Technology Advisory

NRECA's Rural Cooperative Cyber Security Capabilities Program (RC3)

New Program Aims to Foster Cyber Security Resiliency in America's Electric Cooperatives

What has changed?

NRECA launched its Rural Cooperative Cyber Security Capabilities Program (RC3) in June 2016 to support cooperatives as they work to improve the cyber and physical security of their organizations. The program recognizes that cyber security – like safety – is a team effort requiring actions from directors, managers, and all of the organization's staff.

RC3 is focused on developing tools and resources that are appropriate for small- and mid-sized cooperatives that have few, or no, information technology staff. In addition, the program will provide collaboration, education, and training opportunities that will be available to all cooperatives, regardless of size. And all of the tools, products, and resources developed in the RC3 Program will be available to all cooperatives.

What will the program do?

The RC3 Program is dedicated to promoting a culture of security and resiliency within the electric cooperative community and has four main areas of focus:

- Advancing Cyber Resiliency and Security Assessments
- Onsite Vulnerability Assessments
- Extending and Integrating Technologies
- Information Sharing

Within these focus areas, the RC3 Program will:

- Convene Cyber Security Summits to foster peer-to-peer interactions, inform participants about cyber security threats, and increase awareness of cyber security resources currently available to the cooperative community
- Create new cyber security tools for cooperatives to use, including self-assessment, vulnerability testing, information sharing, and anomaly detection tools
- Provide opportunities for cooperatives to help test and deploy cyber security tools, including self-assessment and vulnerability assessment tools

NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives

- Create cyber security education and training materials designed to address the unique needs of cooperative utility staff
- Increase access to existing highly regarded cyber security training courses for both technical and non-technical staff
- Assess new cyber security technologies, and invest in research and development that will advance those technologies so they meet the unique needs of the cooperative community
- Create a secure cyber security information sharing platform for members
- Increase awareness of existing cyber security resources and programs
- Provide opportunities for cooperative staff to participate as Industry Advisors to help the RC3 Program develop tools and resources that are appropriate for the cooperative community

What do cooperatives need to know or do about it?

Like all businesses, cooperatives have experienced ransomware attacks and other cyber incidents. NRECA is working to develop tools and resources, and to provide training and guidance to assist cooperative directors, managers, and staff in assessing their cyber security risks, enhancing their cyber security capabilities to prevent and mitigate cyber incidents, and implementing cyber security best practices. All co-ops, regardless of size, need to take ongoing steps to ensure the security of their data and operational systems.

There will be many opportunities for cooperatives to participate in and benefit from the RC3 Program. Calls to participate in the RC3 Program will be announced via our NRECA twice-monthly newsletter, *TechUpdate*, and on the RC3 website. As the RC3 Program produces new tools, educational materials, guidance publications, case studies, and summaries of research and lessons learned, these resources will be made available to all NRECA members on our member website, cooperative.com.

If you are interested in participating as an Industry Advisor to help the RC3 Program develop and refine tools and resources that are appropriate for the cooperative community, please send an email to CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop with "RC3 Industry Advisor" in the subject heading.

The RC3 Program is funded as a collaborative partnership between NRECA and the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.

Additional Resources

- NRECA Cyber Security websites:
  - RC3 Website Page
  - Public page
  - Additional resources for NRECA members
- Guide to Developing a Risk Mitigation and Cyber Security Plan
- Sign-up for NRECA's newsletter, *TechUpdate*

Contact for Questions

- RC3 email: CyberSecurityRC3@nreca.coop
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