
UTILITIES TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

By Kathy Nelson, Ondas Networks

UTC recently adopted a new umbrella policy for member distribution cooperatives of Generation and Transmission (G&T) cooperatives that are members of UTC. By virtue of a G&T being a UTC member, all member-owner distribution cooperatives of a G&T cooperative are also able to become UTC members at no additional cost.

BENEFITS OF UTC MEMBERSHIP

Distribution cooperatives are becoming more involved in applications such as AMI and Field Area Networks (FANs), which require telecommunications networks to support them. Utilities need information and communications technology (ICT) to deliver safe, reliable, and secure utility services. Unfortunately, as issues such as spectrum allocation and pole attachments are considered in Congress and the FCC, the ICT needs of utilities are not given adequate consideration. UTC works diligently to ensure that more consideration is given to the ICT needs of utilities, especially considering the requirements and expectations of federal policymakers that utilities will keep the lights on, keep the water running, and keep the natural gas flowing.

UTC conducts its advocacy by visiting Congressional offices and federal agencies such as the Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Communications Commission, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. UTC files comments on numerous rulemakings and other proceedings occurring at the FCC. There are numerous proceedings that are of interest to our members.

UTC offers opportunities for education on technical and policy issues. In addition to UTC's annual conference in the spring, there are regional conferences. All Minnesota cooperatives are part of Region 5, which is made up of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Manitoba. The 2018 Region 5 meeting will be held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota the first week of October. The regional conference is a great opportunity to learn about technology and

hear what your neighboring counterparts are doing in areas such as AMI, FANs, NERC/CIP, pole attachment issues, etc. This meeting moves location every year and will be held in the Minneapolis area in 2020.

In addition to in-person conferences and meetings, UTC offers webinars on a variety of topics throughout the year. Many of these are on issues and technologies that affect distribution cooperatives.

UTC is different from other trade associations in that it covers ICT issues for all utilities including cooperatives, municipal and public power, investor-owned utilities, oil and gas, and water. The ICT issues facing cooperatives are not unique; UTC provides opportunities to engage with different utilities to learn and share with colleagues across the country and around the world.

BECOMING A MEMBER

With the change in UTC's policy allowing member-owner distribution cooperatives of a G&T to be members at no additional cost, there is no downside to joining. Please contact Karna Thomas at (202) 833-6816 or karna.thomas@utc.org or Tiffany Bennett at (202) 872-0030 or tiffany.bennett@utc.org for more information or to join UTC.

Kathy Nelson worked at Great River Energy as a telecommunications engineer for nearly 25 years and recently served as UTC's Board Chair. Ms. Nelson is currently employed by Ondas Networks, formerly Full Spectrum, a wireless networking company that designs and manufactures its multi-patented, Software Defined Radio (SDR) platform for Mission Critical IoT (MC-IoT) applications. Ondas' customer end markets include utilities, oil & gas, transportation, and government and supports the IEEE 802.16s worldwide narrowband Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX) standard.