



Marty Haight, United Cooperative Services, TX

1. What motivates you to want to be on the Touchstone Energy Board of Directors?

I've watched Touchstone Energy evolve since its first advertising campaign in 1998 into a true brand, recognizable by electric cooperative members as being a positive force within our industry and at the local level. As a director, I'd want to contribute to that continuing evolution and help resource our national staff with the tools and support to sustain the brand's success.

2. How has your experience prepared you to be a Touchstone Energy board member?

With my experience working at Touchstone Energy and, for the last 12 years, at a distribution cooperative level, I can bring a unique and pragmatic perspective to the Touchstone Energy board.

3. What do you think are the biggest opportunities facing Touchstone Energy?

Cooperatives are uniquely positioned to embrace new energy-related technologies and demonstrate our leadership in innovating programs and solutions to make our members lives better. But it goes beyond energy. Look around the country at the great things co-ops are doing for members. We've set ourselves apart from our industry counterparts by cultivating relationships with our member-consumers where they trust us to the point where they seek our expertise and assistance in so many other areas, including broadband, economic development and local programs and activities that have nothing to do with electricity. That's where our brand, at the local and national levels, has been a story of success.

4. What would your best advice be to engage Touchstone Energy member co-ops and build loyalty?

Having worked at the national Touchstone Energy level, one of the most beneficial and enjoyable aspects of the job was interacting with the member cooperatives. That's where the brand really mushrooms into something much more important than a logo, a communications campaign or a member engagement program. The advisory committees and board participation, along with simply visiting with co-op employees around the country are where the best ideas and direction start. As new faces join the co-op ranks, it's essential that they get involved in the brand and bring fresh perspectives to our network.

5. What engagement activities do you foresee for our member-owners?

I think it's clear that we must stay active in the social media arena if we're going to engage our members. As new platforms crop up in this area, we're going to have to evaluate if it makes sense to participate in them. I think the Touchstone Energy national staff has done an exceptional job at leveraging these communications resources and provided member cooperatives with the tools to participate in them successfully. That said, I also believe we can never lose sight of the value of face-to-face interactions with our members. Whether it's community meetings, annual meetings, focus groups or local events, our physical presence has to be a part of our engagement efforts.

6. When asked about Touchstone Energy, what are you most passionate about?

When I think about Touchstone Energy and where it's come from to where it is today, I'm most passionate about the thousands of co-op employees around the country who came together to create a brand that is bigger and more important than its original purpose. While the brand represents everything good about cooperatives – Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and Commitment to Community—it's about the people at every electric cooperative across the country who strive to bring exceptional service and value to their members.