



**JAM Business Development Committee Meeting**

July 22, 2025 | Bentonville, AR

**Committee Members Present:**

Chair – Lea Hoover, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, OR  
Nick Bowers, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, OK  
Annie Erbert, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, KS  
Tanner Hayes, Poudre Valley REA, CO  
Michael Jansen, Trico Electric Cooperative, AZ  
Katie LaBree, Butler County Electric Cooperative, IA  
Andie Massa, LCEC, FL  
Ryan Nance, NC’s Electric Cooperatives, NC  
Matt Porth, Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative, SC  
Devin Sonnenfelt, White River Valley Electric Cooperative, MO  
Heather Verrett, DEMCO, LA  
Chris Walker, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, TX  
Matt Walters, Boone Power, IN  
Jeremy Woeste, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, ND

**Committee Members Not Present:**

Brad Ebersole, Consolidated Cooperative, OH  
Brooke Guthman, Egyptian Electric Cooperative, IL  
Brad Thomas, East Kentucky Power, KY

**Touchstone Energy Staff:**

Jana Adams  
Scott Bialick  
Josh McGhee

**Meeting Opening**

Lea Hoover called the meeting to order, took roll call, and called for a motion to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was approved. We welcomed Andie Massa and Chris Walker to their first meeting and noted that Brad Thomas would not be serving his second three-year term. We reviewed committee terms and were happy that we reached our maximum of 20 members.

**Touchstone Energy Update and 2025 Key Metrics Dashboard**

Scott Bialick mentioned recent staff changes at Touchstone Energy and new direction for the Member Engagement and Communications teams. Several new co-ops joined TE during the summer such as CoServ, Gascosage EC, and Moon Lake EC. Bialick asked the committee to be on the lookout for updated Member Value Reports in August. We looked at strong progress on many of

our KPIs such as member engagement, non-dues revenue with SHiNE at the forefront, program adoption, and strong participation in the new Cooperative Advantage Report.

### Cooperative Advantage Report

Bialick highlighted that the survey response collection was wrapping up and had some key metrics:

- 54 distribution co-ops in 26 states participated
- There were more than 11,500 residential member responses
- Co-ops can pay \$4,500 for their local report with highly detailed responses; Statewides/G&Ts can obtain a report for \$9,500. This provides the results for any of their systems that did the CAR to get a more regional perspective.
- We'll hold a webinar and share a summary of results in Q4 with all Touchstone Energy members.

The new research approach produces prescriptive next steps based on the results and how heavily certain areas impact overall satisfaction.

### NEXT Conference Preview

Josh McGhee previewed NEXT 2026 from February 2-4 in Tucson, AZ. The committee liked keeping 3 general sessions, 2 pre-conferences and 4 sets of triplets for breakout sessions.

McGhee and Bialick went over the must have topics that scored very well with both committee members and energy managers polled earlier in the summer. Topics that were most popular included Large Load/Datacenters, AI, grid reliability & resiliency, Key Accounts 101, and a DOE update. See Appendix A for the full survey results from the committee.

### Large Load Conversations and Resources

- Large load/datacenter issue is huge for utilities, economic development, businesses, and communities.
- How do we approach meeting the load size, protecting the co-op and membership, and using contracts and processes to make the negotiations more uniform were all mentioned as focuses for future training, speakers, and resources.
- How does each co-op/G&T define a large load is a good foundational conversation to have.
- Education for community leaders on pros & cons of undertaking datacenter projects.
- How do you balance datacenters vs. other large, job-producing projects?
- Community & Economic Development concentrations
- Think about the timeline for interconnection, even if you do have enough generation to serve a large load.

### Business Member Summit Planning

On October 15-16 we will host the Business Member Summit in Atlanta. Staff plans to collaborate with Georgia EMC to invite their contacts from the Atlanta and the wider Georgia region, both businesses headquartered there and electric co-op Key Account and Economic Development professionals. At the time of JAM, invitations to Key Accounts reps in Georgia had been sent out and energy managers that

had attended NEXT in the past three years received invitations to Atlanta. The goal is for 50-55 attendees in all with about 12 different businesses.

#### Key Accounts Deliverables

The committee cited time constraints and overlapping with Education & Training as reasons to pivot from an earlier discussed Key Accounts Playbook. Instead, we can be focus adding to the “Admire & Acquire Library” around community events, KA visits, who is on the KA team, and building relationships with a new business. A focus on how G&Ts and distribution co-ops work together from recruiting a new business to delivering top notch Key Accounts service would be a welcome feature as well.

#### Co-op Connections Update

In 2024, members saved \$372,000 on prescriptions and an average of 48% off at the pharmacy counter. While not reaching the heights of Rx usage like in 2013, this feature still helps generate revenue. There are 248,000+ Connections.coop users and since 2023, more than 17,000+ have downloaded the app.

This summer, the Connections Marketplace was launched. Stemming from our partnership with New Benefits, the prescription discount provider, the Connections Marketplace would offer discounts on mail order contact lenses, pet care and services, identity theft protection, and more.

We are examining bringing the Connections.coop site in house to save \$75k per year. It appears we will need to preserve a local discount functionality there is a still a sizeable group of co-ops still recruiting local offers.

#### Other Business / Adjourn

We’ll next meet as part of the Business Member Summit in Atlanta, GA. The Hotel Colee in Buckhead has been contracted. The committee meeting portion will take place the afternoon of October 16, after the Summit has adjourned.

The winter committee meeting will be held about 10 business days after NEXT concludes and be held virtually. We can lock in a date at the October meeting.

Hoover said that October would be her last meeting as the committee chair and her second committee term ends at JAM 2026. We’ll be looking for volunteers to take on the chair responsibilities.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was approved.

## Appendix A

### 2026 NEXT Conference: Topic Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Battery Storage & On-Demand Power	47.83%	11
Building A Smarter Building (C&I, Community Spaces & Co-op Headquarters)	52.17%	12
Grid Resiliency & Reliability	60.87%	14
Supporting Your Community with Broadband & Cybersecurity	13.04%	3
National Economic Forecasting	47.83%	11
Futurism & Technology	43.48%	10
Artificial Intelligence: Utility & Business Application	65.22%	15
Rural Economic Development & Attracting Industry	47.83%	11
Microgrids & Demand Response: Business Spotlight	26.09%	6
Update from Department of Energy (DOE)	56.52%	13
Gaining Buy-In & Funding Your NEXT Big Project (Utility & Business Perspective)	26.09%	6
Understanding Large Loads (Hospitals, Schools, Military & More)	47.83%	11
Local/Arizona Utility & Key Account Spotlight (Trico Electric, AZ)	30.43%	7
Preparing for Natural Disaster, Mitigation & Recovery	52.17%	12
Supporting Rural Loads (Agribusiness, Manufacturing, etc.)	34.78%	8
Electrifying Transportation (Fleets, EVs, Buses)	4.35%	1
Key Accounts 101 (new hires, new roles, new department)	56.52%	13
Virtual Power Plants & Smart Grid	34.78%	8
Supporting Safety in the Community & First Responders	39.13%	9
Workforce and The Rise of the Gig Economy	26.09%	6
Power Supply & Energy Mix Opportunities for C&I	52.17%	12
Integrated Distribution Resource Planning	17.39%	4
Key Accounts University (Leadership, Communications & Technology)	78.26%	18
The Mega World of Large Tech Loads (Grid Stability, interconnection, rate structures, etc.)	65.22%	15
Total Respondents: 23		