



NREDA News Brief | March 2023



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President's Message



Artisan crafts, grassfed steaks, wines, and fresh ground coffee. To find such luxuries, you might think a trip to Trader Joe's or Whole Foods is in order. But in Madison County, Georgia these items are not only readily available, but are actively promoted.

Jackson EMC is the largest electric cooperative in Georgia, and one of the largest in the entire country. Our service area that spans 10 counties along the I-85 corridor in Northeast Georgia, about halfway between Atlanta and Greenville, SC, has seen rapid growth the past 30 years. But there are parts of our service territory that are still very rural and what would be considered a typical community served by an electric cooperative.

Madison County is one of those rural communities. Located about 30 minutes from the University of Georgia and only having a handful of traffic lights, it is home to lush pastures, rolling hills, and the state's longest covered bridge. Madison County is a charming place to call home, but it has the same challenges many rural communities face. Yet something special is going on there.

In 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Madison County Chamber of Commerce launched its **MADICO Made Program** to promote local products made within its county lines. MADICO Made has over 30 small businesses, farms, and boutiques selling unique items that are made locally. Agriculture is by far the largest economic driver in Madison County. The community's economy is dependent on commercial poultry and beef cattle operations. The Chamber has designed MADICO Made to pay homage to its agricultural roots while finding a way to celebrate local businesses.

You can learn more about innovative ways rural communities such as Madison County are promoting economic development at the 2023 Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach on November 8-10. Brittany Dickey is leading the annual conference committee and the theme for this year's conference is *Navigating the Changing Tides*. This will be an outstanding conference with topics to include broadband, site selection, and professional development. Also, if you are planning to attend the conference and an avid golfer, pack your golf clubs. Eric Phillips is organizing a golf outing in Myrtle Beach the afternoon before the conference begins.

Between now and the annual conference, there are continuing educational opportunities made available through your NREDA membership. Recently, NREDA partnered with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives to offer a webinar featuring Lacy Beasley with Retail Strategies. She offered great insight on Retail Retention and Recruitment. The Professional Development committee is already hard at work planning future webinars so stay tuned.

Finally, in closing, there are wonderful things going on at NREDA. I have already referenced the annual conference planning and a recent webinar. The Publications & Marketing committee is completing an overhaul of the website and developing promotional videos. The Rural Issues committee has finalized the organization's white paper. In May, a group of leaders from NREDA are traveling to Washington, D.C. to visit our allied partners and congressional leaders. My challenge remains the same – get involved. If you are involved, stay engaged. Let's make NREDA the organization that makes a difference in Rural America!

David Cleveland, 2023 NREDA President

NREDA Rural Issues White Paper

The Rural Issues Committee has recently finalized a document to identify rural issues/priorities that you are welcomed to utilize in your legislative efforts! **You may view the rural issues document [HERE](#).**

You may also be interested in reviewing the recent grant whitepaper from Golden Shovel. Check it out [HERE](#).



Interested in sponsoring the 2023 NREDA Annual Conference?

The Annual Conference draws nearly 150 attendees with educational offerings designed to engage the learner and subsequently impact rural communities across America and into Canada. By partnering with NREDA through sponsorship at the annual conference, your company's dollars will stretch all year long, supporting NREDA's efforts and activities – you're not just a sponsor, you're a partner! Sponsoring at the NREDA Annual Conference

provides opportunities for you to:

- Support your rural peers by supporting the NREDA Annual Conference.
- Network with your colleagues. • Build company and product awareness.
- Establish long-term relationships with new and existing clients

Visit <https://nreda.memberclicks.net/annual-conference> to view available packages and to secure your commitment today!

NREDA 2023 Leadership

Executive Committee:

- **President - David Cleveland**, Director of Business Development, Jackson EMC (GA)
- **1st Vice President - Brittany Dickey**, Vice President, Business Development, Corn Belt Power Cooperative (IA)
- **2nd Vice President - Lisa Hurley**, Executive Director, York County Development Corporation (NE)
- **Secretary-Treasurer - Kathryn Grasz**, Director of Key Accounts & Economic Development, Lorain Medina Rural Electric
- **Past President - Dan Boyssel**, Manager, Economic Development, Consolidated Cooperative

To view the full 2023 Board of Directors Roster, visit <https://nreda.memberclicks.net/leadership>.

Action Items

Highlight Your Achievements!

What are your success stories? We want to share them for future posts on social media and brag about our members! Email your stories to NREDA Marketing Chairperson Jennifer Wakeman at jwakeman@driveindustry.com.

#NREDA

Don't forget when posting on social media to use the hashtag #NREDA when sharing your stories! This way we can spread it to all of our members!

Upcoming Events

Webinars

Look for information about additional webinars in 2023 to be released soon!

Did you miss the March Webinar? NREDA Members may access webinar recordings by logging into your member account on the website and visiting <https://nreda.memberclicks.net/webinar-recordings>. (Be sure to

login first and make sure your membership is current, as this page can only be viewed and accessed by current members.)

NREDA Annual Conference

November 8-10, 2023 | Myrtle Beach, SC

Look for more information this summer in your email inbox and/or at <https://nreda.memberclicks.net/annual-conference!>

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