OCTOBER 2019 COMMKIT – LEADERSHIP COLUMN

**Conveners of the Common Good**

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and fall foliage usually come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it’s National Co-op Month. This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including [CO-OP NAME], celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how [CO-OP NAME] was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners of the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. [CO-OP NAME]’s leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that’s you) have a valuable perspective. That’s why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or our annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as high-speed internet, community solar programs and equipment or technology upgrades.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, “Concern for Community.” This month we will be participating in the Tennessee Electric Co-op Day of Service, an annual opportunity for us to give back to the communities we serve. [INSERT DETAILS] We participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community’s brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of [CO-OP NAME] as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.