

Notes to Co-op Nation

March 14, 2014

TO: NRECA Board of Directors
Distribution CEOs
Statewide Managers
G&T Managers

FROM: Jo Ann Emerson

Co-ops Receive National Honors for Wind Energy

Congratulations to Old Dominion Electric Co-op in Virginia and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative in Illinois for receiving [Wind Co-ops of the Year](#) honors from the Energy Department! Old Dominion added four separate wind power contracts, together totaling 260 megawatts, to its existing resource portfolio. Rural Electric Convenience Co-op transformed the tailings pile of an abandoned mine into a platform for wind energy.

Tell Your Congressional Leaders to Support RUS Loan Program

Your help is needed now to highlight the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan Program as the appropriations process starts. Ask your congressional leaders to sign the RUS letter sponsored by Reps. Conaway (R-TX), Peterson (D-MN), Cramer (R-ND) and Vela (D-TX). The deadline to sign is Friday, March 28 (current signers list attached). The letter supports the \$5 billion RUS loan level in the Administration's budget proposal, which will reduce the deficit by more than \$280 million. The letter also asks the House Appropriations Committee to reject RUS loan restrictions in the budget, which are similar to the previous years' unsuccessful proposals.

'All-of-the-Above' Campaign Update: Keep Grassroots Messages Coming!

You've sent more than [316,000](#) comments on Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) climate change agenda through efforts of your grassroots on [Action.coop](#) and local partner groups on [TellePA.com](#)! EPA needs to hear a loud and clear grassroots voice. You can help by inviting your friends and neighbors to get on [Action.coop](#) and [TellePA.com](#) to tell EPA why we oppose its climate change agenda.

Co-ops Take Grid Security Seriously and Work to Develop Stronger Safeguards

When the *Wall Street Journal* published a story on potential threats to critical infrastructure, I issued a [statement](#) emphasizing that electric cooperatives and NRECA are very serious about physical security of the electricity grid. I highlighted that electric co-ops continue to actively work to protect the grid from potential threats and to improve public and private sector coordination with other utility sector partners and federal agencies.

Recent news stories about grid physical security have increased the attention of federal officials. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has [ordered](#) the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) to draft grid physical security standards within 90 days. That's a very short time to develop such complex standards and NERC needs to hear from co-ops, particularly

G&Ts, in this process. The new standards will require critical infrastructure owners and operators to do system risk assessments, identify facilities necessary for grid reliability, such as substations and control centers. The rule also requires the development and implementation of plans to address those risks. For questions, contact NRECA's [Barry Lawson](#).

RUS Should Provide More Time to Review Proposed Environmental Policies

We're asking the Department of Agriculture to provide a 60-day extension for comments on proposed RUS environmental policies for all agency programs, including the Electric Loan Program. The current deadline is April 7. We need additional time to review the proposed changes to determine the full impact. The proposal affects National Environmental Policy Act requirements for borrowers and the RUS program as well. It addresses third-party contractors hired for Environmental Impact Statement preparation.

OSHA Should Drop Electronic Data Rule and Recognize Crane-Derrick Certifications

We're urging the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to withdraw a proposed rule that would create potential data privacy risks and burdensome costs. The proposal would require regular electronic filing of injury and illness information now kept on OSHA forms 300 and 300A. Currently, companies must keep the data on hard copies and provide them for agency review in the event of an inspection or fatality. Requiring electronic filing would create administrative burdens and employee privacy issues.

On another issue, OSHA is proposing to extend the deadline to meet new crane and derrick operator certification requirements from November 2014 to November 2017. We're asking OSHA not to punish crane and derrick operators and companies that worked to meet the new requirements before the proposed deadline extension. OSHA should grandfather operators and companies to avoid compliance gaps and costs of "double recertification." We also want OSHA to clarify the deadline extension doesn't affect the existing operator certification exemption for digger derricks used for electric distribution and transmission work.

America's PrepareAthon! Webinars will Outline Community Preparedness Events

Learn more about the upcoming "America's PrepareAthon!" in webinars the Agriculture Department is hosting about the campaign to increase individual and community awareness on emergency preparedness. You can register for webinars to be held [March 18](#) (10 a.m. EDT) and [March 20](#) (4 p.m. EDT) to hear how you can participate in activities planned for April 30 and September 30, 2014, to help increase national preparedness for tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, wild fires and other events.

Deadline Approaching for Youth Tour Alumni Scholarship Applications

Your co-ops' Youth Tour alumni still have time to apply for the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation scholarship, but the April 1 deadline is approaching. The foundation will award a \$10,000 scholarship this summer. Spread the word to Youth Tour alumni who've completed their first year of college or received the equivalent credits. They can get details on eligibility and how to apply at www.nreca.coop/GEScholarship. For questions, contact NRECA's [Rebecca Hill](#).

Attached: RUS letter list