

## Using Smart Thermostats to Shift Space Conditioning Load

The market for Internet-connected products is growing, with connected thermostats becoming very popular with consumers. Some co-ops and other utilities are leveraging smart thermostats for demand response and other load shifting programs. This new report reviews the recent efforts of Jackson County Rural Electric Membership Cooperative, a distribution co-op in southern Indiana, and its generation and transmission co-op, Hoosier Energy, to test how smart thermostats could be used to reduce peak demand in both summer and winter. In addition, they aimed to learn whether smart thermostat programs could provide technology that members want, while serving as an engagement touch point.

- [Report](#)
- Contact: [Brian Sloboda](#)

## Guidebook for Rapid Solar Interconnection

The solar generation market has increased significantly over the past several years and is poised to outpace wind energy growth over the next several years. As consumer preferences continue to evolve and solar PV installation costs fall, behind-the-meter solar installations have become more popular. Large numbers of solar interconnection requests combined with labor intensive interconnection practices are challenging for small electric cooperative staffs, and yet existing automation solutions are expensive and often difficult to use. This new guidebook provides electric cooperatives and other utilities with an alternative approach to automate the solar interconnection process, and how to communicate solar programs to consumers. Five cooperative case studies are included.

- [Report](#)
- Contact: [David Pinney](#)

## Homer Electric's Net Metering Program for Distributed Wind

NRECA's *Rural Area Distributed Wind Integration Network Development (RADWIND)* project aims to understand, address, and reduce the technical risks and market barriers to the adoption of distributed wind technologies by rural utilities. Through project case studies, we highlight the innovative ways our members are advancing wind generation in our industry. The distributed wind project profiled in our latest case study is a net metering program at Homer Electric Association that includes member-owned distributed wind turbines.

- [Case Study](#)
- [Additional Case Studies](#)

- [RADWIND Website](#)
- [Contacts: Michael Leitman and Maria Kanevsky](#)

## Coal-Fired Power Plant Modifications to Improve Cyclic Performance

The rise of competitive power markets together with growing variable renewable generation are forcing coal-fired power plants into a reactionary posture, where they operate in a cycling manner instead of the traditional lengthy runtimes at or near rated load. Coal-fired power plants accumulate damage and degradation in key components during every start-up, shutdown, and ramping between load states – eventually leading to failure and reduced availability. This new NRECA *Surveillance* series summarizes CEATI's report *Optimization of Coal-Fired Power Plant Modifications to Improve Cyclic Performance*, providing guidance on the adaptations that electric cooperatives can make to coal-fired power plants to improve their availability. This first article focuses on equipment failure and damage mechanisms and the effect of cycling on forced outages.

- [Report](#)
- [Contact: Dan Walsh](#)

## Using Segmentation Information to Better Understand Consumer-Members

When communicating with consumer-members about products and services, it is critical to position your message in a way that will achieve desired results. Understanding members and what motivates their choices regarding their energy consumption is key, and consumer segmentation is a tool that can help. NRECA recently conducted a segmentation study with consumer-members of 19 distribution co-ops and identified five distinct segments among consumer-members along with a predictive model to identify consumer attitudes and beliefs about various elements of the electric industry. NRECA Market Research Services is available to assist cooperatives conduct their own consumer segmentation study as well. Join us on **August 17** for a related [“Business Insights” webinar](#) and hear from NRECA's Director of Consumer Analytics & Market Research, Mike Sassman.

- [More Information](#)
- [Related Webinar – August 17](#)
- [Contact: Mike Sassman](#)

## Battery Energy Storage Procurement Framework and Best Practices

The foundation of a successful battery energy storage system (BESS) project begins with a sound procurement process. This new report provides insights into the art of assessing the need for and value of BESS and presents a procurement framework. It is intended for electric cooperatives which have limited experience with BESS deployment.

- [Report](#)
- [Contact: Brian Sloboda](#)

## NEETRAC Research Findings on Connectors and Power Equipment Oil

Through NRECA's membership arrangement with the National Electric Energy Testing, Research & Applications Center (NEETRAC) at Georgia Tech, we are able to share their research reports with our members. Two of NEETRAC's latest reports detail research findings on how the strength of a span is affected by the number of connectors inserted into conductor, and oil analysis techniques for power equipment. Their quarterly newsletter is also available with highlights of current research projects underway.

- [Report – Tensile Strength of Distribution Connectors](#)
- [Report – Power Equipment Oil Analysis](#)
- [Quarterly Newsletter](#)
- [Additional NEETRAC Information](#)
- Contact: [Robert Harris](#)

## Webinar: Co-op Economic Outlook – July 22

Join NRECA experts on **July 22, 2:00-2:50 p.m. ET** for a discussion of the key economic indicators, insights on economic growth and the latest trends and implications for rural areas and the broader U.S. economy. This free event also offers follow on conversation about the topics covered in the latest [U.S. Rural Economic Outlook](#) report.

- [Register](#)
- Contacts: [Joseph Goodenbery](#) and [Robbin Christianson](#)

## “Emerging Tech” Webinar Session on EV Trends – July 27

As our industry and the needs of our consumers continue to evolve, it is critical that co-ops understand emerging technologies and how they can impact your business — whether it is to help solve a current problem or help prepare for future challenges. Tune in to NRECA's new “Emerging Tech” webinar series to see how these technology advances may offer a helping hand and where the impacts may be felt. Join us on **Tuesday, July 27 at 2:00–2:50 p.m. ET** for our next session focused on EV Trends, and view our related [Infographic on how EVs impact the grid](#).

- [Registration](#)
- [Infographic](#)
- Contacts: [Robbin Christianson](#) and [Renee Garver](#)

## New “Business Insights” Webinar Series

Change is coming to every aspect of business at a level not experienced in generations — from changing business models to our changing workforce and consumer-members. Join NRECA for our “Business Insights” webinar series to gain perspectives that can help you navigate transformations facing your cooperative. Our first two sessions, focused on Performance-Based Frameworks and Market Segmentation, are Tuesday, **August 10**

and Tuesday, **August 17 at 2:00–2:50 p.m. ET.**

- **Registration**
- **Contacts:** [Robbin Christianson](#) and [Renee Garver](#)

## Hotel Deadline July 19: 2021 Safety Leadership Summit

There is still time to register for the **2021 Safety Leadership Summit** happening in Orlando **August 9-11**, but the deadline to book hotel accommodations at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek at the NRECA discounted rate is just days away. In-person capacity is limited, with priority registration being extended to individuals from NRECA member co-ops and statewide associations, so register early. If you cannot make it to Orlando, portions will be available for viewing via livestream as well.

- **Registration**
- **Book Your Stay**
- **Contact:** [Perron Nicholas](#)

## Hold the Date: Cybersecurity Summit and Tabletop Exercise – August 26

NRECA's *Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities (RC3)* Program will be hosting a virtual Cybersecurity Summit on **August 26**. The Summit will include a morning session of speakers, an afternoon session with a 2-hour mini-CyberSEEC distributed play cybersecurity exercise, and a late afternoon session with speakers. Registration will open soon. RC3 Cybersecurity Summits are open to all co-op staff and do not require any advanced skills training. Any staff responsible for cybersecurity, including those who are not IT professionals, are encouraged to attend.

- **Contact:** [Cynthia Hsu](#)

## WEBINAR AND PODCAST OPPORTUNITIES

### Podcasts:

- **[What is the Beneficial Electrification League?](#)**
- **[How Data Is Revolutionizing the Electric Utility Industry](#)**

### Webinars

- **[Co-op Economic Outlook Series](#)**  
July 22: 2-2:50 p.m. ET  
October 21: 2-2:50 p.m. ET  
January 20: 2-2:50 p.m. ET

- **Emerging Tech Series: EV Trends & Consumer Perspectives**  
July 27: 2-2:50 p.m. ET
- **Business Insights Webinar Series**  
Using Performance-Based Frameworks to Deliver Consumer Value - August 10: 2-2:50 p.m. ET  
Market Segmentation: Tools and Research to Understand Your Members - August 17: 2-2:50 p.m. ET

**On Demand:**

- **Emerging Tech Series: Utility Uses for Augmented and Virtual Reality**
- **Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Summit**
- **New Funding Available for Co-ops Serving Military Communities**
- **The Power of Partnership: Solar Webinar Series – Vol. 1**
- **The Power of Partnership: Solar Webinar Series – Vol. 2**
- **Measuring Co-op Response to COVID-19: Key Take-Aways and Action Items**
- **Aligning Compensation with Your Business Strategy**
- **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**

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

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

- **2021 U.S. Economic Outlook: A Focus on Rural America**  
Contact: Joe Goodenbery
- RE Magazine Article: **The Covid Effect: Contact Injuries**  
Contact: Bud Branham
- **Measuring Co-op Response to COVID-19: Key Take-Aways and Action Items**  
Contact: Mike Sassman
- **Report: Mid-Year 2020 U.S. Economic Outlook: A Focus on Rural America**  
Contact: Joe Goodenbery
- **Paycheck Protection Program: Loan Forgiveness**  
Contacts: Allison Hamilton and Joe Goodenbery
- **Financial Impact Report**  
Contacts: Russell Tucker and Joe Goodenbery

- **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**

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

### Discover the value of NRECA membership. Learn more.

This is a promotion from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
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