



NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter September 2024

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Upcoming NASEO Events

- *Virtual:* NASEO Joint Economic Development and Rural Energy Working Group Meeting (States and Territories Only). October 28, 2024, 2:00-3:15 p.m. ET.
 - This will be a joint meeting of the NASEO-IEDC State Clean Energy-Based Economic Development Working Group and NASEO Rural Energy Working Group with a focus on workforce development in rural and remote communities. Note that this meeting is only open to State and Territory Energy Offices and State Economic Development Agencies. To register for this meeting, please reach out to Jasmine Xie (jxie@naseo.org).
- *In Person:* NASEO Annual Meeting. New York, New York. September 29 – October 2, 2024. More information [here](#). Please join us for a breakout session on *Energizing Rural Communities: Economic Development and Workforce* scheduled to take place on October 1, 2024, from 3:00 – 3:45 p.m. ET.

For the latest information about upcoming and past NASEO Rural Energy Working Group events, please visit the [NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Page](#).

In Case You Missed It

- *Virtual:* NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Meeting (States, Territories, and Affiliates Only). July 17, 2024, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET.
 - The NASEO Rural Energy Working Group relaunched with its first quarterly meeting of 2024 to present the objectives and mission of the Working Group. The Working Group will address key issues impacting energy use on rural lands and agricultural operations. Key focus areas include options for renewable energy development on rural lands, efficient energy and water use in agricultural operations, and

geographic equity in developing energy efficiency programming. This meeting also welcomed remarks from several states on relevant partnerships and funding available from the federal government to advance rural energy priorities and support communities. The presentation slides can be found [here](#).

- Florida and Oregon State Energy Office Representatives Named Co-Chairs of NASEO Rural Energy Working Group
 - [NASEO Newsroom Article](#)
- NASEO Announced as an Awardee of the Phase One Energizing Rural Communities Prize
 - [NASEO Energizing Rural Communities Webpage](#)
 - [NASEO Newsroom Article](#)

Announcements and Opportunities

WEBINAR: U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program Funding for Your Hydropower Energy Project

Sept. 19, 2024, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. ET

Join staff from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) for a 90-minute webinar on the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). USDA staff will discuss its funding opportunities for rural small businesses and cooperatives with a focus on REAP, and NREL staff will provide an overview of how hydropower technologies can best contribute to rural businesses. USDA and NREL staff will then discuss tips on submitting a successful REAP application related to hydropower. The webinar will include time for Q&A.

American-Made Large Animal and Solar System Operations (LASSO) Prize

On September 10, 2024, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) announced an \$8 million prize that supports pilot and demonstration projects designed to gather and share data on costs, business models, and outcomes associated with cattle agrivoltaics, the co-location of photovoltaics (PV) and cattle grazing operations. Multi-stakeholder teams of solar and agricultural experts will work to develop impactful projects that deepen our understanding of cattle agrivoltaics and showcase successful business models that support U.S. decarbonization goals and sustainable land use.

Appalachian Regional Commission ARISE Program: Announcements

On September 5, 2024, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) announced \$16.9 million in funding for five collaborative projects to expand the region's infrastructure, tourism, business development and workforce opportunities. Funded through ARC's Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE), these projects bring together more than 60 partners representing at least 270 counties across 10 Appalachian states.

Empowering Rural America Program: Project Announcements

On September 5, 2024, the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program announced \$7.3 billion in funding for rural electric cooperatives to build out or purchase clean power. This federal investment defrays costs for 16 cooperatives that service rural customers across 23 states to install solar and wind power installations or purchase electricity generated through renewable systems, drastically reducing projected emissions and lowering energy costs for coop members.

DOE Notice of Funding Opportunity for FY24 Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas

The Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) issued a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for up to \$400 million to deliver measurable and sustained benefits to people who live in rural or remote areas; demonstrate rural or remote energy system approaches; and build clean energy knowledge, capacity, and self-reliance in rural and remote parts of America. OCED anticipates announcing the funding opportunity in September 2024.

DOE \$65 Million Funding Opportunity for Connected Communities and Smart Charge Management

[Connected Communities 2.0](#) will offer up to \$65 million to validate [grid-edge technology](#) innovations in real-world situations and provide new tools for utilities, grid planners and operators, automakers and smart charge management service providers, and the communities they serve. The FOA features two major topics: (1) Connected Communities, focused on grid edge technical measures in buildings, industry, and transportation to prepare the electric grid for these new loads, and improve the customer benefits and grid resilience; and (2) Smart Charge Management, focused on various unique urban, suburban, and rural use cases to build confidence in it as an effective approach for electric vehicles to provide flexibility and value to the electric grid. Concept papers were due on August 20, 2024, with full applications due on October 10, 2024.

USDA Rural Energy for America Program Applications Remain Open

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to accept REAP applications and will hold funding competitions quarterly through September 30, 2024. The REAP program helps agricultural producers and rural small business owners expand their use of wind, solar, geothermal and small hydropower energy and make energy efficiency improvements. A complete list of past REAP-funded projects can be found [here](#). For additional information, contact your state's USDA energy coordinator.

Reports, Tools, and Partner Events

- [USDA Rural Energy Resource Guide](#)
 - The USDA Rural Energy Resource Guide compiles success stories in a series of videos on projects made possible through USDA funding and financing support, ranging from installing rooftop solar to conducting efficiency upgrades to slash energy costs across residences, farms, critical facilities, and small businesses in rural areas.
- [Environmental and Energy Study Institute \(EESI\) Beneficial Electrification Toolkit - Agriculture](#)
 - EESI published a toolkit on beneficial electrification for various end-sectors, including the agriculture sector, emphasizing energy cost savings and operational advantages. This resource discusses the financial incentives to facilitate sector-wide electrification and energy efficiency improvements through commercially available technologies, including electric farm vehicles, modernized precision irrigation systems that increase both energy and water efficiency, and electrified industrial processes.
- [Virtual: 2024 Distributed Wind Energy Virtual Summit. September 17, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. ET.](#)

- The [Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#) in partnership with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) is hosting a virtual event on distributed wind energy, designed for participants of all backgrounds to learn, discuss, and take action based on their distributed wind goals, interests, and experiences. Sessions will include topics on distributed wind basics, workforce development, the Rural and Agricultural Income and Savings from Renewable Energy (RAISE) initiative, and deployment of distributed wind projects. Visit the [Summit webpage](#) for details and registration.
- [In-Person: 2024 Alaska Rural Energy Conference. Fairbanks, Alaska. October 2 – October 4, 2024.](#)
 - Communities and experts from around the state will work together to share practical information on energy projects, ideas, and solutions for Alaska’s rural communities.

NASEO wants to highlight your news and success stories! Please share upcoming events, announcements, publications, and relevant news stories, in the next NASEO’s Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter. More resources and opportunities can be found on NASEO’s [Rural Energy Issues](#) page. You may direct any submissions or feedback to Jasmine Xie (jxie@naseo.org).