



NREDA News Brief | July 2023

[ABOUT](#) | [MEMBERSHIP](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [MEMBERS ONLY](#)

President's Message



The 1990s were my formative years. If they were yours too, then like me you love 90s movies. One of my favorite movies of that era is Billy Madison, where Adam Sandler's character must go back to school. Fans of the movie will recall Billy Madison singing "Back to school, back to school..."

My wife is a teacher and has already started pre-planning for school to start back soon. It has been a great summer vacation for my family. Around Memorial Day, I took my youngest son to St. Louis to see a Cardinals' game and the rest of the summer has been spent hanging out with my family by the pool, grilling, and a trip to the beach. While teachers and students aren't thrilled about summertime coming to an end, there is an air of back-to-school excitement. As a alumnus and fan of the University of Georgia, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity proudly say I'm excited for my back-to-back National Champion Georgia Bulldogs to take the gridiron this fall.

Despite the excitement of everything going along with a new school year, school starting back brings challenges for students, especially those in rural areas. The COVID-19 Pandemic cast a light on the lack of access of high speed internet in rural areas. Rural areas are typically underserved because the lower population density for broadband providers to recoup their investment after extending service.

In many states, electric cooperatives are looked upon to assist with closing the digital divide with our expertise in providing utility service in rural areas. Co-ops are

not the silver bullet to solve the complicated broadband problem, but we can be and have been part of the solution. The Georgia General Assembly has taken several measures to help deploy broadband to unserved Georgians. In 2019, the General Assembly passed enabling legislation which provided statutory clarity allowing EMCs to provide broadband service.

Concurrently, our state's leadership recognized the flawed methodology used by the FCC maps to determine served vs. unserved areas. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) created a map that looks at served areas differently than the FCC maps. FCC maps look at individual census blocks, and if one residence or business in the block has broadband service that area is considered "served". The DCA map is location based, meaning broadband service must be available in 80% of a Census block to be considered served. Georgia's more accurate mapping method has been recognized across the country for its practical application. Unfortunately, the federal government continues to use the FCC map to deploy broadband grant funds. We have spoken to our U.S. Senators about the need to improve upon the FCC mapping. A link to Georgia's mapping can be found by clicking [here](#).

To encourage rural broadband deployment in Georgia, a program was initiated by our state's Public Service Commission called the "One Buck Deal". Broadband providers can attach to EMC poles in unserved areas for \$1 per pole, per year. The rate is available to broadband providers for six years—an unprecedented incentive to promote high-speed internet expansion in areas that need broadband the most. EMCs in Georgia, with the influx of federal grant funding combined with the new statutory clarity to deploy broadband, have now begun to offer internet service to our members. Since 2020, 25 of the 41 EMCs in Georgia are providing internet service to 332,000 homes and businesses in 101 of the state's 159 counties.

At Jackson EMC, we announced a partnership with a provider to utilize our dark fiber to deploy broadband service to 8,000 members to the more rural parts of our service area. These efforts by electric cooperatives in Georgia, and around the nation, are helping improve economic development opportunities and the overall quality of life in rural Georgia.

What is your state doing to deploy broadband in your rural communities? I would love to hear all about it at the annual conference in Myrtle Beach, SC November 8-10. If you join us in Myrtle Beach, you will have an opportunity to hear firsthand the success story of Upcountry Fiber, a joint endeavor by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and West Carolina Telephone Cooperative to bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas in South Carolina. To learn more and register for our annual conference visit nreda.org/annual-conference

David Cleveland, 2023 NREDA President

Welcome New



Members!



2023 Professional Development Scholarship Program

The National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) is now accepting self-nominations for the 2023 Professional Development Scholarship Program.

The scholarship program recognizes the importance of training and education, as well as networking, in the field of Economic Development. The program is open to NREDA members and non-members with a focus on those new to the economic development profession.

Two scholarships will be awarded in 2023 and include a complimentary registration to the NREDA Annual Conference to be held November 8-10, 2023 in Myrtle Beach, SC. Additionally, if non-members are selected, a 2023 NREDA membership (for the remainder of the year) will also be included. Priority in selection will be given to those who have not attended a past NREDA Annual Conference.

You may visit <https://www.nreda.org/scholarship> for more information and to complete your application for the NREDA 2023 Professional Development Scholarship no later than August 17th.

The NREDA leadership will review all scholarship applications and will contact the two selected recipients by August 31st. Scholarship recipients that are selected will be notified with full details, including conference and/or membership application information.

Recipients are eligible to receive a scholarship once. Applicants who are not selected are eligible to apply again for future programs.

2023 Awards Recognition Program

Submit your nomination today for the [2023 NREDA Awards Recognition Program](#)! In recognition of outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development, the National Rural Economic Developers Association honors deserving individuals across America. 2023 awards recognition will be presented in conjunction with the NREDA Annual Conference November 8-10 in Myrtle Beach!

[NREDA Rural Economic Development Leadership Award](#)

Do you know someone who should be recognized for his or her outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development? If so, the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) seeks to honor deserving individuals for that purpose with their Rural Economic Development Leadership Awards program.

In recognition of outstanding leadership in the field of rural economic development, the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) seeks to honor deserving individuals across America. Nominees may be economic development professionals or rural electric cooperative/rural telephone staff or board members. Nominees are those who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in an economic development project resulting in the improvement of the quality of life, creation of new jobs, and opportunity for growth and development in rural America.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Attraction, retention, or expansion of business
- Development of unique partnerships to enhance the economic vitality of an area such as the establishment of new economic development organization; development of business incubator or entrepreneur program; participation in revolving loan fund or development of an industrial park or speculative building; new housing initiative (new construction or renovation); development of a marketing program; tourism development; and legislative initiatives.

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit your nomination by August 17th

[NREDA Organization Excellence Award](#)

The Organization Excellence Award is designed to recognize utility/economic development organizations or associations/government entities that have implemented a successful rural economic development program for their area. Focus will be on the success of communicating the program, improvements to the business climate, and measurable results and outcomes.

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit your nomination by August 17th

2023 Annual Conference

2023 Annual Conference
“Navigating the Changing Tides”
November 8-10, 2023
Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center
Myrtle Beach, SC



On behalf of the National Rural Economic Developers Association, we cordially invite you to join us at the 2023 NREDA Annual Conference. Our theme for this year’s conference is, **“Navigating the Changing Tides.”**

The annual conference committee has worked diligently to create an agenda offering opportunities for you to hear about and discuss successes and lessons learned on a variety of topics including workforce, housing, broadband, site selection, placemaking, entrepreneurship and more. We are also excited that we will once again be offering the mobile classrooms for a chance to see some unique projects and businesses in person.

There will be extra networking opportunities this year with a golf outing on Tuesday afternoon. Myrtle Beach is a beautiful location with a variety of fun activities to enjoy if you plan to come early or stay late, look for the options on the new conference app that will be available.

[Click Here](#) for more information and to Register Today!

We look forward to seeing you in Myrtle Beach in November!

Brittany Dickey, VP Business Development,
Corn Belt Power Cooperative
2023 NREDA Annual Conference Chair

NREDA is looking for leaders interested in taking their NREDA involvement to the next level to help the association carry out its mission, goals, and purpose. The NREDA Board of Directors is responsible for the supervision and direction of the affairs of the association. Volunteers are the foundation for NREDA's growth, and its success can be directly attributed to the many members, past and present, who have generously shared their knowledge and expertise.



The Nominating Committee is looking for individuals interested in becoming an NREDA Director.

- Each Director is elected to serve a three-year term.
- Board meetings are typically held six times per year: five virtual meetings, and one meeting held in-person at the Annual Conference location each year.
- Qualifications include:
 - Being a member of good standing with NREDA
 - Believing in NREDA's mission/purpose
 - Having direct NREDA experience by working on one of NREDA's committees
 - Having the time, support and financial resources (for travel 1-2 times per year) to participate in board activities
 - An interest in serving rural America's economic development efforts

Factors such as the balance of geographic location, type of employer, engagement, and interests and strengths of the candidate will be considered. Preference would be given to those nominees who have been a member for at least one year and have been to at least one conference.

The deadline to submit your online self-nomination is Friday, August 11, 2023 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XP9XLQH>.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Dan Boysel, NREDA Nominating Committee Chairperson, at dboysel@consolidated.coop or 740-815-2453.

2023 New Member Challenge

Do you like a challenge? Do you like earning some bragging rights? Do you know of someone who



would benefit from the connecting and networking, personal and professional development (webinars, and annual conference) of NREDA? Well, we have a challenge for you! At the 2023 Annual Conference, the **state** with the most **new** members will be recognized! How will that look? Well, you'll have to come to Myrtle Beach to find out. You and your state peers could earn some bragging rights! A monthly update with numbers by state on this challenge can be found [Here](#)!

First, do you know who in your state is a member of NREDA? You can look up current members [here](#) (note that you must be logged in as a member first), and while you're at it, please take a few minutes to update your online profile. There are a lot of profiles with no photos, which is a little boring to look at. Let's show everyone who we are! I have heard several times that NREDA is the best-kept secret. It shouldn't be. Let's share our NREDA experience with our friends and peers across our states and regions!

Once you know who is a member, take a few minutes and think about who you know in your state/region, who should be at the table on rural issues. Then reach out to them with a personal invitation to join NREDA. If you can, speak at regional or state events (or even national), about "Why NREDA". Share your story about connections you've made both as friends and as professionals, that you would not have met if not for NREDA. Share something you brought back from the conference or something you learned at a webinar. Talk about the laughs you have shared or the ah-ha moments.

Click [Here](#) to look at the member benefits. At the bottom of the page is a one-page flier you can print off or attach to an email or social post. Share this [link](#) with them and encourage them to join today by clicking the link at the bottom of this webpage! Feel free to also share any of the videos posted on the NREDA [LinkedIn](#) page. There will be several more released this year on the social media platforms, as well.

I am personally aiming for Nebraska to come out on top of this challenge, and new members will count toward your state's challenge total through October 31st!

Lisa Hurley
NREDA Membership Chairperson

[Click Here](#) for more Information

Co-op Forum: Local Housing Initiative

Check out this very insightful recent local housing initiatives forum featuring several

NREDA leaders!

[READ MORE](#)

Job Postings

NREDA provides current members space to post a position on the NREDA website, plus inclusion in the NREDA News Brief, at **no charge**.

[Click Here](#) for more Information

News Brief Guidelines

NREDA would love to share your unique stories, industry trends, best practices, white papers, and - of course - your successes in our bi-monthly e-newsletter!

Guidelines:

- E-newsletter distribution dates are the end of the month – 2023 remaining months are September, and November.
 - Please email your article to Tracey Hogan at tracey@assnoffices.com by the 15th of each e-newsletter month. Please include the subject line **NREDA Newsletter Article Submission**
 - Please submit your article in a an editable format (Microsoft Word or text in the body of an email preferred).
 - Feel free to include a photo with your article.
 - Please send information, educational, and/or newsworthy items.
 - Please no ads or sales/marketing articles.
 - Articles submitted by current NREDA members receive priority.
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