



# YOUNG ADULT MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IDEA STARTERS

The engagement ideas below are meant to serve as inspiration for your co-op. We know you face limitations, like budget, time and resources – but we hope this list will be helpful as you think of new ways to engage young co-op members. Note that, where applicable, NRECA and Touchstone Energy® content boosts have been added to steer you to existing resources that can help implement some of these ideas. Please note Touchstone Energy® resources are only available to Touchstone members.

As appropriate, check with your co-op’s legal counsel to review any ideas you plan to implement.

## Member Activities

- Host a “yappy hour” event. Members bring their dogs and listen to a co-op energy advisor share information about energy efficient pet doors and how to keep your pet (and energy bill!) comfortable during the dog days of summer.
  - Partner with local businesses (especially co-ops!) to start a recreational softball league for members.
  - Host a “screen on the green” outdoor movie night for families. Have employees available before the screening to discuss various co-op programs.
  - Arbor Day/Earth Day events:
    - Plan a tree-planting day (Arbor Day is typically celebrated the last Friday in April).
    - Have employees on hand to talk about energy efficient landscaping ideas.
    - Give trees to members to celebrate Arbor Day or when the co-op must cut down a tree or significantly cut back for vegetation management purposes. Tree seedlings are available from [arborday.org](http://arborday.org).
  - Host a pumpkin-carving event during the fall. Provide LED/battery lights to replace candles.
  - Partner with a local food co-op and/or other businesses to sponsor a community garden.
  - Host a “home design” event. Discuss energy efficient DIY projects that also focus on modern home design.
  - Bring a member to work day/open house. Explain the co-op business model and share information about the variety of jobs at the co-op. This could work for students too!
  - Host an EV test drive event. Let members get a feel for EVs before they buy.
- NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**  
*Download Straight Talk’s “Types of EVs” cheat sheet.* 
- TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*Check out our videos, fact sheets and messaging.* 
- Organize an EV wrap design activity. Allow schools/students to design an EV wrap for the co-op. You could also make this a contest.

- Host Taco and Tech Tuesdays. Invite members to the co-op for tacos and smart-home tech discussions. This could be a monthly event.
- Host events showcasing the different types of co-ops (get other local co-ops involved too!). Perfect for Co-op Month.
- Host workshops for small business owners. Offer energy efficiency advice (for businesses, not residential). This is a good opportunity to promote community solar, TOU rates, etc. Also share information about the importance of backup power systems, especially for the food industry and other businesses where power outages impact products/production.

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*Our library of resources for small and large businesses is helpful.* 

- Host an electrical safety demo/workshop for first-responders and tow truck drivers to educate them on electrical safety during emergency situations. Topics could include:
  - Car or other accident involving downed power lines.
- “Share the Space” (similar concept to We Work). Offer empty office space (like a conference or board room) for members who work remotely or could simply use the space. Could include a co-op tour. (This is a great way to highlight a sense of community.)
- If space/resources permit, offer to co-locate the Chamber of Commerce in a co-op building.
- Host a “Shop Local” event. Invite local artisans, farmers, food vendors, musicians, etc. so members can shop locally in one place. Bonus points if you offer free childcare at the event!

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*The Co-op Connections Program is perfect for this outreach, and November is our #ImConnected social media contest.* 

- Conduct a “solar panel safety tips” demo for members interested in residential solar.

**NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**

*Download Straight Talk’s “Solar Panel Safety Tips” graphic.* 

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Download our solar fact sheets.* 

Note this could be done for local first responders, as well.

**NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**


*Download Straight Talk’s “Solar Panel Safety Tips for First Responders” graphic.* 

- Start a “volunteer response team.” Members can sign up/volunteer to provide water and supplies after major storms and disasters (similar to a phone tree).
- Storm Safety/Prep Workshop: Invite members to learn about safety tips before, during and after the storm (for example, food safety, what to do about your electric meter if your home floods, etc.). This works best in areas prone to major storms, hurricanes, tornados and blizzards.

**NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**

*Check out Straight Talk’s Storm Safety and Outage Restoration resources.* 

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Download our handy checklist for electric safety.* 

- Host an “Electric Lawn Care” demo. Let members try out electric lawn care equipment, like mowers and weed eaters to promote beneficial electrification. Consider letting members rent the equipment. Co-ops could partner with ACE and True Value co-ops.
- Host political candidate forums in the co-op’s community room.
- Provide in-kind donations to provide LED lights to local high schools, hospitals, community center/charities.

### **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Don't forget to invite LED Lucy.* 

- Create a “Beat the Peak Competition.”
  - Members can create (registered) groups to compete against each other to save energy.
  - The winning group’s designated local charity receives a pre-determined, significant contribution from the co-op.

- Each group will promote energy-saving tips to help their group beat the peak.
- Your Co-op has the opportunity to provide information on beating the peak and other energy saving programs.

## Targeted Marketing

- Mail “Happy Anniversary” cards to members on their membership anniversary date.
- Send a handwritten letter to new members letting them know the co-op is all about them.
- Give away co-op branded sunblock, sunglasses, etc. at community solar events.

### **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Don't forget to invite Solar Sam.* 


- Let past Youth Tour participants take over the co-op’s social media channels for the day (with an employee/communicator closely monitoring). This could work for Youth Tour, annual meetings and other events. This would allow members to see the co-op from a young person’s view, who are already invested in the co-op.

- Create personalized e-bill tips or create an e-bill video: Show members how they used energy the previous month and offer tips to save. Or, share a video that explains energy bill details, like [this one](#) from SMECO.
- Create a marketing campaign to increase the number of member email and cell phone addresses.

## Leveraging Technology


- Offer tech training sessions at the co-op. Discuss new energy efficiency technologies.
- Create energy efficiency posts on Instagram and Pinterest. Show DIY examples that are modern and save energy (i.e. “ways to hide extra insulation”).

### **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**


*Visit the online home efficiency analysis with DIY instructions for each suggested improvement.* 


- Hold a social media photo/video contest among your members. Ask members to share ways they are being energy efficient at home.

### **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Participate in the Who Powers You national social media contest in August or #ImConnected social media contest in November.* 

- Create online engagement through a light-hearted weather app contest.
  - On the co-op's social media channel ask members to vote on their preference for a "weather kitty" or "weather puppy" weather app.
  - The contest could be tied to preparing for spring showers, rainy season (raining cats and dogs).
- At the co-op's annual meeting or member gathering, partner with a local technology business to provide members "cracked screen repair" at a discount.
  - If space permits, create an area within the meeting area for this service.
  - The co-op would provide a discount voucher for co-op members.
- Post about community/high school events on the co-op's social media channels.
- Host a "flash sale" event for bill credits – the first pre-determined number of members to respond receives a bill credit.
- Think about messaging at local gas pumps or cinemas.
  - Touchstone Energy has expertise and co-op examples.
- Tie digital and print messaging together with augmented reality.
 

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*Learn more about this innovative communication technology.* 
- Create a promotion around downloading the co-op's payment/outage report/storm tracker/ other app.
  - Participating members are entered into a drawing to win a grand prize \$500 e-gift card.
  - Smaller amount e-gift cards are also awarded.

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*Restaurant gift cards at a substantial discount.* 

## Students/Children

- Have co-op employees (wearing branded co-op attire) work local high school concession stands at football games.
 

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*At least a 10% discount from Lands' End.* 
- Organize a "Cram the Van" canned food drive competition to benefit a local food pantry/homeless shelter.
  - Challenge local high schools to compete in a community canned- food drive.
  - Designate donation points around town, including during high school sporting or community events.
  - Winning HS receives a contribution to their PTA, scholarship fund, etc.
- Sponsor a splash screen for local school's e-learning day with links to co-op youth programs.
- Sponsor a Science Fair. For younger children tie to a campaign about "Super Powers."
 


**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**  
*For inspiration click here, select "Superhero" and watch the video.* 
- Open up a "co-op community" room to let students come and work on e-learning day. Don't forget to buy them pizza!

- In areas that don't have widespread, broadband/wifi coverage, create hours when members of the community can utilize the co-op's community room to access a strong connection.


- Publicize on the co-op's social media channels, on bill-stuffers etc.

- Prepare a basic electricity module for middle school science classes.
- Team up with the local YMCA for their "Youth in Government" program.
- Host a "parents' night out." Parents can drop the kids off at the co-op for a night of free babysitting. Co-op employees can plan activities to keep the kids busy.

**NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**

*Check out Straight Talk's Energy Explorers activity sheets. You can find them in the Image Library, select the "Charts and Graphics" filter.* 


**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Have Solar Sam or LED Lucy mascots visit or download the hot air balloon coloring pages.* 


- Sponsor high school ballgames and raffle items/prizes. The money raised can go straight to the school.
- Start a book drive for local schools (March is National Reading Month).
  - Include co-op branded bookmarks with applicable slogans like "Knowledge is Power."
  - Include a web address for the co-op's info on renewables.

- Partner with local businesses to host an "Our Town" event for high school students. The co-op represents the energy provider, other businesses can represent various services/expenses (like cable/satellite TV, natural gas, childcare, groceries, etc.). Assign students a monthly income and show them the importance of balancing a budget.
- Create and provide a short safety demo to local schools on what to do if a person is involved with or encounters an accident involving downed power lines.

**NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**

*Check out Straight Talk's video on what to do during a vehicle/utility pole collision, found in the Video Library.* 

**TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**


*National video about downed power lines (select "On the Safe Side").* 

- Give away a \$1000 or other significant scholarship money to a high school senior.
  - Parent enters scholar's name into a drawing.
  - Parent and scholar must be present to win.
  - Scholar must be accepted into a college or professional training program to take possession of the scholarship.
  - Work with co-op legal counsel on scholarship details and drawing requirements.

# Renewables/Community or Rooftop Solar

- Host field trips to community solar arrays.
- Conduct a naming contest for your community solar array.
  - This is a great social media engagement opportunity.

## **NRECA CONTENT BOOST:**

*Check out Straight Talk's short video on how community solar programs work. Access the video through the Social Media Animations page. *

- Note – if you only have one high school in your territory, you can also name the co-op's solar array after the high school or high school mascot.
  - Host a naming ceremony/event at the co-op or at or near the location of the solar array.
- Enlist the local high school science classes to create a pollinator habitat in the area around the community solar array. If you have a charitable non-profit that is associated with the co-op, you can offer community service hours to high school students that participate in the planting/tending activities.
- Partner with a local farm, FFA or 4-H participant to have sheep graze in order to take care of vegetation management around the solar array.
  - If applicable, conduct a naming contest to name the sheep that graze around the solar array.

- Partner with the local community college, university or high school science department to create a renewables “learning center” within a community room in one of the co-op's buildings.


- Create info on solar energy (i.e., myth vs fact; top 10 things to know about solar energy [utilize info from Dept. of Energy]).

## **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Download our solar fact sheets. *

- Have a partner organization create/provide content for learning center.
  - Have a partner organize/(co-)host learning activities and workshops for students and community members.
  - Host a tour, info session and refreshments for members touring the community solar field (potential Earth Day activity).
- If the local high school has a drivers' education program—
  - Work with a local dealership to have an EV ride and drive and present to them information about EVs.

## **TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CONTENT BOOST:**

*Check out our videos, fact sheets and messaging. *

- Provide a teen-friendly one-pager on renewables and safety with regard to what to do in the event the teen is an accident involving a downed power line.
  - Alternative – create and provide a short safety demo on what to do if a teen is involved with or encounters an accident involving downed power lines.