

# ENERGYLINES



## RECYCLING PROGRAM RE-STORED

Determination leads to appliance recycling success | **PAGE 3**



## A CONVERSATION WITH DARIN DUNCAN

Hoosier Energy Board  
Director for 11 years.

**SEE STORY, PAGE 8**



## 2017 Touchstone Energy Coordinated Media Plan

# Media plan to connect consumers to co-op value

Helping electric consumers understand the value their electric cooperative offers is the basis for Hoosier Energy's Touchstone Energy Coordinated Media Plan for 2017. This year's advertising campaign intends to increase member/consumer awareness about the ways electric cooperatives are their source of information in addition to providing safe, reliable power.

Hoosier Energy works with a media buying team and the member systems to identify the best media outlets to garner the widest reach, such as television, radio, web, print, etc. In recent years, media consumption has shifted away from more "traditional" media and more toward online. In fact, research

shows that rural electric consumers are turning to digital resources through the internet to gather information more than anywhere else. Increasing digital components of the media plan will provide the ability to reach consumers at home and on-the-go.

"Without alienating the traditional media components, we are shifting some dollars to digital. This is exciting because we have much more control of targeting members and driving them to the electric cooperative's website to engage further," said Hoosier Energy Manager of Communications Claire Gregory.

The campaign will run from April to June and then again from September to October. [E](#)

## "Your Source" campaign

Advertising materials communicate how co-ops are member's source for information.



## NRECA backs rural broadband effort

The NRECA applauded efforts by 71 members of Congress who sent a letter to President Trump asking him to include investments in his infrastructure proposal that would bring broadband to rural America.

The letter was coordinated by the House Rural Broadband Caucus, which is led by representatives from North Dakota, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Vermont and Iowa.

"Without access to high-speed internet, rural communities are being

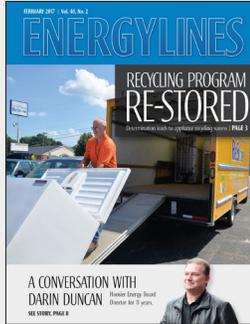
left behind in the 21st century economy," NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said in a Feb. 2 news release. "The Rural Broadband Caucus understands this issue well, and we appreciate their leadership. Expanding broadband access in rural America should be a top economic development priority. We look forward to working with the Trump administration and Congress to address this problem."

Source: [NRECA.coop](http://NRECA.coop)



## ON THE COVER

The appliance recycling program, part of the Demand Side Management Program, gets refreshed.



## SEND COMMENTS TO

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# Meetings with members a communication tradition

Steve Smith updates co-op leaders on G&T, industry news

As he has been doing for 17 years, Steve Smith, President and CEO of Hoosier Energy, has been meeting with the CEOs and directors of each of the 18 member distribution systems.

It's a tradition Smith looks forward to every year.

It provides the opportunity to sit down in an informal setting – often at a local restaurant – deliver patronage capital to eligible members, highlight the latest business challenges Hoosier Energy and the industry are facing, and discuss member questions and concerns.

Referencing the wholesale rate outlook for 2018 and beyond, Smith likened it to a basketball metaphor. Hoosier Energy has put on a full court press to identify areas of cost management, whether through operations, financial strategies or taking advantage of the power markets, in order to pass the savings along to member cooperatives.

Smith also talked about the Clean Power Plan and how the risk asso-

ciated with it has changed in the last year. The likelihood the ruling will remain as written now appears doubtful, he said.

Additionally, Smith reported that Hoosier Energy and Duke Energy are collaborating to address reliability issues at certain points on the system. Additionally, the meetings provided Smith with the opportunity to note that Hoosier Energy, along with partners, was selected to build and maintain a transmission line for MISO. Revenues from the line are expected to offset some of the increasing costs from MISO.

Each board is encouraged to talk with Smith about concerns or issues specific to their co-op. While each of these sessions differ, a recurring theme was Hoosier Energy's ability to maintain its current success. Smith attributed the sustainability of the G&T directly to the people at the member cooperatives and Hoosier Energy. Investing in the cooperative workforce, he says, will sustain the business into the future. **EL**

## ONLINEEXTRA

### EnergyLines online

Access to digital files of current and back issues of EnergyLines are available online. The back issue library dates to 2007 and all files are saved as PDFs.

>> Log on to view current and back issues of EnergyLines. ([www.hepn.com/energylines.asp](http://www.hepn.com/energylines.asp))



COVER STORY

A vintage white refrigerator with its door open, standing on a gravel surface. The background features a large body of water, likely a lake, and a line of trees with some autumn-colored foliage. The sky is clear and blue. The refrigerator's interior is visible, showing a wire shelf and a crisper drawer. The door is open to the right, revealing the hinge mechanism and a small handle.

Appliance recycling program  
**RESTORED**



It all started with a phone call,  
after phone call,

Each ending with a...

# BEEP!

Susie Smith picked up the phone for the eighth time and paused before she dialed – she knew her previous attempts ended in the dreaded voicemail beep. She cautiously dialed the number. The phone rang and rang. Then again – beep. She took a deep breath knowing she had reached another dead end.

Smith, new to the role of Demand Side Management Analyst at Hoosier Energy, was charged with fixing the appliance recycling program. After a previous vendor went bankrupt she needed to find a new solution for co-op consumers to recycle working refrigerators or freezers. This program removes appliances, often old and inefficient from consumer homes, taking them off the grid to help reduce demand.

Smith believed in the value of the program but some vendors didn't answer her calls because they thought they were avoiding a sales call.

"All I wanted was someone to just talk to me," said Smith.

With an infectious smile and smooth sarcasm she continues, "I was really good at reaching voicemails across the state!" >>



## Marketing materials support program efforts

To promote the program, marketing resources were created for member co-ops to use including a bill stuffer, newsletter content and social media materials.

**PERSONAL TOUCH :** ReStore Manager Mike Virgin, right, shares a few best-practices he has implemented while working with Henry County REMC through the appliance recycling program with Hoosier Energy Demand Side Management Analyst Susie Smith.

HE photo

This spring, she had a breakthrough. Mike Virgin, Manager at the ReStore facility in Henry County, Indiana answered her call.

Smith explained the program – how it works and the benefits for everyone involved. Mike was interested and the program began anew.

### ReStore commitment to community

ReStore facilities operate based on a volunteer workforce. The way the stores work is simple. As they accept donated household items from the public, they resell them. The money they bring in helps fund future Habitat for Humanity homes in the communities they serve.

“ReStore’s commitment to community aligns perfectly with the values electric cooperatives bring to this partnership,” said Smith.

Smith ran a pilot program to test the

system she developed and it was a success. For each new ReStore added to the appliance recycling network, Smith takes the time to build a strong business relationship between them and the local co-op.

Together they clearly identify how the interaction between ReStore volunteers and consumers should take place.

At Henry County REMC, the recycling program has been met with staff and member excitement.

“We are happy to use a local organization to collect these devices. The money goes right back into our community to help build homes for those in need,” said Lara Sullivan, Marketing and Member Services Manager at Henry County REMC.

The co-op’s members have been steadily calling to begin the recycle process. With 102 appliances recycled in 11 months, the program is already seeing success.

“This program is so simple and our members understand its value. It’s local; it helps members save energy, and they get

to help those in need,” said Sullivan.

### ReStoring a process

The process begins by co-ops scheduling their members for appliance pickups. ReStore then is responsible for picking up the items and recycling them in a responsible manner. ReStore sends information back to the co-op that a pickup has been completed so the incentive can be applied for that member.

This is the first year for the partnership and Smith loves the brand recognition ReStore brings.

“When a truck shows up at a member’s home, it is a good feeling to recognize the Habitat for Humanity ReStore name. This is an added bonus co-ops love,” said Smith.

The community connection ReStore brings is helping grow the program. With overall growth up 20 percent at participating cooperatives, the appliance recycling program has been “ReStored.” [H](#)

# Co-ops Show Commitment to Community



Submitted Photo

**COMMITTED TO EFFICIENCY:** Pat Lichlyter, left, and Kyla Jones, right, of Dubois REC, presents a \$50,000 incentive check to Farbest Foods for their ammonia and refrigeration energy efficiency project in Huntingburg, Indiana. Farbest Foods is one of the largest turkey companies in the U.S.



HE photo

**(AT LEFT) OPERATION ROUND UP GRANTS:** Sunman Dearborn Youth Association is just one of 24 recipients from seven counties to receive a grant from Southeastern Indiana REMC's Operation Round Up® program. The grant money is made possible through the generosity of the REMC membership by "rounding up" their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar.



## Meeting in summary

Category III Operator Certification Training  
■ 2/3/17 ■ Hoosier Energy Headquarters

# Hoosier Energy hosts operator certification training

Hoosier Energy hosted Category III Operator Certification Training in February. This training is required for operators of restricted waste site and construction/demolition landfills.

This year, nine Hoosier Energy operators will be trained or will renew their certification.

In 1997, Hoosier Energy's Michalene

Reilly and Lon Petts developed the first internally-conducted training session for employees and outside operators.

By bringing the training in-house, Hoosier Energy saves up to \$4,000 each year.

The G&T continues to host these training sessions for about 35 employees from four utilities.

As of January 1, 2017, certifications are now valid for three years.

The training course and its instructors are accredited by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

### Next training session

The next training session at Hoosier Energy will take place in June. [EL](#)



# Digital communication refresh underway

For the past decade, digital devices have changed the style and speed with which we communicate. Communication is a very important aspect to the success of Hoosier Energy with messages ranging from employee awareness to member education.

In 2016, the Hoosier Energy communications team launched an audit to identify strengths and areas for improvement for a wide-range of corporate communications. The audit included a channel analysis, a marketing assessment as well as a survey that was distributed to Hoosier Energy board members, co-board members, employees and managers and Hoosier Energy employees. With a strong response rate, the survey provided data to support improvements to a variety of Hoosier Energy communications.

The following are some highlights of improvements underway.

## Digital Refresh

Significant updates include the Hoosier Energy website, member portal and internal corporate intranet.

■ **HEPN.com** – The new website will become the virtual face of Hoosier Energy for members, new employees, partner companies and peers. The site, launching this summer, will be reorganized and redesigned to work on mobile and desktop devices.

■ **HEPN.com members-only portal** – New software that provides improved design and organization will make it easier to access important information such as billing and marketing materials in a secure environment.

■ **Intranet** – For Hoosier Energy employees, the intranet will be reorganized so it remains a valuable source for corporate information.

## Annual Report

The 2016 Annual Report will, for the first time, offer an interactive digital format in addition to the print version. The digital version will be available at HEPN.com and will include videos to explain certain topics in further detail.

## EnergyLines

In the near future, board members, member system managers, directors and Hoosier Energy employees can choose to receive EnergyLines in print or subscribe to view an electronic version online. Offering the publication electronically helps save on printing and postage costs while allowing readers to view the information in a format they prefer.

Hoosier Energy and the communications team are excited about these changes as we strive to continuously improve upon our culture of execution. Hoosier Energy will continue to update members and employees as the projects progress. **EL**

# Out of the Board Room

## DARIN DUNCAN

Catching up with Darin Duncan is a little like trying to corral one of his 20 head of cattle. The former Harrison County engineer is constantly on the go, juggling duties as a husband, father, middle school basketball coach, softball coach, civil engineer, entrepreneur and part-time cattle farmer.

Patience and persistence pay off, though – a lesson he teaches every chance he gets.

Meet up with him, and his gracious personality tells you he has all the time in the world for a philosophical conversation about what truly matters in life.

The youngest of Johnnie and Marilyn Duncan's four children, Darin is used to being the young one in the group with bright ideas. He is the youngest Hoosier Energy director, was the youngest Harrison REMC director and started his county civil engineering career as the first (and youngest) Harrison County engineer.

He and his two older brothers and sister grew up outside of Elizabeth, Indiana on a small 10-acre farm, not far from where he lives today. "We learned early on what tough, hard work was all about," he recalls, crediting his father with instilling in his children an old-fashioned American work ethic and an appreciation for the value of a good education. >>



HE photo

**ENGINEERED TO LAST:** As CEO of a civil engineering firm, Darin is deeply involved in infrastructure improvements. Here, he overlooks the yard at Contech Construct Products in Mitchell, one of his firm's manufacturing facilities.

His first job was pumping gas at his dad's Sunoco service station. "We grew up working on vehicles and pumping gas, back in the day before self-serve," he says with a chuckle. He watched his dad work long hours at the station and it was there that a young Darin became intrigued with all things mechanical and desired to learn more.

"My dad was the guy in town where everyone brought something to be fixed. He used to laugh and say he did a lot of engineering in his shop. He could fix anything."

Darin graduated valedictorian of the South Central High School class of 1987. "It's pretty easy to graduate the first in your class when there are only 58 or 60 kids. Not much competition," he quickly points out.

Taking his father's advice to improve himself through education, he graduated from the J.B. Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville in 1992, earning a bachelor's degree in engineering and a master's degree in civil engineering. Fresh from engineering school, the first thing he did was propose to his high school sweetheart, Deonne, before accepting a job with a small engineering firm in Louisville. The couple married on Sept. 11, 1993.

When opportunity knocks, Darin opens the door. Just five years out of college, he was appointed Harrison County's first county engineer, a position he held for 10 years. Planning infrastructure projects to support the county's riverboat license led to several accom-



*HE photo*

**FAMILY MAN:** Keeping up with Duncan kids is a full-time job, Darin says. (Left to right): Luke, 16; Darin; Abby, 14, and Blake, 20.

plishments including commissioning the study to create the county's first sewer district in early 2000 to promote economic development. He currently is a volunteer board member of the Harrison County Regional Sewer District.

When Harrison REMC asked if he would consider running for a director position, he said "sure," a position he's held since 1993. That led to his election to the Hoosier Energy Board of Directors in 2005, where he served as chairman from 2014-2016.

Darin considers working in his local community to create a better quality of life one of his greatest rewards, whether through coaching or working

as a county engineer. Progress, he says, means making the world a better place – a lesson he imparts to his children and associates every day.

"I tell people we're in the bridge building business, not the bridge burning business."

His knack for spotting teachable moments led him to be called up into coaching basketball, first with elementary students at St. John's Lutheran in Lanesville and later at Lanesville's junior high. The satisfaction comes, he says, as much from teaching the kids about life lessons as teaching them about basketball.

He stops to reinforce his message.

*“This is somebody else’s world and we’re just living in it for a while. While we’re here, we want to try to make the most impact we can – positively, for the community and the people we touch.”*

**Darin Duncan**

“Sometimes, players need the game more than the game needs the players.”

After 10 years of coaching, his children have nearly outgrown the sport, but Darin is still at it although he says it may be time to cut back. The family enjoys camping throughout southern Indiana, with the occasional road trip or visit to Cedar Point. Last year, they camped on the beach at Myrtle Beach.

Many activities keep the Duncans on the move. Abby, 14, is the youngest, and a freshman at Lanesville High School playing travel softball and year-round volleyball. Their middle son, Luke, 16, is a sophomore in high school, collects antique tractors and plays on the tennis and golf teams. Brother Blake, 20, studies mechanical engineering technology at Purdue University, New Albany. “There’s not a whole lot of down time at my house,” he says.

His best advice for them? “Set your goals high. When you think you are about at the bar, move the bar up.”

Darin counts his marriage and the birth of his children as the most significant high points in his life, while the sudden death of his father in 1999 was the lowest. Reflecting on the circle of life, the philosopher emerges again.

“This is somebody else’s world and we’re just living in it for a while. While we’re here, we want to try to make the



*HE photo*

**LOVING COUNTRY:** Deonne and Darin still find time for date night. They enjoy country music and jumped at the chance to see country legend Garth Brooks.

most impact we can – positively, for the community and the people we touch.”

The drive to improve the world he lives in is evident during a recent tour for several Indiana county engineers at Contech Construct Products in Mitchell, Indiana. Darin is CEO of Civilcon Incorporated, a civil engineering and pre-engineered construction product sales company based in Jeffersonville.

The Mitchell plant is one of the firm’s manufacturing facilities.

He stands in the back, listening, answering questions, intent on helping his guests but never overtaking their conversation. “You learn something every day when you talk to people. When you quit learning, you’ve either quit listening, or you’ve turned off your appetite.”

He’s proud of the infrastructure programs he helped put in place 20 years ago in Harrison County, and the projects his firm works on today with county officials from across the state. The pride stems not so much from his role in the projects, he says, but for the lasting impact they will have on economic development.

“The challenge is always in trying to get something blended together and sell the fact that the programs you are doing are beneficial as a whole.”

He sums up his passion for helping others learn, quoting the same advice his high school science teacher penned in his yearbook many years ago. He didn’t quite understand it at the time, he says, but he’s never forgotten it.

“Good luck in your future endeavors and remember be kind, be understanding, because sometimes it won’t be the educated that challenges you most in life, it may be the uneducated.” **EL**

# ENERGYLINES

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## Co-ops talk solar with Hollingsworth

On a sunny, cold February afternoon following a day of light snow, co-op employees talked solar. U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-Ind). headed out to the Henryville solar site near Scottsburg, Indiana to learn how the one-megawatt site works and the value it provides for the community. From left is Manager of Operations and Engineering Dave Barton, Supervisor Engineering Services Larry Edwards, Staking/Engineering Technician Derek Combs of Clark County REMC and Trey Hollingsworth.