



Business & Technology Update

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Upcoming BTS Survey

As a valued NRECA stakeholder, your insights are invaluable in helping us evaluate and enhance the NRECA Business & Technology Strategies (BTS) programs and services. Your feedback will help us uncover strengths, identify areas for improvement, and ensure we continue delivering meaningful support to you and your peers.

Subscribers to our Business and Technology Update newsletter may receive a survey from NRECA Market Research (MarketResearch@NRECA.coop) in the next 1-2 days; completing it should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. We greatly appreciate your feedback and appreciate your time!

Co-op Innovation and Creative Solutions

As the evolution of the electricity industry presents opportunities and challenges, our members continually demonstrate leadership and ingenuity.

"Co-ops are committed to driving innovation by investing in new technologies that will shape the future of energy. By leveraging the cooperative model, they are focusing on next-generation solutions to deliver unparalleled value to their members and communities by continuing to provide safe, affordable and reliable energy."

Angela Strickland
Senior Vice President
Business and Technology Strategies

This new RE Magazine article showcases some recent innovative efforts of our members:

- [Article](#)
- Contact: [Scot Hoffman](#)

New Resources & Opportunities

Updated Simplified Staking Manual

Distribution lines are the major asset of a distribution cooperative, and the process of staking is a core skill. The Fifth Edition of the NRECA Simplified Staking Manual for Overhead Distribution Lines (the *Staking Manual*) is available to members. It serves as a resource for novice staking technicians to acquire basic working knowledge of the principles and practices of distribution line staking, and as a useful reference for more experienced technicians and engineers. This latest edition has been updated to comply with the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and builds on three decades of continual development to provide an overview of basic overhead distribution line staking practices. Learn more in our new advisory:

- [Advisory](#)
- [Staking Manual](#)
- Contact: [David Farmer](#)

Invitation to Join the New Cooperative Engineering Standards Interest Group

NRECA is launching a new working group, the Cooperative Engineering Standards Interest Group (CESIG), to provide visibility to the standards-making process across the cooperative community and to ensure that our voice is represented consistently in the various entities tasked with electric utility standards development. We are soliciting interest from people willing to participate in CESIG and contribute to the standards development process. This interest group's work complements but is separate from NRECA's other work on generation standards and the North American Electric Reliability Committee (NERC) process for standards development. Find out more in this new advisory.

- [Advisory](#)
- [Sign-Up Form](#)
- Contact: [David Farmer](#)

Energy Storage Technical Assistance from PNNL

Is your distribution utility considering an energy storage or microgrid project and need guidance on where to start? Help is available from subject matter experts at the U.S. Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) through NRECA Research's Energy Storage for Rural Resilience (ES42R) project. This new and exciting opportunity provides technical assistance to electric cooperatives for projects including those that could be eligible for future federal, state, or local funding initiatives. **Applications must be received by 5 p.m. ET on February 14.**

- [More Information](#)
 - [Application Form](#)
 - Contact: [Steph Joven](#)
-

EV Telematics Pilot Program with Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative

Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC) offers a 24-hour, Time-of-Use (TOU) Electric Vehicle (EV) charging program through which customers can charge their vehicles whenever needed, and electricity rates fluctuate by the time of day. Recently, MVEC and other industry stakeholders, including NRECA, worked to evaluate the alignment between EV submetering data and telematics data to assess the feasibility of telematics as a billing method. This new advisory reviews the research and findings.

- [Advisory](#)
- Contact: [Jennah Denney](#)

Cybersecurity Resources

NRECA's Cybersecurity Program offers an array of resources and opportunities for cooperatives to learn and advance their cybersecurity posture. Here are some of the more recent offerings:

Become a Cyber Champion!

The world of cooperative cybersecurity is constantly evolving and we are calling on members of our community to help lead the charge. We are kicking off the pilot phase of Cyber Champions, a five-year program, that will continue through [Project Guardian 61-7A](#). Those selected during this pilot stage will develop the program framework and evaluate the need for future improvements in the program.

- [Learn More & Sign-Up](#)
- Contact: [Ryan Newlon](#)

Federal Funding for Cybersecurity for Operational Technology

NRECA still has funding available for member co-ops in the Industrial Control Systems for Rural Electric Cooperatives (ICS-REC) program. This \$15M program funds the rapid deployment of technologies that protect, defend, or harden Operational Technology (OT) in your network. If your organization's 2025 roadmap includes OT cybersecurity activities and/or enhancements, the ICS-REC program may be able to fund some of your planned projects.

- [Questionnaire to Find Out More](#)
- Contact: [Adrian McNamara](#)

Co-op Cyber Goals – Year 2 Review

Designed specifically for the needs of electric cooperatives, NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals Program provides clear guidelines for basic security integration and actionable steps to advance your cybersecurity posture. Over 400 co-ops are now participating in this voluntary, self-paced program. Cyber Goals is comprised of two sets of 10 cybersecurity goals – known as Level One and Level Two – and co-ops receive a digital badge, commemorative coin and recognition at our Cyber Tech conference for completing a Level. Find out more in our new Advisory recapping accomplishments during the program's second year.

- [Advisory](#)
- [Cyber Goals Website](#)
- Contact: membersecurity@nreca.coop

Mental Health in Cybersecurity—Balancing the Scales: Webinar – On Demand

Designed for cybersecurity professionals at all levels, this webinar delves into the unique mental health challenges faced by cyber professionals and entrepreneurs, emphasizing the need for a proactive approach to managing these issues. Now available On Demand.

- [Webinar](#)
 - Contact: membersecurity@nreca.coop
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Podcast: Nuclear Plant Recommissioning

The Palisades nuclear plant in Michigan was shut down in 2022, but is on a path to be repowered by late 2025—an unprecedented project that wouldn't be possible without the involvement of the two Midwestern generation and transmission cooperatives that signed long-term agreements to purchase power from the plant. Listen to this Along Those Lines podcast to hear from Wolverine Power Cooperative's Eric Baker and Hoosier Energy's Donna Walker about how co-ops became involved in this historic effort.

- [Podcast](#)
 - Contacts: [Dan Walsh](#) and [Scot Hoffman](#)
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Live and On Demand Webinars

TODAY: Cooperative Tech Insights Webinar Series

Join us today, **January 23 at 2 p.m. ET** for the debut of this free, monthly webinar series to explore the latest NRECA business and technology solutions and resources available to our members. Led by NRECA staff, each session focuses on a specific business and technology topic, such as Microgrids, Safety, Workforce and Cybersecurity. We'll also discuss related NRECA research projects and any federal funding opportunities that could support your cooperative's technology initiatives.

- [More Information & Registration](#)
 - Contact: [Lauren Khair](#)
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An Introduction to REWIRED for Electric Vehicles: January 30

Rural Electric Workflow Improvements for Rapid Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Deployment (REWIRED) is a cooperative agreement between NRECA Research and the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. This agreement provides over \$2 million of federal funding over 3 years (June 2024, to May 2027). The project aims to reduce the soft costs associated with EVSE deployment. Join us on **January 30 at 2 p.m. ET** to hear an update on the progress of the project and upcoming resources for cooperative members.

- [More Information & Registration](#)
 - Contact: [Jennah Denney](#)
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Distribution Automation Toolkit for Cooperatives: February 4

Last year, NRECA started a Distribution Automation (DA) initiative that aims to develop a variety of resources that cooperatives can use to create a DA strategy and process based on grid needs and co-op goals, evaluate DA technologies and plan for increased adoption and implement DA and operate the grid in a safe, secure, and cost-effective manner. Join us **February 4 at 2 p.m. ET** to hear about the Distribution Automation Software Toolkit developed by NRECA as part of the initiative. This toolkit will assist in performing benefit-cost analysis of proposed DA project technologies over the expected life of the investments. The toolkit will also help members to assess value of DA projects and facilitate demonstration projects with vendors.

- [More Information & Registration](#)
- Contact: [Ravindra Singh](#)

On Demand Webinars

Many NRECA webinars are offered On Demand after the live events, to continue as resources to benefit our members. Here is just a sample. Find many more on cooperative.com.

- [Mental Health in Cybersecurity](#)
- [Economic Outlook Webinar Series](#)
- [Infrastructure Consortia Webinar Series](#)
- [Cybersecurity Update Webinar Series](#)

Upcoming Conferences

Safety Leadership Summit: April 22-24

Join us **April 22-24 in Arlington, Texas** for 2025 Safety Leadership Summit, where co-op leaders have the opportunity to strengthen their commitment to safety by learning from each other and networking with other professionals from across the country who are also working on making significant safety improvements.

- [More Information & Registration](#)
- Contact: [Rebecca Bittle](#)

Call for Presentation and Science Fair Proposals: 2025 Co-op Cyber Tech

NRECA is now accepting presentation and science fair poster proposals for 2025 Co-op Cyber Tech, **June 24-26 in Denver, Colorado**. Showcase your expertise and share your knowledge with hundreds of technical cyber professionals working to enhance rural electric co-ops' defenses against cyberthreats. All levels of experience are welcome. **The deadline for presentation proposals is January 24. The deadline for science fair poster proposals is February 14.**

- [More Information](#)
- Contact: membersecurity@nreca.coop

TechAdvantage and PowerXchange Overview Podcast Now Available

This year's PowerXchange and TechAdvantage conferences, happening **March 9-12, 2025 in Atlanta, Georgia**, come amid a period of unprecedented disruption for co-ops, many of whom are facing soaring demand from data centers and other major load drivers, shrinking supply caused by misguided federal and state emissions policies, and increasing changes in co-op leadership and work culture. Listen to our new Along Those Lines podcast to hear from Erin Pressley, NRECA's senior vice president for Education, Training and Events, as she gives a behind-the-scenes look at how PowerXchange and TechAdvantage come together, and how this year's events will help attendees confront today's challenges.

- [Podcast](#)
- [More Information & Registration](#)
- Contacts: [Alison Kent](#) (TechAdvantage) and [Kristen Wheeler](#) (PowerXchange)

Call for Abstracts for 74th Annual AREGC Conference

You are invited to submit an abstract for presentation at the 74th Annual AREGC Conference, a four-day event to be held in **San Antonio, Texas, from June 15-18**. Golden Spread Electric Cooperative is hosting the conference and Associated Electric Cooperative is organizing the technical program, including selection and management of presentations. This annual national event is designed to provide electric cooperative power plant operations, maintenance, and engineering personnel an opportunity to meet with experts, collaborate with peers, and gain knowledge and insight into new practices and technologies to enhance the effectiveness of electric-generating cooperatives. **Submissions deadline is February 7** and should be sent to Scott Crise, Manager Gas Plant Operations: scrise@aeci.org

- Contact: [Dan Walsh](#)

Career and Development Courses for Cooperatives

NRECA offers an extensive variety of courses, online and in-person, for cooperatives' career development. Some upcoming highlights include:

- [5306.05 Communicating to Influence: Gain Support That Gets Results](#): 1/28, 12-4 p.m. ET.
- [719.1 Building Trust in the Workplace](#). 1/29 and 1/30, 1-4 pm ET each day. Registration deadline: Jan. 27.
- [5307.05 Improve Your Relationships](#): 2/5, 12-4 p.m. ET
- [5110.1 Fundamentals of Business Writing](#): February, Instructor-Facilitated via Learning Management System
- [731.1 Communicating Technical Information to Boards and Consumer-Members](#): 2/12-13, 1-4:30 p.m. ET. Last day to register or cancel registration with a refund: Feb. 10
- [732.1 Values-Based Leadership](#): 2/19-20, 1-4:30 p.m. ET. Last day to register or cancel registration with a refund: Feb. 17
- [5130.05 Effective Problem-Solving and Decision-Making](#): 2/25, 12-4:00 p.m. ET
- [5132.05 Mastering Presentation Skills: Engage, Inspire and Influence with Confidence](#): 2/27, 1-4 p.m. ET
- [735.1: Developing Others Through Servant Leadership](#) – New course! 4/15-16, 1-4 p.m. ET. Last day to register: April 10.

The full schedule is available for the 2025 [Supervisor and Manager Development Program](#) (SMDP) and [Cooperative Career Essentials Program](#) (CCEP) online courses. The schedule also includes the dates for the annual [Cooperative University](#) event, where SMDP and CCEP courses are held in-person.

The [CCEP](#) focuses on the core skills that all employees need, regardless of their title or tenure. The [SMDP](#) focuses on the specific skills needed to supervise and manage others.

- [Full 2025 Course Schedule](#)
 - Contact for SMDP: [Diane Rhodes-Michaely](#)
 - Contact for CCEP: [Alison Kent](#)
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Discover the value of NRECA membership. [Learn More.](#)

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