

2018 Regional Member Services Conference April 19 Roundtable Discussion: Helping Members Understand Rates & Fees

Moderated by Catherine Powers of Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, notes by Alan Coffey

One of the first questions that Catherine asked the room was, “How many of your coops have recently filed for a rate increase?”

Several in the room had recently filed and some had already heard back about their increase while others were still waiting.

This brought up another major difference for several in the room and that is there are many coops that are regulated by their state and many that are not.

For the coops that are regulated, this means that each coop has to file notice to have a rate increase with their state Public Service Commission and has to wait on their approval.

For those that are not regulated, their board of directors has the authority to vote on their increases and pass them along to their members.

The next question Catherine asked was, “How do you let your members know about your rate increase?”

Most everyone mentioned, newspaper, magazine, website, social media, and bill inserts. Some coops mentioned that they have recently used energy calculators to show what their current bill is and what their new bill will be based on their kwh usage.

There was much discussion about the member charge at each coop. The average is \$15 and under at the regulated coops and it is \$25 and up for the non-regulated coops.

Catherine also talked about how demand response helps the coops and the members. It was also mentioned that the people that can't afford the rate increase complain the least.

Bottom line is that there are a lot of ways for us to educate our members, but every situation is unique and you have to do what is best for your member and coop.