

Thursday, October 8, 2020 | coop.com | [BTS Portfolio](#) | [Contact](#) | [Archive](#) |

U.S. DOE Awards NRECA \$6M to Advance Essence Cybersecurity Tool

NRECA has received \$6 million in a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy to further develop its groundbreaking cybersecurity tool known as Essence and deliver it to co-ops nationwide. Essence monitors for cyber threats and instantly provides key data to network administrators and system operators to isolate the incident and defend the system. NRECA will be testing Essence at 55 cooperatives. Interested cooperatives may contact: Doug.Lambert@nreca.coop. Learn more in our new article and website:

- [Article](#)
- [Website](#)
- Contact: [Doug Lambert](#)

COVID-19 Poses Additional Safety Challenges for Co-ops

As explained in a new *RE Magazine* article, electric cooperative safety and loss officials are warning that new distractions created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption of normal safety training activities could be contributing to an increase in electric contact incidents among operations personnel. Due to this uptick, NRECA's National Safety Program, Federated Rural Electric Insurance and a group of statewide safety professionals have formed a team to look for additional opportunities and resources that could help reduce serious injuries and fatalities due to electrical contacts. This effort is "Phase 2" to the *Commitment to Zero Contacts* initiative that started in 2018 to help support an improving trend in electrical contacts and will continue our quest to reach zero.

- RE Magazine Article: [The Covid Effect: Contact Injuries](#)
- [Commitment to Zero Contacts Website](#)
- Contacts: [Bud Branham](#) and [Jasmyne Montague](#)

Final Opportunity to Participate in the RC3 Online Cybersecurity Self-Assessment: Deadline October 16

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 and available to all NRECA member co-ops. **The application deadline is October 16.** Learn more on our RC3 website, including training webinars to help co-ops complete the RC3 Online Self-Assessment 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](#)

NRECA Expands Consulting Services to Include Technology Management – Appointments Available Now

NRECA has added a suite of consulting services focused on collaborating with cooperatives to address challenges with the integrated grid. Our services include: Technology Planning, Data Strategy Planning, Grid Data Analytics, Technology Evaluation and Deployment, Operations Analysis and Effectiveness and Unmanned Aerial Systems. Book an appointment today!

- [Website](#)
- [Contacts: Henry Cano and Tony Thomas](#)

Rural Wind Research Project Seeking Cooperative Advisors

The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded a research grant to support a two-year, \$3 million research initiative spearheaded by NRECA to study deployment of distributed wind resources by electric cooperatives and other rural utilities. The project, *Rural Area Distributed Wind Integration Network Development* (RADWIND), aims to reduce the balance of system costs of deploying technologies of various scales on rural distribution grids. **NRECA is seeking cooperatives to participate in a Member Stakeholder Advisory Group** to provide guidance in the identification of gaps and creation of solutions for deployment of distributed wind generation across rural America. **Expressions of interest are requested to be sent to RadwindProject@nreca.coop by October 26.**

- [Advisory](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contacts: Michael Leitman and Venkat Banunarayanan](#)

Striving to Ensure Affordable Solar Energy Options for All

While electric cooperatives continue to add significant solar resources to their generating portfolios, hurdles still exist in making solar PV accessible. NRECA's **ACCESS** project, supported by the U.S. DOE, is working with an extensive cooperative and industry stakeholder group to explore various technology and financing models to help make solar affordable to communities in need. Read two related advisories – one explaining a new technology tool by PNNL and another about the potential for using federal energy assistance funding – and **join us on November 12 and 18** for our “The Power of Partnership” webinar series to hear how cooperatives are partnering with tribal communities and philanthropic organizations:

- [Press Release: ACCESS Project for Solar Affordability](#)
- [Advisory: PNNL Research to Expand Solar Benefits](#)
- [Advisory: Research on Using Federal Assistance Funding to Advance Solar Affordability](#)

- **Webinar Series: The Power of Partnership**
- Contact: [Adaora Ifebigh](#)

New Resources from the Beneficial Electrification League

During this very challenging time, the *Beneficial Electrification League* continues to bring together diverse stakeholders and advance our mission to increase understanding of electrification's economic, consumer and environmental benefits. Several new resources are now available for cooperatives. Two new videos, focusing on business and residential consumer groups, can be branded and used by cooperatives with their members. Virtual statewide events will take place this fall and are open to all: **Electrify New Mexico!** (Oct. 14), **Electrify Virginia!** (Oct. 15), and **Electrify Alaska!** (Nov 16-18). In our recent *Along Those Lines* podcast, leaders of the Beneficial Electrification League discuss their goals for the group and how co-ops are getting involved. If you have a beneficial electrification project, we want to hear from you so we can best represent and support members! Please contact Keith.Dennis@nreca.coop.

- Video: **Businesses Choose Electricity!**
- Video: **Residential Consumers - Electrify Your World!**
- **Podcast**
- **Beneficial Electrification Website**
- Contact: [Keith Dennis](#)

Expanded Analytics Tool Now Available to NRECA's Reliability Benchmarking Group

Now more than ever, given the operational challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, cooperatives need to leverage the power of data to pinpoint issues quickly and save money wherever possible. NRECA recently negotiated an agreement with Aerinet Solutions, provider of PwrMetrix Data Analytics, to extend the **full PwrMetrix platinum version** to all rural electric cooperatives, which includes the suite of cost and GIS analytics until December 30, 2020. NRECA will be offering web conferences to review the capabilities of PwrMetrix in helping cooperatives through this difficult time. Interested cooperatives may contact Tony.Thomas@nreca.coop.

- Website: **Reliability Benchmarking Group**
- Contact: [Tony Thomas](#)

On Demand Webinar: Measuring Co-op Response to COVID-19: Key Take-Aways and Action Items

NRECA and Touchstone Energy® recently conducted a national COVID-19 Response Survey of electric cooperative consumer members, measuring local co-op response to COVID-19 compared to other local organizations and member expectations of the co-op during the recovery. This new On Demand webinar provides highlights of the survey results, including national and regional insights, communication strategies, comparison with past surveys, and perspective on broader market trends and consumer expectations. NRECA also offers a DIY survey for co-ops who would like to conduct a similar survey for their own members and be able to benchmark their results to the national results.

- [Webinar](#)
- [Report](#)
- Contact: [Mike Sassman](#)

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](#)

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](#)

Smart Devices Extend Cybersecurity Concerns from IT to OT

As smart devices proliferate on the grid, cybersecurity practices, once largely focused on IT, are now increasingly also concerned with operational technology. The two present very different challenges for cooperatives. Our new *RE Magazine* article discusses this issue and highlights the experiences of Co-Mo in adopting multifaceted, in-depth approaches and how the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association and Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) are using NRECA's [RC3 Program](#) to build stronger cybersecurity.

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

How Collaboration is Essential as DER Growth Heightens

The increased adoption of distributed energy resources (DERs) is driving change in the industry and causing some G&Ts to evaluate their traditional way of doing business with their members. This new advisory reviews insights gained through recent NRECA surveys regarding how G&Ts perceive the current and potential levels of DER, and highlights the value of collaboration between G&Ts and their distribution cooperatives in planning for grid impacts from increasing DER and in helping to adapt to evolving NERC reliability interest in this arena.

- [Advisory](#)
- Contacts: [Paul McCurley](#) and [Patti Metro](#)

Microgrids with Energy Storage Case Studies and Best Practices

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. Our recent article series, based on the CEATI report: *Integration and Coordination of Energy Storage within Microgrids*, highlights case studies and provides best practices for implementing energy storage within microgrids.

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

WEBINAR AND PODCAST OPPORTUNITIES

Podcasts:

- [What is the Beneficial Electrification League?](#)

Webinars:

The Power of Partnership: Solar Webinar Series

- The Solar Energy “Cause”: Helping Members Save Through Philanthropy
November 12, 2-3 p.m. ET
- Solar Energy Accessibility: Bringing the Power of Solar Energy to Tribal Communities
November 18, 2-3 p.m. ET

On Demand Webinars:

- [Measuring Co-op Response to COVID-19: Key Take-Aways and Action Items](#)
- [Future Of... Volume 1: EVs, Battery Energy Storage, and Grid Analytics](#)
- [Future Of... Volume 2: UAS, Analytics, and Distributed Operations](#)
- [Aligning Compensation with Your Business Strategy](#)

- **Broadband as an Essential Service**
- **DOE Wind Energy Webinar**
- **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

- **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**
- **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.

This is a promotion from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22203 | Tel: (703) 907-5500 | E-mail: nreca@nreca.coop

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