

New Report Outlines the Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy in Rural America

NRECA economists and RE Advisers portfolio managers have published *Mid-Year 2020 U.S. Economic Outlook: A Focus on Rural America*, a new report that outlines the impact of COVID-19 on rural electric cooperatives and examines several issues likely to play a major role in shaping the economic health of the communities they serve. Insights are paired with a broad view of the health of the U.S. economy overall and portfolio management perspectives from RE Advisers.

- [Report](#)
- Contacts:
 - Report: [Joe Goodenbery](#)
 - Portfolio Management Perspective: [Dima Awamleh](#)

Attendees of New “Future Of...” Webinar Series Can Earn Professional or Educational Credits

NRECA's recent webinar series "The Future Of..." was so popular that we have launched the Vol. 2: Technology, Trends and What it Means for Your Cooperative. Three webinars on Tuesdays (**September 15, September 29, and October 6: 2-3 p.m. ET**) will give you a look at technology advances and uses for co-ops. Experts offer their advice on how to get the most from data to improve reliability and safety. **Registration** is free. Engineers can earn **CEUs**, if you **register** and attend the live event.

- [Information and Registration](#)
- Contact: [Robbin Christianson](#)

Two Cybersecurity Tabletop Exercise Opportunities to Help Cooperatives Prepare

NRECA's Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities (**RC3**) Program just released the next set of tabletop exercises for cooperatives to use in gaining insights about their ability to respond to a cybersecurity incident. The scenarios are offered in three levels of complexity to fit the various cybersecurity capabilities at cooperatives. In addition, on **October 29**, NRECA will offer CyberSEEC 2020, a virtual tabletop exercise conducted by **NUARI** for National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Cooperatives will need to register a team of their staff to participate, which could include the CEO/GM, IT, and others. Save the date and stay tuned for more information!

- [RC3 Tabletop Exercises](#)
- [RC3 Website](#)
- Contact: [Cynthia Hsu](#)

NRECA Expands Consulting Services to Benefit Cooperatives

Recognizing that technology and the people behind it go hand-in-hand, NRECA's Business and Technology Strategies group has added a suite of consulting services to our portfolio of work. In addition to the existing consulting services focused on management, executive search, safety, governance and similar topics, we have now added consulting services focused on assisting cooperatives address challenges with the integrated grid, including technology and data strategy planning, organization and operations analysis, UAS training, and more. **Now, during budget planning season, is a key time for cooperatives to consider how these services can help you achieve your goals.** Find out further details in this advisory:

- [Advisory](#)
- Contacts: [Henry Cano](#) and [Ginny Beauchemin](#)

Co-ops Find Benefits and Challenges through Microgrids with Energy Storage

Microgrids have the potential to help utilities and their customers by mitigating long-term outages from extreme weather events, providing grid services, and improving reliability. Improved performance and decreasing costs for distributed energy technologies have resulted in increased microgrid deployments, many of which are beginning to incorporate energy storage. This article, the second of a three-part series based on the CEATI report: *Integration and Coordination of Energy Storage within Microgrids*, highlights the experiences of the University of California, San Diego and Kodiak Island, Alaska.

- [Article](#)
- [Website for Series](#)
- Contacts: [Dan Walsh](#) and [Jan Ahlen](#)

ACCESS Project Involves Diverse Industry Stakeholders to Address Solar Energy Affordability

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), through the Solar Energy Technology Office (SETO), awarded NRECA a cooperative agreement to research how to make solar energy affordable for communities with fewer financial resources and extend the benefits of solar development to low- and moderate-income consumers. NRECA is pleased to announce the involvement of **six cooperatives from across the country and 25 key industry stakeholders**. In addition, cooperatives are invited to join as Affiliate Cooperatives to stay informed of the project's progress and offer their input and feedback. The broad and diverse perspectives from this group will bring substantial value to our collaborative effort. Find out more on our new website:

- [Solar ACCESS Project Website](#)
- Contacts: [Adaora Ifebigh](#) and [Maria Kanevsky](#)

NESC Update Process Delayed By A Year

The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC), required to be followed for overhead and underground electric distribution and transmission construction, is updated through a set process every five years. The next update, to replace the current 2017 version, has been postponed by a year. This new advisory explains how NESC made this decision due to the inability for stakeholders to meet given travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [Advisory](#)
- Contact: [Robert Harris](#)

Last Opportunity to Participate in the RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment Available Now

More than 480 of NRECA's member cooperatives are participating in the RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment program to learn about their current cybersecurity posture and make action plans for further improvements. **The final round for applications to participate is now open. The deadline for application is October 16.** Learn more on our RC3 website, including webinars with insights from participants. **The Self-Assessment can be used virtually and does not require staff to assemble in the same location.**

- [Advisory](#)
- [RC3 Self-Assessment Website](#)
- [Instructional Webinar Series - On Demand](#)
- Contacts: [Cynthia Hsu](#) and [Valerie Sayd](#)

Webinar - ROW Reclamation: People and Policies for the Long Game

Winning over internal and external opposition to removing trees in the rights of way, particularly when it has not historically been done systematically, can be an uphill battle. Join us on **September 16, 1:00 PM ET** to hear how Crawford Electric Cooperative has used reclamation to galvanize the whole utility, shore up interdepartmental collaboration and trust, unify the vegetation team and contractors, and deliver individual job satisfaction. Learn how they got it done and how to avoid some common mistakes. **Free for NRECA members**, and hosted by NRECA and Utility Arborist Association.

- [Registration](#)
- Contacts: [Patti Metro](#) and [Janelle Lemen](#)

Collaborative Project Aims to Predict Solar Adoption

The SEEDS II project is a Department of Energy (DOE)-funded collaborative project with the University of Virginia (UVA) and electric cooperatives focused on estimating the probability of an individual household to adopt rooftop solar, based on demographics, social characteristics, and behavioral characteristics. Through this three-year project, two models are now in prototype and are hopeful to provide insights to co-ops in the future. This advisory provides further details:

- [Advisory](#)
- Contact: [Maria Kanevsky](#)

Compensation Planning Assistance for Co-ops

Salary budget planning? We can help. The **National Compensation System** is the most comprehensive distribution electric cooperative salary benchmarking tool available, with data contributed from nearly 800 distribution systems. For more hands-on assistance in developing or redesigning your compensation model, our **compensation experts** are available to provide a customized proposal based on your **answers to a few questions**.

- [Our Compensation Model and Its Benefits](#)
- [On-Demand Webinar: Aligning Compensation with Your Business Strategy](#)
- Contact: [Delaine Orendorff](#) (571- 289-9023)

Paycheck Protection Program: Loan Forgiveness During COVID-19

A significant number of electric cooperatives leveraged the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for important short-term assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these loans can be forgiven, provided certain conditions, documentation and deadlines are met. This advisory provides resources and guidance for cooperatives in applying for loan forgiveness.

- **Advisory**
- **Contacts:**
 - Joe Goodenberg and Allison Hamilton (Business and Technology Strategies)
 - Russ Wasson (Tax & Finance)
 - Bobby Hamill (Legislative)

A New Energy Resource Model Initiative

The fuel mix for electric generating units is significantly and rapidly changing, incorporating more renewable generation, both utility-scale and behind-the-meter. This, in turn, is affecting how consumers interact with the generation resources, such as electric vehicles and smart meters, and consumers' relationship with their utility, including innovative rate structures. NRECA's new case study series explores the impact of these changes on the relationship between wholesale power suppliers and their distribution members, as they adapt to this new industry model and manage associated business disruption challenges. Read our first case study highlighting the collaboration between a G&T cooperative and its members as they achieve long-term, strategic goals.

- **Case Study: North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives**
- **Contact:** Paul Breakman

WEBINAR OPPORTUNITIES

- **Future Of... Volume 2 Series**
 - **UAS: The "Future Of" Measurement and Monitoring**
September 15, 2-3 PM ET
 - **Analytics: The "Future Of" Turning Your Data in Action**
September 29, 2-3 PM ET
 - **Situational Awareness: The "Future Of" Distribution Operations**
October 6, 2-3 PM ET
- **ROW Reclamation: People and Policies for the Long Game**
September 16, 1-2 PM CT (2-3 PM ET)

On Demand:

- **Broadband as an Essential Service**
- **DOE Wind Energy Webinar**
- **Future Of... Volume 1 Series**
- **RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment Program**
- **Impacts of COVID-19 on Renewable Energy and Storage Development**
- **Impacts of Postponing or Canceling Annual Meetings and Director Elections due to COVID-19**
- **Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)**
- **Series: Mitigating Bird Issues**

Additional Resources Regarding the Impact of COVID-19 on Co-ops

NRECA has recently completed several analyses on the impact of COVID-19 on electric cooperatives, including economic, job sectors, and broadband. Below are links:

- **Report: Mid-Year 2020 U.S. Economic Outlook: A Focus on Rural America**
Contact: Joe Goodenberg
- **Paycheck Protection Program: Loan Forgiveness**
Contacts: Allison Hamilton and Joe Goodenberg
- **Financial Impact Report**
Contacts: Russell Tucker and Joe Goodenberg
- **Financial Impact and Pathways to Relief**
Contact: Allison Hamilton
- **At Risk Job Sectors Report**
Contact: Michael Leitman
- **Impacts on Generation and Transmission Cooperatives**
Contacts: Lauren Khair and Michael Leitman
- **How COVID-19 Is Impacting Electricity Industry Sectors**
Contacts: Lauren Khair and Michael Leitman
- **Tools to Help Manage Energy Expenses**
Contact: Brian Sloboda
- **The Criticality of Broadband**
Contact: Paul Breakman
- **Business and Technology Resources to Use Virtually**
- **NRECA COVID-19 Hub**
- **Special Edition: Business and Technology Update**

See past issues of *Business and Technology Update* in our [archive on cooperative.com](#).

Discover the value of NRECA membership. Learn more.

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