



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

RURAL Highlights

Survey results show member satisfaction and priorities

Illinois' electric cooperatives conducted a survey in early 2016 to determine overall member satisfaction, perception about our performance, members' thoughts about energy efficiency, technology use, communications, and member demographics. RECC members were included in the mail survey and results from our own membership were tabulated along with statewide results.

One indicator we use to compare consumer satisfaction to other utilities and other industries across the nation is the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). RECC's ACSI score rose to an 85, compared to a score of 82 in the last member survey conducted in 2013 and 77 in 2011.

The average national rating for investor-owned utilities was 74, while the average for municipal utilities was 73. The average for Illinois electric co-ops was 85, also an increase from three years ago.

While our overall satisfaction rating among our members was 90 percent "somewhat" to "very" satisfied, the survey broke down the things that lead to a satisfied consumer. Top satisfaction drivers are prompt outage response, knowledgeable, competent employees, reliable electric service and employee performance. RECC had higher ratings in all of the 13 top attributes for satisfaction, compared to our 2013 results.

Even though satisfaction with rates is lower than other

attributes, we had a considerable increase in this area to 70% (was 53% in 2013) and for working to control costs at 78%

RECC had higher ratings in all of the 13 top attributes for satisfaction, compared to our 2013 results.

(was 63% in 2013). And, 82% feel they receive good value for their electric payments.

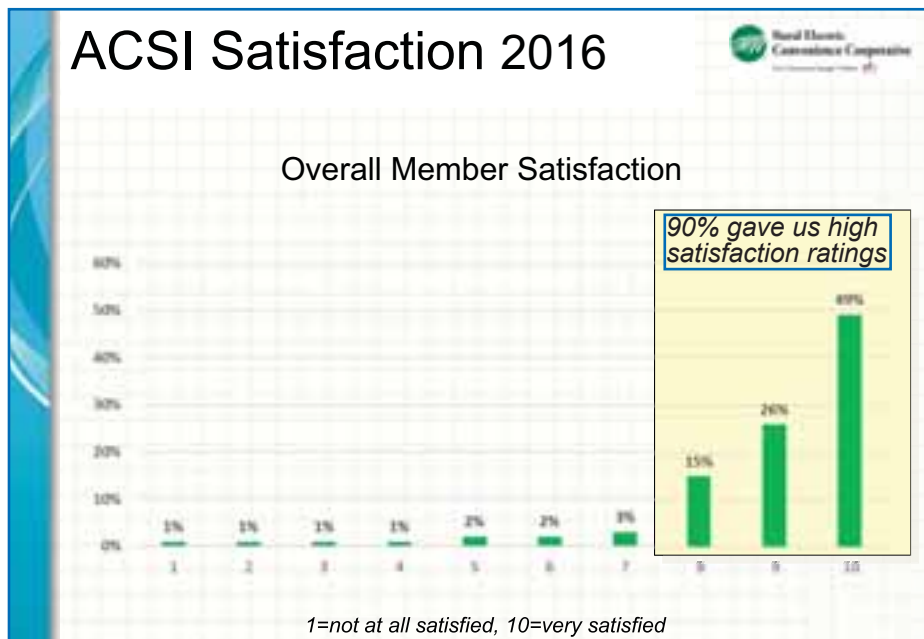
The median age of survey respondents was 56, but the satisfaction levels remained high across all age groups.

One of the significant areas of improvement was satisfaction with after-hours contact, going

up from 78 percent to 88 percent with high ratings. Our new digital phone system with more incoming lines and automated outage reporting has probably contributed to that improvement. Almost half of respondents recalled getting a follow-up call or message to explain a recent outage.

About half of the members said they preferred to get their information from the co-op by newsletter/

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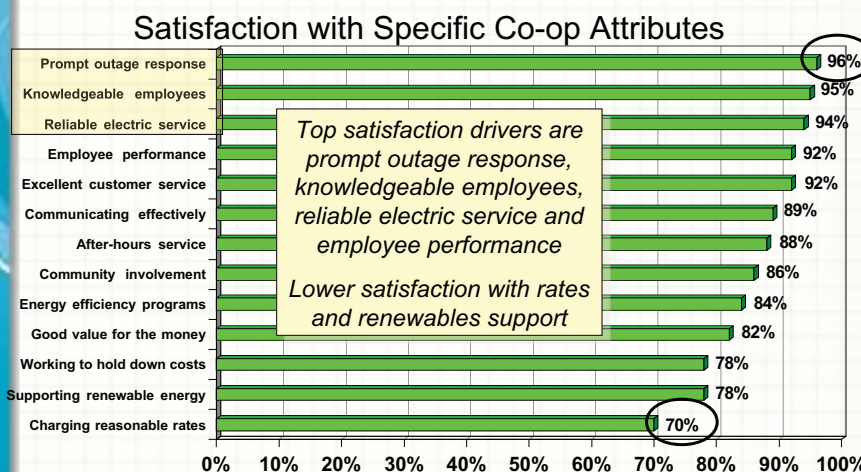
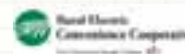
Survey results

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magazine or by mail, but 20 percent preferred emails and 10 percent chose text messages. We will continue to add electronic messages to our communications options, including Facebook and other social media. This is often the first choice for our younger and newer members.

Thank you to the members who took the time to complete the 2016 survey! It provides us with valuable information on how we're performing and where we can improve to provide even better service to our member-owners. RECC's Board, management and employees take great pride in the putting the needs of our members first in all we do.

Attitudes & Perceptions 2016



Share the road with farm vehicles and school buses

September is here. Farmers will soon be starting their harvest, and kids are on their way to school each weekday. That means motorists will be encountering farm equipment and school buses on rural roads, increasing the potential for accidents.



Road safety is especially important as tractors, combines, large trucks, buses and cars share the road in the fall.

Vehicle collisions are often the result of the speed differential between slower-moving vehicles and passenger cars and trucks. Many times passenger vehicle drivers simply don't have enough time to

react if they do not recognize the slowed or stopped vehicles ahead.

Keep in mind the following safety tips for motorists as you share the road with farm equipment:

- Farm machinery has a legal right to use public roads just as other motor vehicles.
- Farm machinery can unexpectedly turn onto a public road from a field or driveway. Farm machinery travels slower than normal traffic, often at speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. Automobile drivers must quickly identify farm equipment and slow down immediately to avoid rear-end crashes.
- Farm machinery operators may not be able to see you because the large equipment or a load can block part of their rear view. If you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you.
- Extra-wide farm machinery may take up more than one lane to avoid hitting obstacles such as mailboxes and road signs.



School buses have the extra danger of kids getting on or off the bus, and they often cross the road to their homes. If you see a school bus in your lane or coming towards you, pay close attention to what it's doing. Give the bus extra space and be prepared to stop suddenly as it loads or unloads its cargo (kids).

Here are some rules to follow:

- School buses are required to stop at railroad crossings, so be ready to hit the brakes if you're behind one.
- Pay attention to any stop signs or signals on the bus.
- If a bus has its red lights flashing, you must stop from either direction unless you are on a divided highway.

RECC offering \$500 school grants

Four Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment grants available

Hands-on learning projects. Science demonstrations. Anti-bullying discussions.

Those are vital school activities that RECC helped support in the past year through the Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants Program. The \$500 mini-grants enabled area teachers in three school districts to carry out education enhancement projects that were not included in the schools' budgets.

\$500 grants will help teachers bring activities to their classrooms beyond their normal budget

RECC is offering four Classroom Empowerment Grants again this year, to help fund innovative projects by local teachers. Public and private schools in the general service area of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative can receive a grant of up to \$500 for grades K-8. Up to two grants may be given for different grade levels within the same school district.

Application forms are available on our website at www.recc.coop, and are due by November 4. Winners will be announced on December 1, and the project must be completed by May 20, 2017. While electricity and energy are not required to be the central topics of any project, entries that do include

energy education will be weighted more favorably.

All applications should include the following details:

- A description of the project and what it will accomplish
- The estimated cost of the project
- An explanation of why outside funds are necessary to carry out the project
- When the project would be completed
- The number of people affected by the project
- If the project's goals are measurable, and how
- How the project ties in with Touchstone Energy's four core values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

For more information, please contact Dana Smith, Manager of Member and Public Relations, at dana.smith@recc.coop, or 217-438-6516.



Sixth-grade students at Morrisonville Grade School learned about fossils through "Digging For Dinosaurs," one of the hands-on projects carried out by teacher Sarah Jennings with funding from RECC's Classroom Empowerment Grants last year. Other grants were used to bring a St. Louis Science Center demonstration to Raymond Grade School, and to purchase story-telling books at Glenwood Intermediate School in Chatham that were used to develop anti-bullying discussions in several classrooms.

2015 capital credit allocation notification

On your July electric bill, which was mailed on August 4, there was a message on the left hand side indicating the amount of capital credit equity allocated to you for electricity purchased in 2015. This message only appears on your master account and only if you were a customer in 2015.

As a member-owner of your cooperative, you share in any annual

margins. Your share of these margins is called "capital credits." At the end of each year, these net margins are allocated to each member on a basis of the dollar amount of energy used during that year. We are providing you with the amount of the allocation for the year, shown on your electric billing statement.

These allocations are not available

as cash, nor can they be applied as payments on your electric bill. These monies are used by your cooperative for long-term debt retirement, reserves, emergencies, system improvements and other contingencies. Capital credit equity may be paid to members as the board of directors deems appropriate and as the financial condition of the cooperative permits.



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See our web page for monthly Board meeting reports.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Is your home ready for this??

It's hard to imagine swirling snow and bone-chilling temperatures right now, but winter will surely come in just a few months. You can prepare now by checking the insulation level in your attic, looking for air leaks around doors and windows, and making sure your heating system is ready to work when needed.



Special fall pricing for home blower door test - just \$25!

RECC can help you check your home's readiness with a free energy assessment. We will walk through your home to look for any big problems, and point out some smaller ideas to help save you energy and money this winter.

As a special fall incentive, we'll also perform a blower door test on your home in September or October for

just \$25. A blower door measures the amount of air leakage you have through windows, doors, walls and ceilings, to give you an idea of how "tight" your home is now. It also helps you find any serious leakage areas so you can make improvements.

A drafty home will not only cost you more to heat, it's also less comfortable and may give you the urge to turn your thermostat even higher to feel warmer!

Call us today to schedule an energy assessment, at 438-6197. We want you to enjoy your home, whatever the weather!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.

Source: energy.gov