



Tim McCarthy, Sioux Valley, SD

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

The Touchstone Energy brand has played a critical role in establishing and sustaining a unified cooperative identity for the past 20 years. The brand is in a period of transition and cooperatives must stay united in using the brand strategically to leverage that past success and establish a consistent vision for the future of all cooperatives. It's the same kind of challenge each of us face as leaders at our respective cooperatives. I have worked hard with my Board to establish a strategic vision and I want to work for all cooperatives to establish a shared vision for Touchstone Energy that we can all support and be proud of for years to come.

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

I have had a very broad and diverse 30-year career in the utility industry. My experience ranges from many aspects of field operations, customer facing business functions and work processes, legislative and regulatory involvement, strategic advising, and leadership roles. I have spent the last eleven years in senior leadership roles in large cooperatives. The last 6 years I have served as the CEO/GM of Sioux Valley Energy, a 25,000-member cooperative in southeastern South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. Prior to this I spent four years as the CEO/GM of a 22,000-member cooperative in Indiana. Throughout my career I have worked with my directors to establish and deliver on a shared vision aimed at continuous improvement for our cooperatives and delivering exceptional, best-in-class service to our members. I see the opportunity to help navigate the challenges facing Touchstone Energy as a natural extension of my current role and an opportunity to improve the brand for all cooperatives.

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

In our own market research at Sioux Valley Energy, we have seen an increase in the awareness of the brand. Members have indicated they feel a connection and a trust in that recognition. They have come to know the brand over time. As our industry is transforming, now is the time to further enhance the brand to maintain that momentum and trust in what we have created. As cooperatives have grown significantly over the past eight decades, we must continue to show that we are progressive and moving forward with the times in the way we relate to our members, the services we offer them, and how we serve them.

As previously mentioned, I believe Touchstone Energy and NRECA are in a transitional period. The positioning of the brand will be critical to its continued impact on the perception of our cooperatives in the minds of our members nationwide. We must define the role of Touchstone Energy and create a vision that resonates with our cooperatives and members alike. The current discussions regarding the dues structure must also be addressed in a manner that allows our cooperatives and members to see the value Touchstone Energy delivers while

maintaining the high quality of the critical services the brand provides.

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

Embrace transformation! We have an opportunity to break the stereotype some have of cooperatives as small thinking and antiquated. We have an opportunity to really step forward and show our members across the country that we are ready to step up and take on the challenges facing our industry head on by providing unmatched service. We have an opportunity to establish a mission to lead our members into the future and create a vision that displays that leadership.

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

Our current Touchstone board, staff and committee members are working hard to provide tools for every cooperative to use in their efforts to engage and serve our members. You truly get out of the brand what you put in. It is up to each cooperative to evaluate these tools and leverage them in their respective strategic objectives to maximize the services and experiences we offer our members. These tools are available to all and if we do not utilize them to the fullest extent, we leave an opportunity lying on the table.

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

Our national network of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is ultimately in this together. Touchstone Energy stands as a point of unification. We are at a crossroads with the brand. Now is the time to come together and redefine who and what we are. We can do that using Touchstone Energy as our springboard. We have the talent. We have the drive. We have the desire. We have the passion. Now is the time to unite and move forward as one. If we fail in this mission, we do a disservice to ourselves and to our members! However, when we succeed, we will show once again that the cooperative model is strong, effective, and will be a relevant force in the energy industry for generations to come.