



Kentucky's
Touchstone Energy
Cooperatives®

Press Release

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National Rural Economic Development Group Lauds Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Co-ops

The economic development team for Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives has received the 2018 Organization Excellence Award from the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA).

"Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are an innovative organization which uses that innovation to market their cooperatives in the economic development realm," said Dennis Mingyar, NREDA Awards Chair. "They took cutting-edge technology, combined it with a new marketing concept, and formed one unique brand with which to market their cooperatives. This effort has helped secure almost 10,000 new jobs in their cooperatives service territory."

The award recognizes Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives for using technology such as data from aerial drone flights, online videos and mobile mapping apps to market rural Kentucky communities globally, attracting jobs and investment to the Bluegrass State. Those initiatives are highlighted on the co-ops' economic development site, www.DataIsPower.org.

"This award is especially gratifying because the leaders and members of NREDA understand the unique challenges faced by rural communities in attracting jobs and investment," said Rodney Hitch, Economic Development Director for Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. "They recognize economic development strategies that are truly effective for rural areas like those served by our 16 owner-member cooperatives."

Terry Gill, secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, applauded the cooperatives' work and ongoing service to the state.

"Whether it's a prospect investment by an internationally based tech company or an expansion by a longtime local manufacturer, the team at Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives recognizes economic development projects take trust, partnership and a long-term commitment," Sec. Gill said. "Our congratulations to Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and their economic development group on this national recognition. We're grateful to have them as partners in growing the commonwealth's economy."

The NREDA Organization Excellence Award recognizes utility/economic development organizations or associations/government entities that have implemented a successful rural economic development programs for their areas by successfully communicating the program, improving the business climate, and producing

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measurable results and outcomes. The award was presented at NREDA's annual conference, which took place in November in Saint Petersburg, Fla.

NREDA is an organization of economic development professionals focused upon the issues and opportunities of rural America. It is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of its membership through ongoing education and networking programs, while serving as an information source and conduit for developers, site selectors and prospective businesses to NREDA members and the areas they serve.

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