

RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE SCORECARD INITIATIVE

RECSI IN ILLINOIS



WHAT IS A RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE?

- Cooperatives deliver electricity to rural places not served by investor-owned utilities
- Rural Electrification Act of 1936
- Co-ops are self-organized and responsive to member-owners
- Strong claims to local control and democratic decision-making basis for environmental regulation carve outs



Com Belt Electric Co-op, Photo courtesy of the Mclean County Museum of History, Bloomington, IL



RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES IN ILLINOIS

- 25 “Distribution” Co-ops in Illinois
 - distribute electricity locally to rural areas
 - owned and governed by the members they serve
 - elected Board of Directors
- 5 “Generation and Transmission” Co-ops in Illinois
 - “Co-op of co-ops”
 - Generate and move electricity over longer distances
 - G&T co-ops in IL are co-owners of the Prairie State Coal Plant



More about IL co-ops prairierivers.org/priorities/rural-electric-cooperatives/

ORIGINS OF COOPERATIVE SCORECARDS



Other Co-op Scorecards exist in [MN](#), [MO](#), and the [Southeastern States](#)

Rural Electric Cooperative Scorecard Initiative (RECSI)
Illinois, Wisconsin, and North Dakota



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD
Fighting for Illinois Consumers



Green Neighbor Challenge



A PRACTICE IN ENERGY DEMOCRACY

Investing in community-driven solutions to create energy system transformation toward clean and democratically owned energy.

Main areas of focus include:

1. Building community-owned power and taking back member power in Rural Electric Co-ops
2. Liberating people from utility debt
3. Working against corporate monopolies in energy markets
4. Supporting models for democratically controlled and locally produced clean energy

A PRACTICE IN ENERGY DEMOCRACY

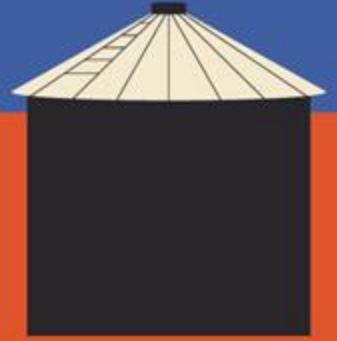


Credit: Story of Stuff

A QUICK TOUR OF SCORECARDS

Link:

[greenneighborchallenge.org
/CoopScoreCards](https://greenneighborchallenge.org/CoopScoreCards)



KEY TAKEAWAYS — PROGRAMS

- Only 12% of cooperatives post their fuel mix
- 60% of cooperatives offer efficiency rebates to their member-owners
- 24% of cooperatives offer an efficiency loan program to their member-owners
- No Illinois cooperatives offer an Inclusive Utility Investment or Pay As You Save program
- 32% of cooperatives offer a green pricing program
- Only 12% of cooperatives offer a community solar program
- 20% of cooperatives reimburse excess energy at a rate above avoided cost
 - 80% of co-ops have policies that make it harder for their customers to go solar compared to Ameren and ComEd Customers.
- 68% of cooperatives have an annual true-up date
- 64% of cooperatives offer disconnection protection for delinquent pay, medical, and/or temperature related reasons

KEY TAKEAWAYS — ACCESSIBILITY

- 64% of cooperatives publish an electric bill explainer.
- 32% of cooperatives publish information regarding IRA rebates/incentives
- 52% of cooperatives publish information on how to vote in board elections
- 52% of cooperatives publish information on how to run for the board of directors
 - Rural electric cooperatives are governed democratically, meaning the member-owners are responsible for selecting and influencing board members. Despite this commitment to democratic governance, over half of co-ops do not have information available online on how to vote in board elections or run for the board.
- 36% publish board meeting minutes and agendas
- 48% of cooperatives publish direct contact information for the board
- 20% of cooperatives publish 990s
- 80% of cooperatives publish by-laws

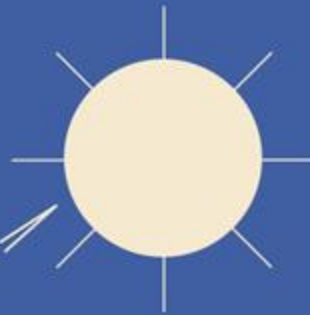
YOUR VOICE MATTERS

- Reach out to PRN and Citizens Utility Board to talk about your co-op's scorecard
- Email your co-op about the scorecard and ask how they are thinking about improving their score
- Vote in you Co-op elections
- Attend a co-op board meeting
 - PRN can assist with talking points
- Host your rural neighbors for a small conversation about your co-op
 - PRN is happy to help you plan this and join you for this
- Run for your co-op board

KEY LINKS AND INFORMATION

- Scorecards
 - <https://www.greenneighborchallenge.org/CoopScoreCards>
- PRN Cooperative Landing Page
 - <https://prairierivers.org/priorities/rural-electric-cooperatives/>
- PRN Blog
 - <https://prairierivers.org/articles/2024/09/illinois-rural-electric-cooperative-scorecard/>
- Power to the People: Story of Rural Cooperatives Animated Video:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53rEB26kLds>

QUESTIONS?



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