

The Human Side of Innovation

Building a Stronger Cooperative for the Next Generation

When people hear the word innovation, they often think about technology – fiber broadband, smart grid tools, digital platforms, or new energy solutions.

But at Southeastern Indiana REMC, innovation is about more than equipment or infrastructure.

It's about people.

As your electric cooperative continues to evolve, one thing remains constant: our responsibility to serve future generations just as faithfully as we serve you today. That means investing not only in poles and wires, but also in leadership, workforce development, and long-term strategy.

Because the cooperative of tomorrow doesn't happen by accident. It is built intentionally – today.

A Workforce Designed for the Future

Across the country, electric cooperatives are preparing for a significant shift in workforce demographics. Many experienced employees are nearing retirement, and the demand for skilled technical talent continues to grow.

SEI REMC is no exception.

Behind every outage restoration, fiber installation, member phone call, or engineering plan is a team of dedicated employees who keep your cooperative running. Preparing the next generation of employees to step into those roles is one of the most important investments we can make.

This includes:

- Mentoring and cross-training between senior and emerging employees
- Leadership development planning across departments
- Continuous training in safety, cybersecurity, and new technologies
- Recruiting skilled professionals who align with our cooperative values

When you see a new face at SEI REMC, it's part of a larger strategy – ensuring continuity, expertise, and strong service for decades to come.



Planning Beyond the Next Budget Cycle

Innovation is also strategic.

Unlike investor-owned utilities that answer to shareholders, electric cooperatives answer to members. That structure allows us to think long-term – not just quarter-to-quarter.

SEI REMC's multi-year strategic planning process focuses on:

- Financial strength and rate stability
- Grid reliability and modernization
- Expanding diversified services like fiber
- Data-driven decision-making
- Community engagement across all demographics

These aren't short-term initiatives. They are multi-year commitments designed to position your cooperative for resilience – whether facing economic uncertainty, regulatory shifts, or evolving energy demands.

Planning responsibly today protects affordability tomorrow.

Technology With a Purpose

While this issue of REMC Connect explores specific technologies in more detail, it's important to understand the "why" behind these investments.

Technology at SEI REMC is not about chasing trends.

It's about:

- Improving outage response times
- Strengthening cybersecurity protections
- Providing reliable broadband access
- Giving members better tools to manage energy use
- Creating operational efficiencies that control costs

Every technological improvement is evaluated through one simple lens: Does this improve service, reliability, or value for our members?

If the answer is yes, it moves forward.

Cooperative Governance Matters

Another critical – and often overlooked – component of innovation is governance.

Your cooperative is led by a board of directors elected from the membership. These directors represent you and help guide long-term policy decisions.

Strong governance ensures that:

- Major investments are carefully evaluated
- Financial decisions align with cooperative principles
- Risk is managed responsibly
- Member interests remain at the center of every decision

Innovation without oversight can be reckless. Oversight without innovation can lead to stagnation.

A healthy cooperative balances both.

Preparing for an Evolving Energy Landscape

The energy industry is changing rapidly. Increased electrification, distributed generation, renewable integration, cybersecurity threats, and supply chain pressures all require thoughtful navigation.

As a distribution cooperative, SEI REMC focuses on safely delivering power to homes and businesses.

But that responsibility requires close coordination with generation and transmission partners, regulators, and industry leaders.

Preparing for the future means:

- Strengthening system resilience
- Evaluating infrastructure needs proactively
- Monitoring policy and regulatory developments
- Engaging members in programs that support grid stability

The cooperative model allows us to adapt thoughtfully – not reactively.

Investing in Community Capital

Perhaps the most unique part of innovation at a cooperative is this: the benefits stay local.

When SEI REMC invests in its workforce, infrastructure, or programs, the impact flows back into the seven-county region we serve – Dearborn, Franklin, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, and Switzerland counties.

Local jobs are supported. Local families are served. Local communities are strengthened.

That's not accidental. It's foundational to who we are.

The Cooperative of Tomorrow

The cooperative of tomorrow will look different than it did 20 years ago.

It will be more digital. More connected. More data-driven. More cybersecurity-focused. More responsive to evolving member expectations.

But its mission will not change.

SEI REMC remains committed to safely providing reliable electricity and diversified services to the members and communities we serve.

Innovation isn't just about bright ideas.

It's about responsibility. It's about stewardship. It's about ensuring that when the next generation flips a light switch, logs onto the internet, or calls their co-op for assistance, the system works – seamlessly.

That future is not something we're waiting for.

It's something we're building – together – today.