Electric Power Cooperative



Jim Matheson, NRECA



Michelle Freeark, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative



Tony Campbell, East Kentucky Power Cooperative



Mark Hayden, Missoula Electric Cooperative



Tim Lindahl, Kenergy Corp.

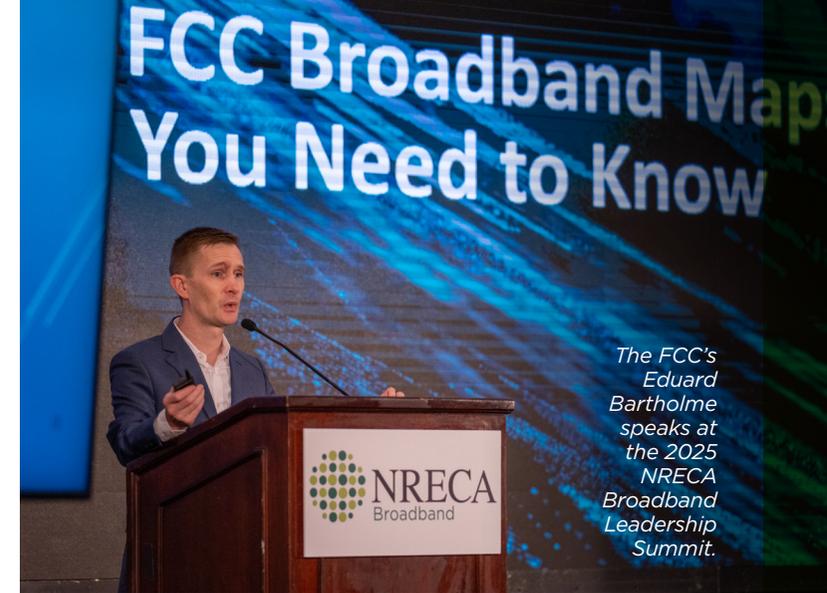
Helping Co-ops Bridge the Digital Divide

NRECA Broadband welcomed seven new co-ops in 2025, with a total of **126 participants** connecting nearly **1 million families and businesses** in **31 states**. NRECA Broadband also added communications, legislative and regulatory professionals to its team.

The 2025 Rural Broadband Benchmarking Report by NRECA and the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative found that co-ops are steadily expanding their deployment of the fastest, most reliable internet service and providing top-notch customer service.

NRECA also launched the Broadband Director's Course, designed specifically for directors guiding their co-op's broadband subsidiaries. It provides leadership skills and practical insights for managing broadband operations, equipping directors to perform effective oversight and make informed decisions.

NRECA remained actively engaged with co-op participants, Congress and the Trump administration on broadband programs and policies. One key issue was the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's BEAD program, which was paused for review by the Trump administration in March and then restructured in June. A total of **62 co-ops** across **27 states** received provisional BEAD awards totaling over **\$669 million** to deploy broadband in rural communities.



The FCC's Eduard Bartholme speaks at the 2025 NRECA Broadband Leadership Summit.



Ben Leonard, a 94-year-old Arkansas preacher, remembers when his co-op turned the lights on at his family's farmhouse and is now benefiting from the power of co-op broadband.



Watch the video on [electric.coop](https://www.electric.coop).

Bringing Co-ops Together for Learning and Networking

More than **17,200 people** participated in NRECA events in 2025, with record attendance at the Broadband Leadership Summit, CEO Close-Up, Connect Conference, Co-op Cyber Tech, PowerUp Conference and Safety Leadership Summit.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour also saw record attendance—**1,685 delegates** and **332 chaperones**.

Participation in the annual Directors Conference grew dramatically, with **952 attendees** in 2025, up from 545 the previous year.



“NRECA does an exemplary job in providing insightful and thought-provoking educational opportunities. NRECA’s efforts enable directors to expand their knowledge across various spectrums and helps us meaningfully contribute to our cooperatives and our members.”

-Paul Guichet, Director, Coast Electric, Kiln, Mississippi

By the Numbers: Courses & Training

Six new courses were launched for co-op directors in 2025:

- Artificial Intelligence and Electric Cooperatives
- Oversight of the Broadband Business
- Power Supply Decision Making
- Political Engagement for Directors
- Providing Feedback to Your CEO
- Navigating in the Era of Uncertainty

Number of co-ops that hosted onsite NRECA training:



39
Distribution Co-ops



12
Generation and Transmission Co-ops



143
Statewide Association Engagements

Online courses offered to members in 2025:



30
Supervisor and Manager Development Program Courses



24
Director Courses



24
Cooperative Career Essentials Program Courses



Learn more about NRECA’s conferences and educational offerings.



Research and Tech Programs Address Biggest Co-op Challenges

Strengthening Cyber Defenses

NRECA Research is in its second year of Project Guardian, a \$4 million, five-year initiative funded by the Department of Energy to help electric co-ops work together to improve grid security and cybersecurity maturity. Recent highlights include the official launch of the Cyber Champions Program; new strategies for scalable self-assessment tools; identification of priority needs for Threat Analysis Center training and webinars; and shared insights from Cyber Champions on real-world co-op cybersecurity challenges.

NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals Program continued to help co-ops improve grid security. More than 450 co-ops are participating. So far, more than 150 have completed Level One and more than 50 have completed Level Two. Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange gives co-ops a 5% discount on new and renewed cybersecurity policies beginning in January 2026 if they complete both levels.

NRECA has been awarded \$20 million in funding—including \$5 million in 2025—from the Department of Energy for the rapid deployment of technologies that protect, defend or harden electric co-ops' operational technology against cyberthreats. Co-op participation in the project—known as the Industrial Control Systems for Rural Electric Cooperatives (ICS-REC)—increased 76% since December 2024, and it is now fully subscribed. The next phase will focus on developing case studies and supporting co-ops through their deployments.



2025 Co-op Cyber Tech saw record attendance, with 467 co-ops represented at the event.



Explore NRECA's growing set of resources to help co-ops serve large loads.

New Solutions for Emerging Needs

Large Loads: NRECA developed a set of resources to support co-ops as they respond to the rapid growth of large loads. The focus is on data centers, industrial loads and large electrified fleets and other transportation. The resources address a variety of issues, from technology to considerations for a co-op to protect itself when entering into a contract with operators of large loads.

Regional Defense Summits: NRECA held the first of several Regional Defense Summits, bringing together military officials and the leaders of co-ops who serve military installations. The goals of the summit include identifying energy projects that would benefit the security and resilience of military installations and the co-ops that power them.

Microgrids for Remote Areas: NRECA Research completed its first year of planning and design to help seven co-ops build microgrids as part of a Department of Energy-funded project to improve grid resiliency and reliability for remote and economically challenged communities.

Distribution Automation: NRECA created a Distribution Automation Toolkit for co-ops that are considering automated devices and processes to boost reliability. The toolkit helps co-ops select the most cost-effective distribution automation technologies for their unique circumstances.

Resilience Planning: NRECA and the Smart Electric Power Alliance developed the Resilience Planning Playbook to help guide electric co-ops in a rapidly evolving energy landscape. It includes case studies, leading practices and real-world insights from interviews and workshops with co-ops.

Economic Impact of Outages: NRECA teamed up with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California to survey co-op consumer-members—residential, small businesses and large commercial and industrial companies—to collect data on the economic impact of power outages.



Elevating Access to Employee Benefits

NRECA's Insurance and Financial Services Department provided benefits through the Retirement Security Plan to **883 employers** and **56,253 participants**, through the 401(k) Pension Plan to **924 employers** and **62,024 participants**, and through the Group Benefits Program's medical and other insurance coverage to **656 employers** and **103,875 participants**. Employers include NRECA, its co-op members and co-op-related businesses.

The NRECA Employee Benefits webpage was redesigned to make it easier to view and manage the many benefits programs and educational resources for co-op employees. The new site also greatly streamlines the work process for co-op benefits administrators.

In another big change, employees can now track their NRECA benefits on their smartphones with the new NRECA Benefits app that allows users to quickly access their health insurance cards, 401(k) balances and other key information.

By the Numbers: NRECA Benefits

Retirement Security Plan:	883 Employers	56,253 Participants
401(k) Pension Plan:	924 Employers	62,024 Participants
Group Benefits Program:	656 Employers	103,875 Participants

Access the NRECA Benefits webpage on cooperative.com.



Schoolchildren are among those benefiting from Ntumbila Power Electric Cooperative in Zambia, which turned on the lights in April.

Leading NRECA International Into the Future

Kate Steel became NRECA International's new senior vice president in September. She brings a wealth of experience, having recently served as co-founder and CEO of Nithio, a financial technology platform that addresses the need for investment in Africa's energy transition.

In April, the lights came on at the Ntumbila Power Electric Cooperative, Zambia's first electric cooperative. NRECA International used internal funding to train and mentor the co-op staff and launched a fundraising campaign to help the new co-op keep the power flowing after the U.S. Agency for International Development was closed. In the wake of the USAID closure, NRECA International has stayed resilient and worked to develop new funding sources to sustain key projects.

NRECA International took on three new projects in 2025 designed to help expand electricity to rural regions of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Malawi. The projects are aligned with Mission 300, an ambitious initiative to connect 300 million people to electricity in the region by 2030.

With funding from Rockefeller Catalytic Capital and the M300 Accelerator, NRECA International is:

- Identifying the location of all unelectrified public facilities in Côte d'Ivoire to evaluate the energy needs of public schools and health centers.
- Developing a planning manual and standards for the transmission and distribution networks managed by the Liberia Electricity Corp.
- Designing grid expansion projects in four cities on behalf of the Electricity Supply Corp. of Malawi.

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Report design by Riva Kim

1 Photo Courtesy Great Lakes Energy | **2** Photo By Heather Dietiker/Black River Electric Cooperative | **6** Photo By Denny Gainer/NRECA | **8** Brooke Rollins: Photo By Denny Gainer/NRECA; Lee Zeldin: Photo Courtesy NRECA | **9** Lower Snake River Dams: Photo By Ryan Hall/Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association; Tony Campbell: Photo Courtesy The White House | **10** Portraits: Photos By Denny Gainer/NRECA; Road Damage; Photo Courtesy Mountain Electric Cooperative | **11** Photo By Denny Gainer/NRECA | **12** Capitol: Photo By Douglas Rissing/Getty Images; Chris Jones, Todd Brickhouse, Jim Matheson, Michelle Freeark, Tim Lindahl: Photos By Denny Gainer/NRECA; Buddy Hasten: Photo By Jerry Mosemak/NRECA; Tony Campbell: Photo By Trudy Ward/NRECA; Mark Hayden: Photo Courtesy Congressional Western Caucus | **13** Photos By Denny Gainer/NRECA | **14** Top to Bottom: Photo By Jerry Mosemak/NRECA; Photo By Riva Kim/NRECA; Photo By Denny Gainer/NRECA | **16** Photos By Jerry Mosemak/NRECA | **17** Photo By halbergman/Getty Images | **19** Photo By Noah Friedman-Rudovsky | **20** Photo By Robert W Capps/Lea County Electric Cooperative Inc.

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