

### CREATED

---



PUBLIC

Oct 15th 2019, 9:47:41 am

### UPDATED

---



PUBLIC

Oct 15th 2019, 10:59:04 am

### IP ADDRESS

---



209.173.165.130

### Information About Nominator

---

(No response)

#### \* Name

---

Ronald Salyer

#### \* Job Title

---

President & CEO

#### \* Electric Cooperative

---

Pioneer Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

#### \* City

---

Piqua

#### \* State

---

Ohio

#### \* Phone Number

---

9373810620

#### \* Email

---

rsalyer@pioneerec.com

#### I have paid to receive general feedback on my entry.

---

Yes

#### \* Name

---

Nanci McMaken

---

**\* Job Title**

---

Vice President & Chief Communications Officer

---

**\* Electric Cooperative**

---

Pioneer Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

---

**\* How long has nominee been at current cooperative?**

---

37.75years

---

**\* How long has nominee been in the NRECA co-op network?**

---

37.75years

---

**\* Cooperation Among Cooperatives (20 points) – How has the nominee lived out the cooperative principle of “Cooperation Among Cooperatives” through service to a wider co-op audience (statewide, regional and/or national level)? (500 word limit)**

---

Nanci McMaken, Vice President and Chief Communications Officer at Pioneer Electric Cooperative, has worked for the cooperative since 1982. Throughout her many years of service, she has impacted and influenced advisory committees at a statewide and national level including, Ohio’s Electric Cooperative’s Advertising Advisory Committee (1999-2019), OEC’s Marketing Committee (2002-2019), the National Rural Electric Association’s Communications Task Force Committee in 2003 and the Touchstone Energy Strategic Communications Committee (2013-2019). Nanci has been a spokesperson for several years leading multiple Ohio Cooperatives during the annual Legislative Conference visits in Washington D.C. She is recognized as a “go to” communicator for these efforts.

Nanci’s cooperation toward cooperatives around the country goes far beyond serving on national and state committees. In her more than 37 years of service she has built relationships with communicators, marketers, board members, and CEOs throughout the country while attending trainings, conferences, and other networking events. I believe that it’s her enthusiasm toward these relationships, the willingness to share ideas, experiences, and knowledge that exemplify how she continues to live out cooperation among cooperatives.

Nanci’s recent leadership establishing a 24/7/365 on-call communications team at Pioneer is being shared with Ohio’s Electric Cooperatives Manager’s 2019 Fall conference for potential implementation across the Cooperative network in Ohio. This effort is one component of Pioneer’s all-time high ASCI 88 satisfaction rating established in the second quarter of 2019.

**\* Education, Training and Information (20 points) – How has the nominee demonstrated personal excellence delivering education, training and information? What are specific examples of demonstrated excellence in the roles of Technician, Artist, and Listener? (500 word limit)**

---

Nanci McMaken, Vice President and Chief Communications Officer at Pioneer Electric Cooperative, became a Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) in 1991, received the Edgar F. Chestnutt award for best total communications program in 2001, and graduated in 2005 from the NRECA Management Internship Program (MIP). In 2009, she attended the NRECA Strategic Financial Planning and Analysis workshop and in 2016 was awarded the Touchstone Energy Brand Champion Award. As she advances in her career, she continues to look for learning opportunities and ways to stay current on what matters most to the cooperative. As she has moved up the management ladder, she has been able to share this education, training, and information with her 11 employees.

Technician: Pioneer’s annual ASCI score has increased from a tight band of 81 to 79 from 2002 to 2012 with a continuous upward trend to an 88 in 2015, 2018, and 2019. A big part of this was Nanci’s leadership adopting quarterly ACSI surveys in 2012, which have enhanced and fine-tuned messaging and communications throughout the year. Nanci always makes herself available when needed, no matter the day or time of day.

Artist: Nanci transformed Pioneer’s brand from literally an outdated Conestoga wagon, to a modern, progressive, high-tech utility. She carefully and thoughtfully crafted Pioneer’s original mission statement. She implemented a new logo in 1998 replacing Pioneer’s logo that had been in place for several decades beforehand. This new modern logo included a focus with a tagline “everything we do revolves around you” and a new mission statement set the stage for a consistent branding message. In 2018, she again worked to update Pioneer’s mission statement to ensure it continues to meet the changing expectations of our membership.

Listener: Through the ACSI surveys she was able to listen to the memberships concerns and interests. Under her leadership, Pioneer was the first cooperative in the nation to launch NISC’s SmartHub in 2012 and text message alerts and bill notifications were activated in January 2019. She continues to look forward, consider the whole picture and set a high standard for co-ops to admire and acquire.

**\* Communication as an integral part of the co-op’s strategic plan, not just a support function of that plan. (250 word limit)**

---

As was mentioned previously, Nanci’s leadership adopting quarterly ACSI surveys in 2012, has been instrumental in helping understanding members growing expectations. Without the information provided by those surveys and anticipating their expectations, strategic goals lose their purpose. Nanci’s ability to read between the lines and offer recommendations as a result of the ACSI survey and similar surveys make communications an integral part of the plan instead of just a support function. Nanci has led an effort to take “always on” communication to the highest level in the last year. She developed a formal procedure for electric line personnel and on-call engineers to provide estimated times of restoral and photos to Pioneer’s four-person, rotating, on-call communications team. This group covers social media communications on a 24/7/365 basis providing updates to Pioneer’s members through Facebook and other social media platforms, as appropriate. This social media interaction is creating a new, very positive, “relationship” between Pioneer and our members. Nanci’s innovation also led to Pioneer adopting mail-in balloting for Pioneer’s Board elections in 2005 and online balloting for elections in 2011. This has increased voting that was held at the annual meeting in the past from a couple of hundred votes to consistently over 1,700 since that time. This represents just over 10 percent of Pioneer’s member consumers.

In 2019, with the assistance of NRECA’s Governance Task Force, she took steps to ensure transparency with the membership and made sure the Pioneer Board of Trustees agreed to the updates proposed.

**\* Member engagement to build loyalty and grassroots political strength. (250 word limit)**

---

As Pioneer’s legislative liaison Nanci was deeply involved in the development of the Cooperative’s political action strategy and tackled key issues at both the state and federal levels, including Ohio’s deregulation, national efforts to impose a cap and trade tax on carbon emissions and the current war on coal for electricity generation. Since 2005, she has assisted with the local growth of ACRE® and Co-op Owners for Political Action, the electric cooperatives’ political action committees. In 2010, Nanci’s efforts were recognized with Pioneer receiving the ACRE® Cooperative Owners for Political Action® Cooperative of the Year. In 2018, Pioneer’s Co-op Owner’s participation increased 21 percent — second highest increase among 900 cooperatives nationwide.

**\* Use of multiple communication channels and platforms to meet members-consumers on their own turf. (250 word limit)**

---

Under Nanci's leadership Pioneer implemented the use of social media including Facebook and Twitter in 2009 and YouTube in 2011. Nanci was also part of the team that created Pioneer's first website in 1997. That website has been updated five times since then. Nanci's communications team was instrumental in the creation of Co-op Web Builder's 2.5 and 3.0 templates. Nanci continues to explore ways to increase engagement through posts and outage communication. Additionally, text message notifications and bill reminders were activated to provide members with timely information in 2019.

In addition to more modern communication channels, Ohio Cooperative Living local pages, bill stuffers, and monthly e-newsletter have also been implemented under her leadership and direction.

**\* Positioning of the co-op as a trustworthy source of information on complex and dynamic energy issues. (250 word limit)**

---

Nanci was the key person to develop the "Wait, Watch and Learn" communications approach when Cooperatives were given the option to opt-in to electric retail generation choice in 1999. Nanci developed a video explaining Pioneer's approach that was eventually adopted by the Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives' statewide organization for statewide communications campaign. More recently, in 2016, Nanci led an effort to send over 2,000 letters to Pioneer members who had the right to vote on a ballot measure regarding generation aggregation that affected investor-owned utility customers. This ballot initiative could have been very confusing for Pioneer's members. After the letter was sent no phone calls of concern were fielded by Pioneer's member service representatives.

**Attach a File**

---

mcmaken\_nanci\_nreca\_courses.xlsx