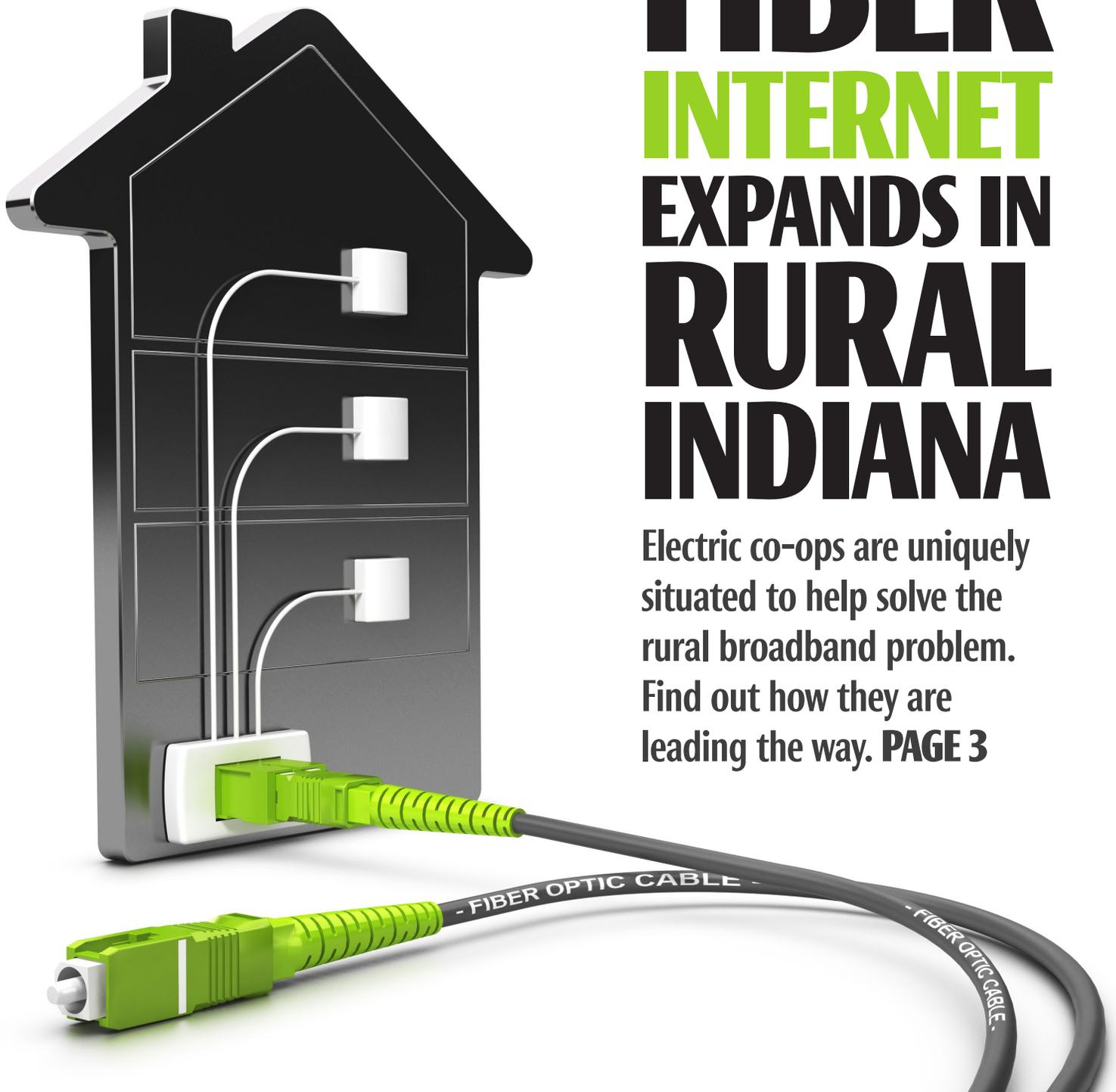


# ENERGYLINES



## FIBER INTERNET EXPANDS IN RURAL INDIANA

Electric co-ops are uniquely situated to help solve the rural broadband problem. Find out how they are leading the way. **PAGE 3**

## New Hoosier Energy director

**Rick Wendholt** has been representing District 7 on the Dubois REC board for 26 years. He has served as board president for 21 years and vice president for three years. Wendholt replaces Jerry Jackle on the Hoosier Energy Board.

Wendholt retired from Verizon after 41 years of service. His wife of 42 years, Sue, has worked for 46 years at Best Home Furnishings, where she is currently director of administration.

Wendholt and his wife live in Duckville, on the outskirts of Ferdinand. They have two daughters. Shay is an occupational therapist. She and her husband Adam live in Indianapolis with their daughter Charlotte. Shay is expecting another daughter in August. Kaylin, Wendholt's youngest daughter, is in her third year at Indiana University School of Optometry, where she is studying to be a doctor of optometry.

When not spending time with the Board, Wendholt likes to be outside on his farm or hunting and fishing. He is enjoying his family life and retirement.

"I am looking forward to being on the Hoosier Energy Board and the challenges that come with it," said Wendholt.



Wendholt

## ACES CONFERENCE



### Indiana cooperative employees in attendance

ACES works to help its members buy, sell and manage energy more efficiently and with less risk. The National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) is the nonprofit finance cooperative created and owned by America's electric cooperative's. A recent conference in Indianapolis hosted by ACES and CFC had a record attendance of 1,800.

Topics of the conference included an economic outlook for the energy industry, broadband fiber and geopolitical factors.

In the photo above, employees of Indiana cooperatives take a break between sessions. From left is, Roy Friedersdorf of Decatur County REMC, Jennifer Rufatto of IEC and Don Sloan of Henry County REMC and a Hoosier Energy board member.

## G&T COMMUNICATORS CONFERENCE



### Communicator conference at Hoosier Energy Headquarters

Twenty-five communicators from across the nation traveled to Bloomington to attend the G&T Communicators' Summer Conference hosted by Hoosier Energy. Guests heard from eight speakers on topics including renewable energy and the Lexicon Project.

Above, attendees partake in an interactive session lead by Indiana University Women's Basketball Assistant Coach Janese Constantine.

## INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION



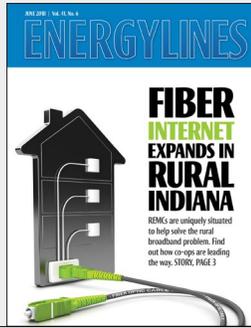
### Regulatory commission staff visit Hoosier Energy facilities

The Chairman and employees of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) visited Hoosier Energy Headquarters and the Operations Center.

The IURC Chairman Jim Huston, left, was part of the tour conducted by Hoosier Energy staff members.

## ON THE COVER

Electric co-ops are uniquely situated to help solve the rural broadband problem. Find out how they are leading the way.



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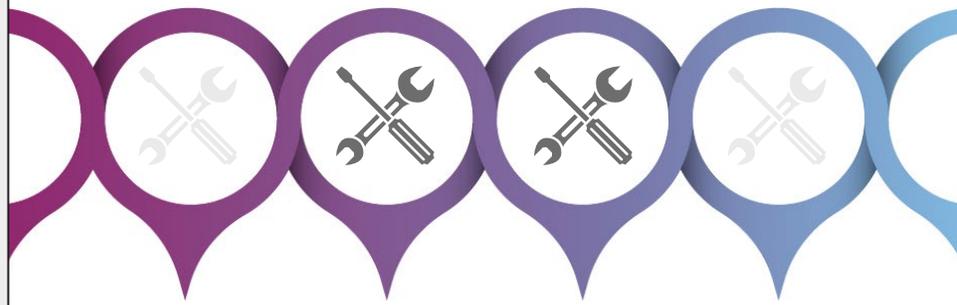
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# Crisis communications

## TOOLKIT BUILDS FOUNDATION FOR NAVIGATING A CRISIS

Power outages, employee injuries, rate increases – three topics that might lead to crisis for electric cooperatives. Once a crisis is underway, the speed and approach to the response is vital. As each crisis varies, these dynamics often benefit from a co-op telling their side effectively. But where to begin?

There is help navigating these waters. The Hoosier Energy Communications Toolbox has a “crisis toolkit” to use as a foundation to build a successful plan.

The toolkit includes information such as talking points for various industry topics. This can help prepare messages that are timely and accurate based on established communication protocols and processes. This is especially valuable during crisis situations that benefit from

highlighting co-op attributes such as cooperative principles and community concern.

Communications Coordinator Heather Hughet is Hoosier Energy's media relation's professional. Hughet encourages members to review the crisis toolkit.

“This customizable toolkit helps members build a solid foundation for crisis response – very valuable when time is of the essence,” said Hughet.

Included in the crisis communications toolkit are key messages including topics ranging from natural disasters and outages to rates and cost of services.

With the hope a co-op never has to use these materials, the Hoosier Energy Communications team is here to support you when needed. [EL](#)

## Five principles for crisis communications

1. **BE TIMELY** – Get out in front of what's happening – fast.
2. **SHOW COMPASSION** – Keep the tone of all communications empathetic and compassionate. Always put people first.
3. **BE ACCURATE** – Be direct, truthful and brief.
4. **COMMUNICATE FREQUENTLY** – Keep pace with the incident. Be visible, transparent and accessible.
5. **CORRECT MISTAKES** – Tell the truth and use the truth to correct mistakes or dispel rumors. Promptly contact news organizations to seek corrections of any inaccurate information that has been broadcast or distributed on the news wires or posted online.

# FIBER INTERNET EXPANDS IN RURAL INDIANA



## INDIANA SENATE OPENS DOOR TO RURAL FIBER

**A**cquiring a high-speed internet connection can be hard in rural communities, but in today's world, it has a huge impact on quality of life. Rural residents are driving their children into town to upload homework or waiting for the library to open to fill out a job application. High-speed internet is becoming a necessity for the 21st century.

Electric cooperatives are uniquely situated to help solve the rural broadband problem because they are in the rural infrastructure business. In addition, the community-based, member-consumer business model of electric coopera-

tives positions them well to play a leading role in advocating and delivering rural broadband.

Indiana State Senator Eric Koch (District 44) spoke at the South Central Indiana REMCs fiber announcement in April. Koch reviewed several legislative stances that encourage electric cooperatives to pursue broadband capabilities in their territories. The 2015 Broadband Ready Community Bill encouraged the streamlining of local permitting processes in order to expedite the installation of broadband technology in municipalities designated as broadband ready.

The senator referenced Enrolled Senate Bill 478, introduced in 2017, allowing electric co-ops to access existing electric poles within existing easements to install fiber optic cable for the expansion of fiber optic broadband service within their territory.

This bill opens the door for co-ops to fill the gap of much needed high-speed internet in geographically-challenged areas, where traditional carriers cannot or will not provide broadband.

### Cooperative plans

Three Hoosier Energy member co-ops are currently taking on the rural fiber connection challenge. Jackson County REMC, Orange County REMC and South Central Indiana REMC are taking steps to bring high-speed internet to their member-consumers.

Jackson County REMC started with an initiative in February 2016. After extensive research, it was discovered that no company was willing to take on the task of rural broadband, so Jackson County REMC decided to offer this service in its area. A multi-phase construction plan was developed and began in October 2017.

The first phase includes a 220-mile fiber backbone and 120 miles of fiber for the circuits served from the Brownstown Metering point. Construction of phase one is almost complete. Phase two, including construction of 650 miles of fiber, is well underway.

On June 25, 2018, Jackson County REMC connected their 100th fiber account and has almost 4,500 accounts system wide who have expressed interest in acquiring the fiber internet connection. This is approximately 18 percent of the total number of electric accounts. This is approximately 18

“The interest levels we are experiencing indicate we are doing what our members are wanting us to do by providing a true high-speed internet solution to their home.”

**Mark McKinney**  
Jackson County REMC  
General Manager

percent of the total number of electric accounts.

“The interest levels we are experiencing indicate we are doing what our members are wanting us to do by providing a true high-speed internet solution to their home,” said Jackson County REMC General Manager Mark McKinney.

Orange County REMC began researching their fiber options in 2017.

“Initially we surveyed our members to determine general interest and then followed up with another survey which contained detailed information that came from a financial feasibility study completed. Based on the second survey, 85 percent of Orange County REMC members stated they would take our service if it were offered,” said Orange County REMC General Manager Matt Deaton.

Those consumers who were lucky enough to have high-speed internet in their area stated that they were dissatisfied with their current internet service provider.

As the previous cooperatives did,

South Central Indiana REMC (SCI REMC) surveyed consumers about broadband needs. The survey showed that while high-speed internet was extremely important, most consumers weren't sure how to get it since major internet service providers avoid rural areas.

SCI REMC's Board of Directors chose to move forward with a phased zone approach for installation. Phase 1 will offer services to approximately 3,754 homes in Southeastern Morgan County, Northwestern Brown County and the Northeastern area of Monroe County. Construction for the backbone infrastructure has just begun, with plans for the consumers to start receiving internet service at the end of the year.

Additional phases will also be partly chosen by demand. Current consumers may sign up on the SCI REMC website. Fiber services will also be offered to those homes and businesses that are not SCI REMC consumers, for a nominal fee. Installation for current consumers will be free. Along with fiber, SCI REMC will also offer voice over internet protocol (VOIP) phone service with clear connections and advanced calling features. This service will be offered for \$40 per month when added to one of the four fiber tiers.

Johnson County REMC is also in the fiber business, having partnered with Ninestar in 2012 to deliver high-speed internet to members in Johnson County.

Electric cooperatives embrace concerns for the communities they serve. For some, a need was recognized and certain co-ops are positioned to be the ones to solve the problem. Entering this business is not for all co-ops. There must be a balance of what is best for the members as well as what is a feasible solution for the co-op. [EL](#)

## Co-op annual meeting highlights



### Member focused

## WIN Energy REMC annual meeting

### Meeting details

WIN Energy REMC's 79th annual meeting took place at Lincoln High School with approximately 500 consumer-members in attendance. The theme of the meeting was "Member Focused."

Chief Executive Officer Tom Gregory's report noted that \$70,000 was distributed in 2017 through Operation Round-up. The main theme of his presentation was "Focused on You" with the following subcategories: safety, reliability, technology, member satisfaction, education/training and the board of directors.

The cooperative presented six \$1,000 scholarships to area high school seniors from four high schools in the service territory.

Scott Atkins, WIN line worker, received special recognition for his involvement in the trip to rural Guatemala to help bring power to a community.



### Election of officers

Dan Schuckman, unopposed

Harley Drake, unopposed

Phil Carter, unopposed



**TOP:** WIN Energy REMC Chief Executive Officer Tom Gregory speaks to the crowd of approximately 500 during their 79th annual meeting.

**MIDDLE:** Member-consumers register at the annual meeting at Lincoln High School.

**BOTTOM:** Attendees were entertained by bluegrass musicians Mariah Creek.

## Co-op annual meeting highlights



### *The cooperative difference*

## Southern Indiana Power annual meeting

### Meeting details

The Southern Indiana Power annual meeting took place April 19 at the Spencer County 4-H Youth and Community Center. There were approximately 300 consumer-members in attendance.

Activities for members included bingo, horse rides, bucket truck rides, prize drawings and a live line demonstration. Dinner was provided for members.

During the business meeting, members learned about capital credit retirements, students who attended the Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. and employees who helped bring power to a community in rural Guatemala.

Hoosier Energy employees Wes McFarland and Renee Campbell staffed an energy efficiency booth and Angela Dabney staffed an environmental education booth.

Consumer-members learned of improvements made to the grid in St. Croix and Tell City and that the electric rate outlook shows stable rates over the next five years.

### Election of officers

District 5 – Incumbent Randy Kleaving was selected over

Burke Etienne

District 6 – Kevin Waninger, unopposed



**TOP:** President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Seibert speaks to consumer-members during the annual meeting.

**MIDDLE:** Heather Toothman, left, paints the face of a child as one of many activities provided for member-consumers to enjoy.

**BOTTOM:** Members were provided health screenings during the annual meeting.



## Live line training builds safe workforce

A total of 14 Hoosier Energy Apprenticeship Training and Safety students completed their 40-hour rubber glove training this spring at the Franklin Training Center. The apprentices practiced with live lines energized at 12,470 volts. Rubber glove training includes energizing conductors, changing insulators, changing arms, phasing two circuits together, cutting in flying dead ends and other scenarios they may experience in the field.