



Kentucky's  
Touchstone Energy  
Cooperatives®

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## Press Release

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# Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Co-ops receive Excellence in Economic Development Award

Washington, DC – Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives won a Gold Rank for its Co-opAPaLooza, a project in the category of Special Event of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). The honor was presented at an awards ceremony during the IEDC Annual Conference.

“Co-opAPaLooza was a first-of-its-kind event that brought together 250 key players from Kentucky's rural economic development community for an experience that was informative and energizing, leaving the participants better prepared to seize opportunities in their communities and transform local economies,” said Rodney Hitch, Director of Economic Development for Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

The event featured nationally recognized speakers such as renowned site selector Didi Caldwell, rural economic development expert Lorie Vincent, and the cast from HGTV's Home Town. With a jamming soundtrack and high-energy entertainment, the six-hour program presented in Frankfort, Ky., in February 2020, built excitement for rural economic development.

“Since Co-opAPaLooza, not a week goes by that Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives does not hear from participants asking when the next event will take place,” said Brad Thomas, Manager of Economic Development for the cooperatives.

Fueled by the excitement of Co-opAPaLooza, 2020 was a strong year for economic development in the communities served by Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. Those communities had 32 projects announced, representing \$732 million in investment and creating 3,200 jobs.

IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. 25 award categories honor organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Awards are judged by a diverse panel of economic and community developers, following a nomination process held earlier this year. IEDC received over 500 submissions from 4 countries.

“The winners of IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development awards represent the best of economic development and exemplify the leadership that our profession strives for every day,” said 2021 IEDC Board Chair and Invest Buffalo Niagara, President, and CEO Tom Kucharski. “We're honored to recognize the more

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than 100 communities whose marketing submissions, projects, and partnerships have improved regional quality of life.”

“We're incredibly honored to recognize the outstanding organizations that received this year's Excellence Awards. This year, more than ever, has presented opportunities to innovate, impact, and progress the cities, neighborhoods, and communities around us. Each of this year's recipients represents the best of the economic development profession and exemplifies the ingenuity for fellow economic developers to aspire to in the years to come.”

### **About Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives**

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives include 17 not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperatives that serve more than 1 million Kentucky residents across 87 Kentucky counties.

They include:

- Big Sandy RECC, Paintsville, Ky.
- Blue Grass Energy, Nicholasville, Ky.
- Clark Energy Cooperative, Winchester, Ky.
- Cumberland Valley Electric, Gray, Ky.
- Farmers RECC, Glasgow, Ky.
- Fleming-Mason Energy, Flemingsburg, Ky.
- Grayson RECC, Grayson, Ky.
- Inter-County Energy Cooperative, Danville, Ky.
- Jackson Energy Cooperative, McKee, Ky.
- Licking Valley RECC, West Liberty, Ky.
- Nolin RECC, Elizabethtown, Ky.
- Owen Electric Cooperative, Owenton, Ky.
- Salt River Electric, Bardstown, Ky.
- Shelby Energy Cooperative, Shelbyville, Ky.
- South Kentucky RECC, Somerset Ky.
- Taylor County RECC, Campbellsville, Ky.
- East Kentucky Power Cooperative

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### **About the International Economic Development Council**

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 5,000 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities by creating, retaining, and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, IEDC's members engage in the full range of economic development experiences. Given the breadth of economic development work, our members are employed in various settings, including local, state, provincial, and federal governments, public-private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities, and a variety of other institutions. When we succeed, our members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities, and improve the quality of life in their regions. Learn more at [iedconline.org](http://iedconline.org)