



NREDA News Brief | May 2023

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President's Message



Every two years NREDA board members and past presidents visit Washington D.C. This gives us the opportunity to visit with our allied partners, federal agencies, trade associations, and leaders on Capitol Hill. Washington D.C. is a remarkable city that has it all – monuments and museums, politics, sports, celebrities, culture, architecture, and entertainment. It is steeped in history, and I am always fascinated with the energy of this city when I travel to D.C. We experienced great weather on our visit in mid-May.

We began our visit with the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) and learned about the great work they're doing across a 13-state region. They partner with local, regional, and state agencies to transform Appalachian communities, create jobs, and strengthen the regional economy. We met with the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) and learned about their policy priorities and its' impact on rural America.

Senior leadership at NTCA, the Rural Broadband Association, was kind enough to take time out of their busy schedules to meet with us. We discussed the critical need to expand broadband across rural America and how we can collaborate in the future. In June they are hosting a unique event titled [Smart Rural Community Live](#). Smart Rural Community is a policy-agnostic program that promotes collaborative efforts among rural



broadband providers and leaders from other sectors including ag, economic development, education, healthcare, and others who together build vibrant and resilient rural spaces.



We met with [NRECA](#) and [Touchstone Energy](#) where we discussed grid resiliency and the desire to educate our elected officials that America must rely on a diverse energy mix. We learned about the great work that Touchstone Energy is doing across the country and how their programs benefit rural electric

cooperatives. Also, I would be remiss if I did not recognize Touchstone Energy for partnering with us on our quarterly NREDA webinars. Speaking of which, we had over 240 participants for our March webinar featuring Lacy Beasley with Retail Strategies. Our next webinar is scheduled for June 6 and will feature Chet Garner of The Daytripper. Chet will share some inspiring stories he's discovered traveling small-town Texas. This webinar will encourage you to think about the stories that make our organizations and hometowns unique.

We visited with leadership at [NRTC](#) to discuss how a robust communications network is needed to meet the new demands of power and connectivity. While meeting with [CFC](#) we learned about their mission to support lending for the rural electric cooperatives across the country and what they do beyond the balance sheet to support their members be successful. We visited with [NADO](#) and discussed common priority issues. NADO is a leading voice in D.C. advocating for federal programs and policies that promote regional community development and economic competitiveness.



We were fortunate to have the opportunity visit Capitol Hill and meet with Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa. Senator Ernst is a ranking member of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship committee as well as a member of Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry committee.

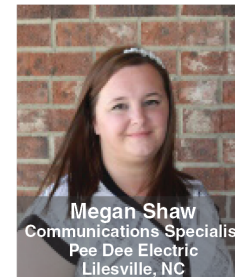
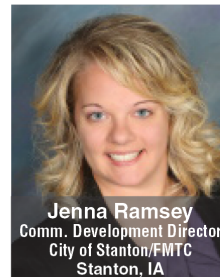
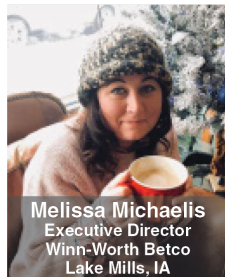
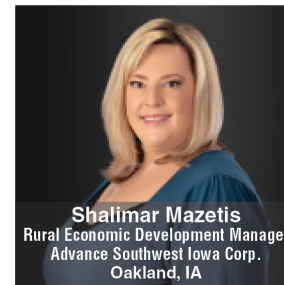
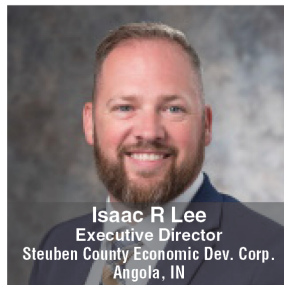
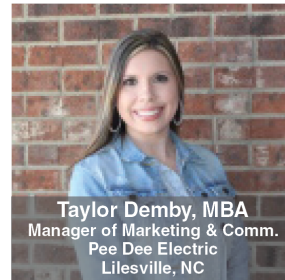
We also met with staff members from Senator Stabenow's office and Senator Boozman's office. Senator Stabenow is the Chairwoman of the Ag committee and Senator Boozman is a ranking member of this committee. This gave

NREDA board members a great opportunity to emphasize that The Farm Bill is a crucial tool for America's rural communities.

Finally, we closed our time in D.C. by meeting with the Under Secretary for Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small. The time with the Undersecretary was well spent discussing the ReConnect Loan and Grant Program as well as the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. It was a jam packed three days full of travel, wall-to-wall meetings, and plenty of Lyft rides in between. However, I believe it was well worth the time and investment as we were able to engage with national leaders on issues that are relevant to the growth and vibrancy of rural America.

David Cleveland, 2023 NREDA President

Member Spotlight





We hope you are planning to join us in November at the Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center! The conference planning committee has been hard at work to put together a can't-miss event with plenty of education and networking opportunities!

Conference registration will open in July, but check out some of the many things to look forward to at the NREDA 2023 Annual Conference!

This year's conference is November 8-10, but we have added a fun networking opportunity the afternoon of November 7th! The **"NREDA Masters" Golf Tournament** will be held at Legends Heathland, a short 15 minute driver/uber ride from the Sheraton! Space will be limited, so plan to register early (no later than October 1st) if you would like to compete! Lunch is provided, club rental is available (limited number), and there will be lots prizes (aka bragging rights) to earn!

Wednesday, November 8th will begin with a morning **pre-conference session**, CliftonStrengths Discovery Day! Uncover the *true* you to become the *best* you! Georgia EMC's team of Gallup Certified CliftonStrengths Coaches will lead participants through their customized talent assessment reports to gain a better understanding of each individual's natural patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Space is limited for this pre-conference session, so plan to register early!

If you are a **new member or conference first-time attendee**, be sure to register to attend the November 8th new member/first-timer luncheon to learn more about NREDA and meet the leadership!

This year's Wednesday opening conference keynote presenter is Jeff Black, Founder and CEO with Black Sheep, a renowned leadership development company. Jeff will present "Inspirational and Influential Communications". Participants will enjoy an engaging

format that includes an influential communications quiz to explore specific techniques for communicating with greater impact – whether online or live – learning how to structure a strong presentation or meeting.

Additionally, the difference between information and messaging will be discussed. Participants will also learn the value of Powerful Opening Words (POW) – what to say at the beginning of a meeting to authentically capture an audience’s attention. And, Jeff will target the Power of Storytelling, as he shares a motivational story of someone who definitely “Navigated the Changing Tides”.



[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

Upcoming Webinars

["Tell Your Local Story"](#) Webinar featuring the Daytripper

Rural economic developers know that every destination has a story to tell. It's something Chet Garner learned while making thirteen seasons of his Emmy-award-winning travel show "The Daytripper." Chet will share some of the hilarious, inspiring, and just-plain-weird stories he's discovered traveling small-town Texas. He'll inspire everyone to think about their own personal story and the stories that make their organizations and hometowns unique.

This free webinar is brought to you by [Touchstone Energy Cooperatives](#) and [NREDA](#).

When: Tuesday, June 6 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time/1 p.m. Central Time

Who: Chet Garner, The Daytripper, Georgetown, TX
Scott Bialick, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, Arlington, VA

[Get Registered for Free!](#)

NREDA Members may access webinar **recordings by logging into your member account on the website and visiting <https://nreda.memberclicks.net/webinar-recordings>**. (Be sure to login first and make sure your membership is current, as this page can only be viewed and accessed by current members.)

Bringing Light to Guatemala: The Impact of Electrification in Dos Cruces



Driving down bumpy dirt roads surrounded by rugged hillsides and fields teeming with fauna and wildlife, it's impossible to miss the Jumay stratovolcano rising 700 meters above the earth. Being so near a volcano in this remote terrain feels surreal and a far cry from the bright blue and yellow Spanish architecture often associated with Guatemala. Yet this was the setting of Golden Shovel Agency's trip to film **Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative** (OTEC)'s work to electrify the village of Dos Cruces on the outskirts of Jalapa. Bumping along in trucks filled with wires, drop hardware, anchors, tools, books, toys, and soccer balls, GSA's Aaron Brossoit and Greg Kolbjornsen were there to film the electrification of a village and to witness their moment of transformation.

[READ MORE](#)



Have you ever wondered what exists beyond the cornfields of rural Iowa? What the attraction is for small-town living? Or why some rural communities thrive? It's often the farmers and entrepreneurs who are committed to pursuing and living the American dream. The seeds have been planted and businesses are taking root! Find out what's next for rural Iowa during the Evolution of the Heartland! Join us on August 3-4, 2023 in [Manning & Audubon](#) to experience more of what rural Iowa has to offer.

WHAT TO EXPECT!

Event Itinerary – This 1-2 day event will kick-off in Manning on August 3rd. The event features 12 immersive tour options, a family-style, farm-to-table luncheon at the Audubon County Fairgrounds, and a community tailgate and Iowa vendor showcase featuring ag and retail vendors along with live entertainment during the evening. Stay overnight in one of our three lodging options and join in for the day two morning tour where we will explore all things homegrown! [Discover the details of the event here.](#)

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:

- You must be a current NREDA member to submit an article.
- E-newsletter distribution dates are the end of the month – 2023 remaining months are July, 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 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.

- NREDA reserves the right to exclude submitted articles as deemed necessary by the leadership.



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