

2018 RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION



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Beartooth Electric Cooperative

Survey Results Prepared by:

NRECA
**MARKET
RESEARCH
SERVICES**

BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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2018 Residential Satisfaction

BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following are the top-line findings based on the results of a telephone/online survey of 390 residential members of Beartooth Electric Cooperative (BEC) conducted in March of 2018:

- Overall satisfaction with Beartooth Electric is very good, with a mean rating of 4.31. Older members (75 or older) give significantly higher ratings than do those who are younger. Although there are no significant differences in overall satisfaction between districts, district 7 gives the highest mean rating of 4.47.
- The mean ratings for seven of the 12 attributes evaluated are higher than 4.00 on a 5-point scale, and four are rated 4.50 or higher, which is excellent. Beartooth Electric is rated highest on their *friendly/courteous employees, being easy to reach, and restoring power quickly after an outage*. Many of the attributes are rated similar to the Co-op Norms, although there are measurable differences in some areas.
- The strongest key driver of members' overall satisfaction scores is their Rates. This means that increases/decreases in the attribute ratings in this area should cause a corresponding increase/decrease in overall satisfaction ratings. This is an area in which there is room for improvement. The attributes that make up this driver – *charging reasonable energy rates, charging reasonable base rates, and working to keep rates low* – are three of the lowest rated in the study with mean ratings below 4.0.
- The next two key drivers of overall satisfaction are providing information to help members manage energy wisely and Member Service. These two drivers are of near-equal importance in regard to their impact on overall satisfaction.
 - *Providing enough information to help members manage energy wisely* is evaluated well, with a mean rating of 4.20.
 - Member Service is an area in which the co-op should keep up the good work. The two highest rated attributes of the study – *having friendly, courteous employees and being easy to reach* – are a part of this driver, with mean ratings well above the excellent level.
- Nineteen percent of members are extremely interested in buying a community solar panel at \$900, and 37% are interested at any price point of the three price points tested. Forty-seven percent of members couldn't put a number on how many panels they would be willing to buy, signifying that they would need more information before making a decision.

- Fifty-six percent of members have some form of member identity, either viewing themselves as a member/owner or as both a customer and member/owner. This is higher than the Co-op Norms (49%). Having members with member identity is a strength of Beartooth Electric as “members” tend to give more positive evaluations of the co-op.
- There is strong agreement that Beartooth *keeps members well informed about news and current events* (mean=4.44). With a mean rating of 4.13, agreement for *the board making good decisions* is somewhat lower, but still in a range that can be considered good.
- A majority of members say they get most of their information about BEC through *Rural Montana* magazine. Bill inserts and direct mail are also mentioned frequently. Among online respondents, the Connections email and the co-op website are mentioned, although still second to the monthly magazine.
- Fully nine in ten have internet access through a smartphone and/or a high speed connection. Just over half indicate they spend more than 5 hours a week online, 56% use Facebook at least occasionally, and 30% have visited the co-op website at least once in the past year.

OBJECTIVES

This residential member survey addresses but is not limited to the following informational objectives:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** Assess how satisfied members are with Beartooth Electric
- **Performance Quality Attributes:** Evaluate residential member perceptions of service quality on a variety of attributes (e.g., rates, outages, problem resolution, etc.).
- **Performance Quality Benchmarks:** Benchmark the results against co-ops nationwide using NRECA's Co-op Norms Database.
- **Member Identity:** Estimate the proportion of consumers who identify themselves as member-owners, member-customers, or just customers of the co-op.
- **Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy:** Determine energy projects that members have implemented and/or plan to implement and member interest in community solar panels at various prices.
- **Communication:** Explore communication channels used for co-op information, high speed internet access, use of the co-op website, and use of social media.
- **Member Demographics:** Provide demographics of the residential membership base and identify differences in attitudes between demographic groups.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through telephone and online surveying. Telephone interviewers were thoroughly trained on interviewing techniques and on the questionnaire prior to initiating the survey. During this training, the survey instrument was reviewed to ensure that all surveys would be completed in the same manner. On average, the telephone interviews lasted approximately 9.5 minutes.

Telephone surveys were completed with a total of 263 residential members of Beartooth Electric between March 5 and March 12, 2018, with random sampling done proportionate to district and connect date. Of those contacted, 292 declined to participate, resulting in a response rate of 47%. Additionally, 133 of the phone numbers attempted were disconnected or were otherwise unable to be used to complete a survey (place of business, fax number, etc.).

An e-mail invitation was sent to a random sample of 870 members for whom Beartooth Electric has an e-mail address, with 13 returned as being undeliverable. A total of 127 surveys were completed online, resulting in a response rate of 15%. The online survey respondents are weighted to represent 25% of the total data, and to match the district and tenure distribution of the phone survey respondents.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample is plus or minus 4.8 percentage points. This means that a result of 50% in the survey may range between 45.2% and 54.8% in an infinite number of residential samples this size.

ANALYSIS

The graphics presented in this report are based on data collected from the current study. The co-op has experienced some recent events that are likely to have an impact on attitudes and satisfaction:

- A new CEO was hired in August 2017.
- SmartHub upgrades were implemented in June 2017.
- A number of new programs/upgrades are planned for 2018. These include an AMI-TWACS digital meter upgrade project which begins in April, a community solar project, and a vegetation management program.
- Rates were decreased by 5% in July 2017, and it was announced there would be no rate changes in 2018. At the end of the year the co-op will be using the information from the upgraded meters to look at the current rate design.

Comparisons are also made to results from similar studies conducted by 74 co-ops among more than 75,000 residential members across the nation between July 2014 and June 2017. These “Co-op Norms” are not taken from the universe of all cooperatives; rather these are co-ops who value, monitor and measure the satisfaction of their members and therefore represent higher performing co-ops, not all co-ops.

Differences between member segments, such as differences by age or service tenure, are pointed out and characterized as being either statistically significant or not. When the term “significant” is used, this refers to the certainty of a difference, not the magnitude or size of the difference. Significance is measured at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the difference is not likely a matter of chance (there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of no difference).

When evaluating the mean ratings in this report, on a 5-point scale a mean of 4.50 or above should be considered “excellent” and a mean between 4.00 and 4.49 is considered “good”. Means below 4.00 may be cause for concern and those below 3.75 indicate a need for improvement.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

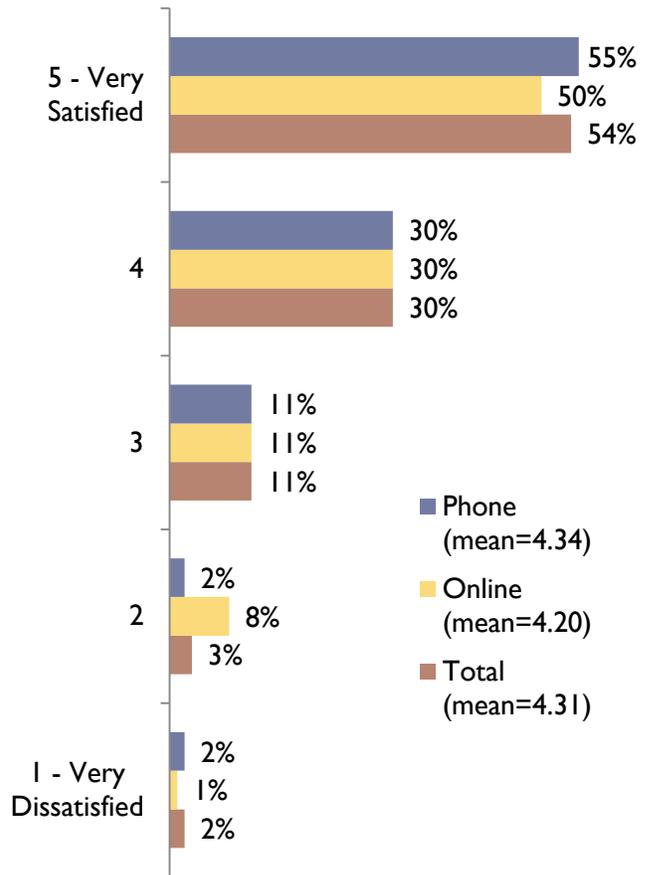
Overall satisfaction among Beartooth’s residential members is very good. The mean overall satisfaction rating is 4.31 and 54% give the top rating of “5”.

Older members (75 or older) are significantly more satisfied than are those younger than 75.

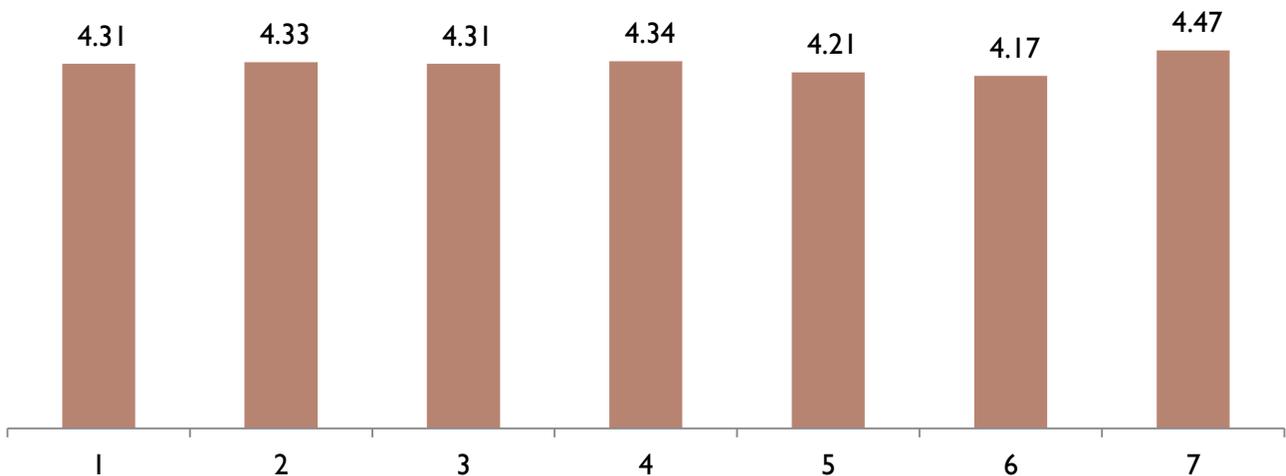
Phone respondents give higher ratings than do online respondents, which is typical in a mixed methodology study, but the difference is not statistically significant.

There are no significant differences in satisfaction between districts.

Overall Satisfaction



Mean Satisfaction by District



Performance Quality Attributes and Benchmarks

Members were asked to evaluate 12 performance quality attributes related to member service, electric service, communication, and cost. On seven of the attributes measured, the mean ratings are higher than 4.00, a “good” rating on a 5-point scale.

Additionally, mean ratings for four attributes meet or exceed 4.50, which can be considered excellent. These include:

- Having friendly, courteous employees (4.72)
- Being easy to reach (4.69)
- Restoring power quickly after outages (4.51)
- Resolving issues or problems (4.50)

Conversely, the attributes on which BEC is rated least well are listed below. Although these attributes are routinely rated lower in satisfaction research, with mean ratings below 4.0, this could be cause for concern:

- Offering renewable energy choices (3.39)
- Charging reasonable base rates (3.47)
- Charging reasonable energy rates (3.64)
- Working to keep rates low (3.86)
- Value for the money (3.94)

On many of the comparable attributes, mean ratings for BEC are consistent with the Co-op Norms. However, five attributes have a gap that is 0.10 or greater. These include:

(Phone and Online Respondents Combined)	Beartooth Mean	Co-op Norms	Gap
<i>Being easy to reach</i>	4.69	4.53	+0.16
<i>Operating with concern for the environment</i>	4.24	4.43	-0.19
<i>Charging reasonable base rates</i>	3.47	3.69	-0.22
<i>Charging reasonable energy rates</i>	3.64	3.87	-0.23
<i>Value for the money</i>	3.94	4.18	-0.24

Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts

The key drivers of overall satisfaction among residential members are: rates, providing enough information to help members manage energy wisely, member service, electric service, and social responsibility. Going forward, these are the areas that BEC should focus on most.

Regression analysis was used to determine the key drivers of overall satisfaction. The scores are to be interpreted relative to each other. For example, since *rates* has a score of 0.35 and *electric service* has a score of 0.22, we can say that members' perceptions of the cost of their electricity have 1.6 times the impact on overall satisfaction as their perceptions of their electric service. Attributes and factors not shown below are not significant drivers of overall satisfaction. More information on how the factors were formed and importance scores derived can be found in Appendix A.

Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charging reasonable energy rates • Charging reasonable base rates • Working to keep rates low 	0.35	Overall Satisfaction
Providing enough information to help members manage energy wisely		0.30	
Member Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having friendly, courteous employees • Being easy to reach • Resolving issues or problems 	0.29	
Electric Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring power quickly after an outage • Keeping outages to a minimum 	0.22	
Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making renewable energy choices available • Operating with concern for the environment 	0.14	

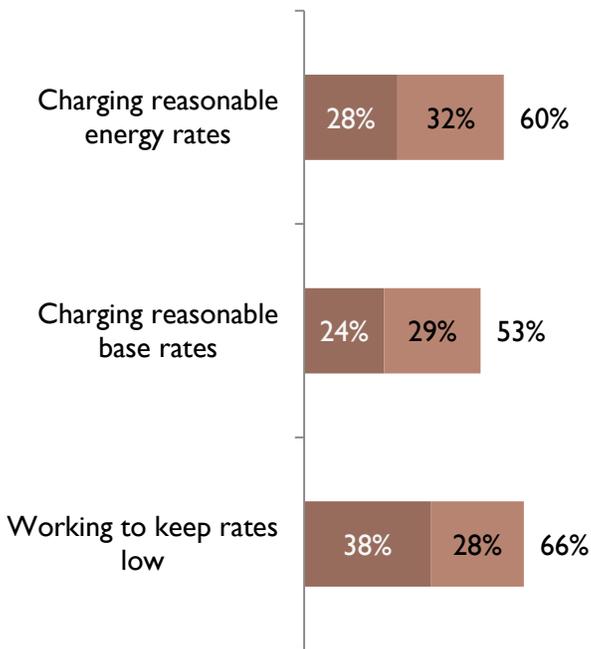
Rates

The strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is “Rates”. As is typical, this is the area that contains three of the four lowest rated attributes in the study.

All three attributes in this driver are below the “good” threshold and *charging reasonable energy rates* and *charging reasonable base rates* are lower than the Co-op Norms. As expected, those who pay average monthly electric bills between \$51 and \$100 give significantly higher ratings for all three attributes than those who pay more than \$150.

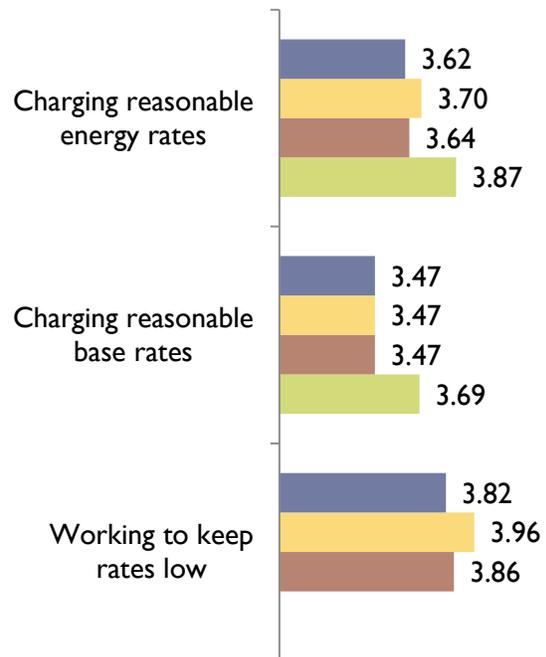
Top Two Box Ratings

■ 5 Rating ■ 4 Rating

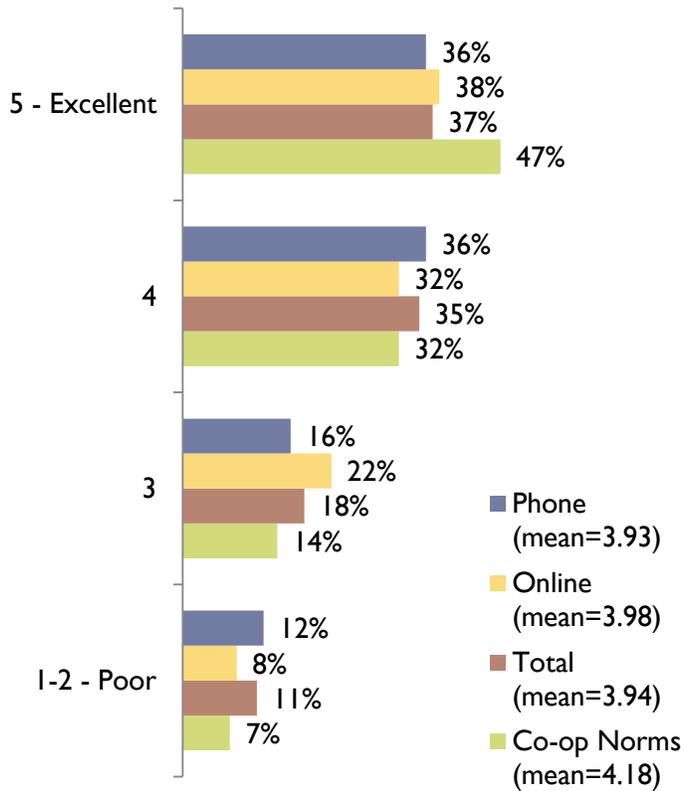


Mean Ratings

■ Phone ■ Online ■ Total ■ Co-op Norms



Value for the Money



With a mean rating below 4.0 and lower than the Co-op Norms, there is room for improvement in members’ perception of BEC *delivering good value for the money*.

A regression analysis was also conducted to determine the key drivers of *delivering good value for the money*. As seen in the table below, it was found that four factors are significant drivers of value. Although the perception of the cost of electricity has by far the strongest impact on the value members feel they receive, there are other factors that enter into the “value equation” among members of Beartooth Electric.

Key Drivers of Value	
Rates	0.68
Member Service	0.24
Electric Service	0.20
Social Responsibility	0.17

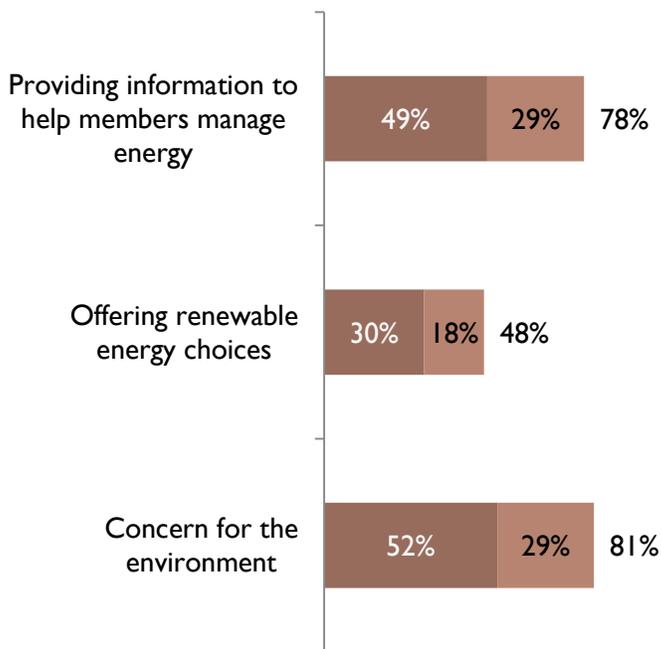
Social Responsibility

The second strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is “providing enough information to help members manage energy wisely” and is related to the fifth and final key driver, “Social Responsibility.”

Making renewable energy choices available to members is evaluated below 4.0 and is the lowest rated attribute in the study. Although operating with concern for the environment is evaluated lower than the Co-op Norms, it is above the “good” threshold, as *providing enough information to help members manage energy wisely*.

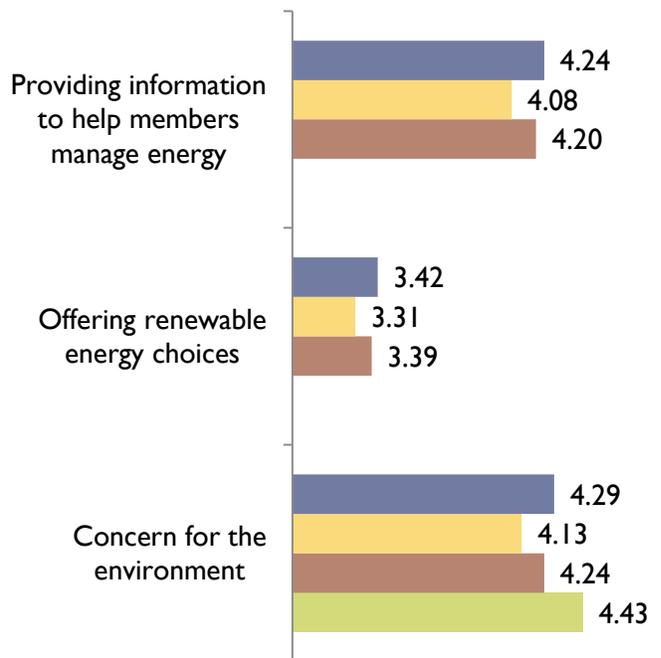
Top Two Box Ratings

■ 5 Rating ■ 4 Rating



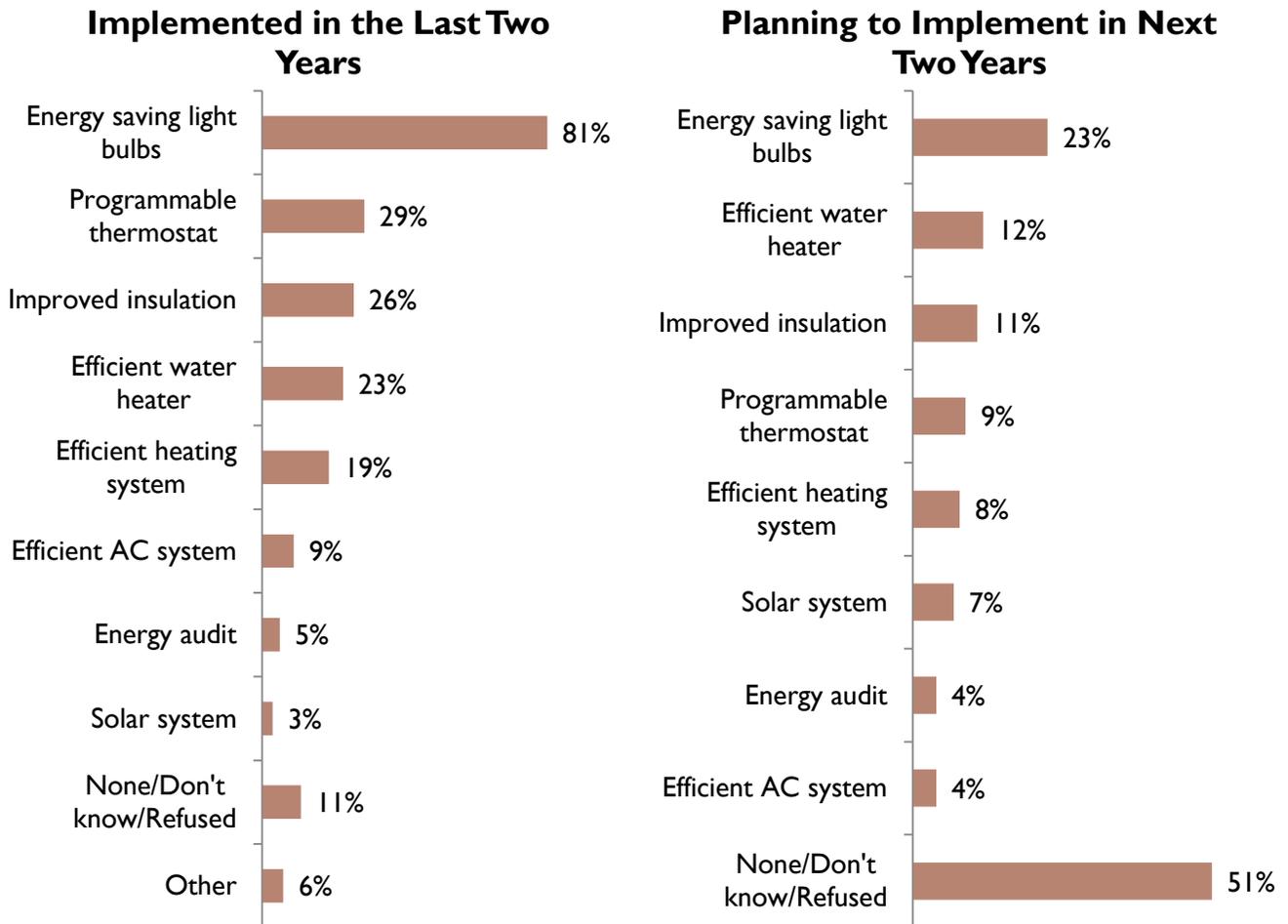
Mean Ratings

■ Phone ■ Online ■ Total ■ Co-op Norms



The installation of energy saving light bulbs is the most common energy project that was either implemented in the last two years or is being planned to implement in the next two years.

Other common projects include: programmable thermostats, improving insulation, efficient water heaters, and efficient heating systems. Just over half of the members do not know what energy projects they will implement in the next two years or do not plan to implement any.



Approximately one-fifth say they would be “extremely interested” in purchasing a panel in a community solar project for \$900. Interest increases somewhat as the price decreases, up to 23% at \$700 and 37% at \$500.

On average, members are willing to buy 2.3 panels at \$900, 2.0 panels at \$700, and 1.8 panels at \$500. Forty-seven percent of members answered “don’t know” or “depends” when asked the number of panels they were willing to buy. This could indicate that they don’t have enough information about community solar to make a decision. (Note that respondents who said they were “extremely interested” at a higher price point were not asked about the number of panels at lower price points.)

Younger members, shorter tenured members, those with higher electric bills/use, and more affluent members are more interested than their counterparts at purchasing solar panels at any price point although not all of the differences are statistically significant.

Interest of Purchasing Community Solar Panel if Price Was...



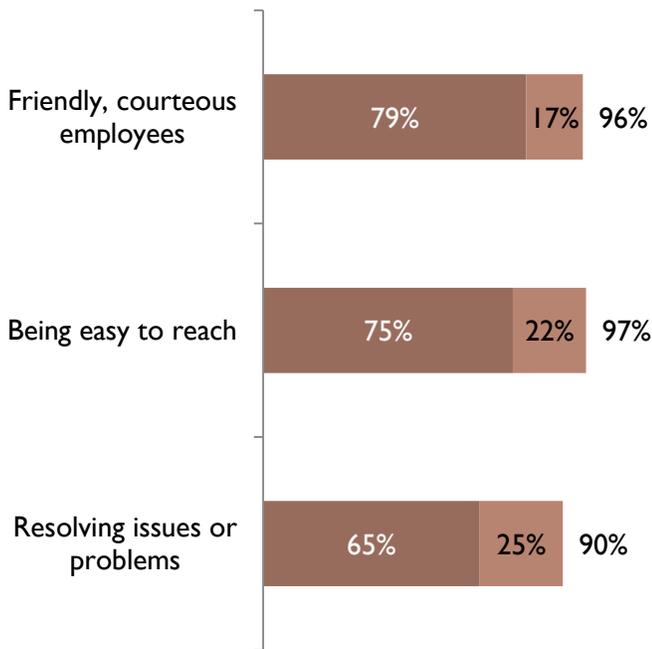
Member Service

“Member Service” is the next key driver of overall satisfaction. This is an area for which BEC is rated at or above the “excellent” threshold, including the two highest rated attribute in the study.

Having friendly, courteous employees and resolving issues or problems are evaluated similar to the Co-op Norms while being easy to reach is evaluated 0.16 points higher.

Top Two Box Ratings

■ 5 Rating ■ 4 Rating



Mean Ratings

■ Phone ■ Online ■ Total ■ Co-op Norms



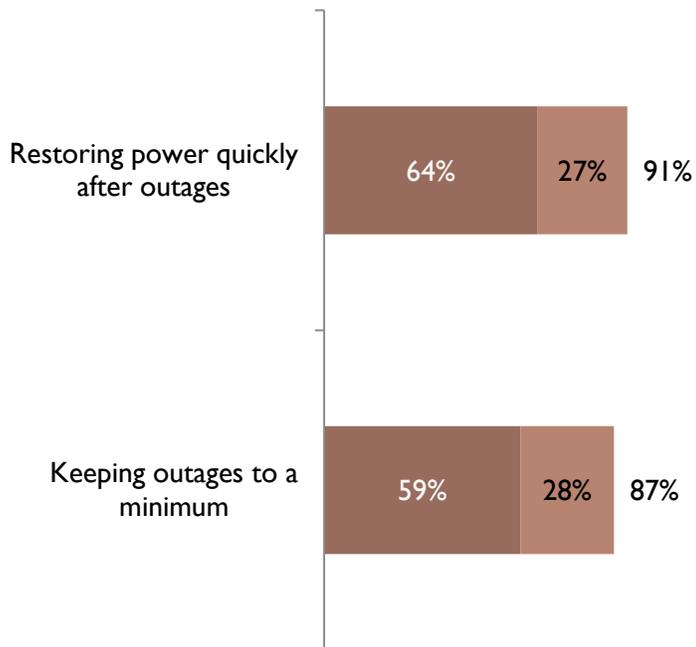
Electric Service

“Electric Service” is the fourth key driver of overall satisfaction. This is another area in which the co-op is evaluated very well, with mean ratings well above 4.0.

Restoring power quickly after an outage is just above the “excellent” threshold and is consistent with the Co-op Norms. BEC is also rated as being very good for *keeping outages to a minimum*.

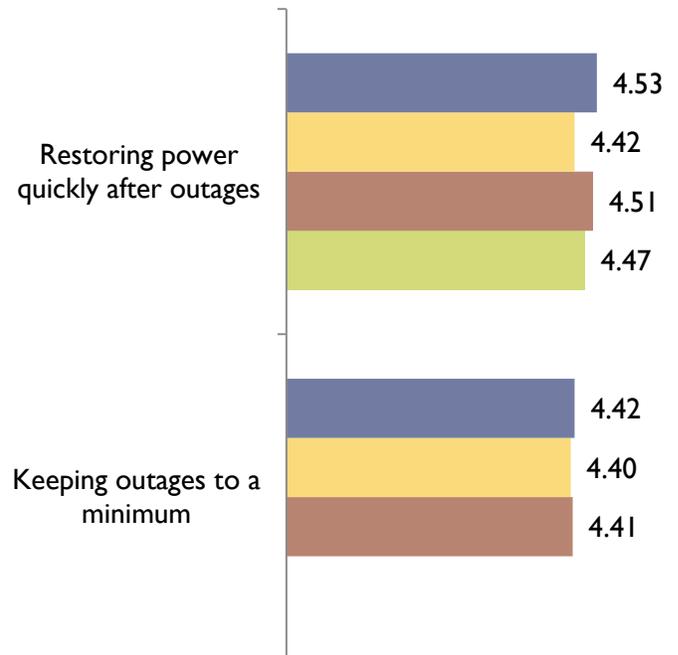
Top Two Box Ratings

■ 5 Rating ■ 4 Rating



Mean Ratings

■ Phone ■ Online ■ Total ■ Co-op Norms



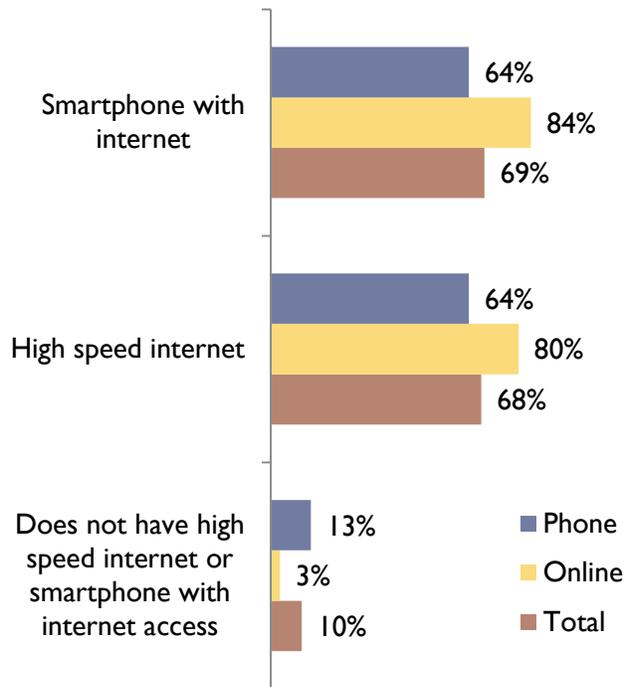
Internet and Communication

Nine in ten indicate they have internet access either through a smartphone or a high speed internet connection.

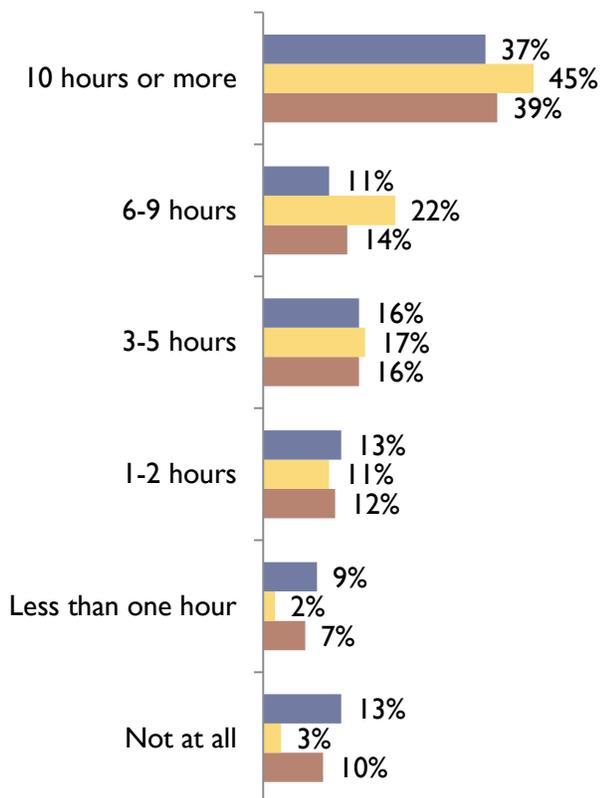
Online respondents, younger members, newer members, those living in larger households, and more affluent members are significantly more likely to have a smartphone with internet access or high speed internet.

Approximately four in ten members spend ten hours or more online per week and/or use Facebook at least daily. Fully one-third do not use Facebook.

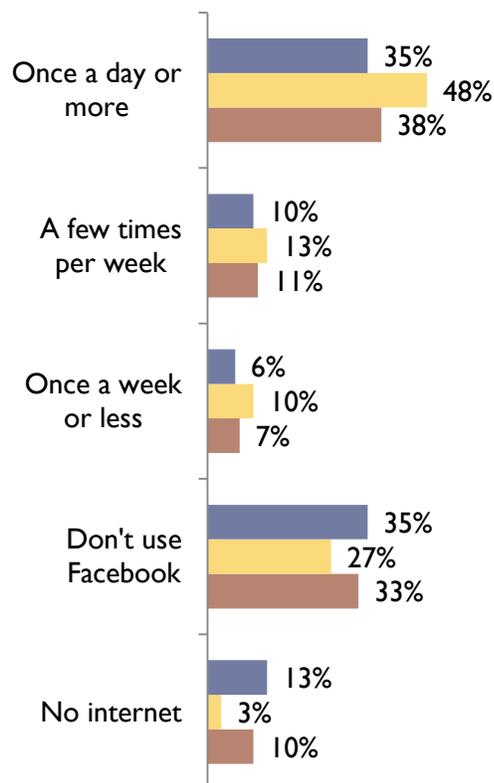
Internet Accessibility (Multiple Responses Possible)



Hours a Week Spent Online



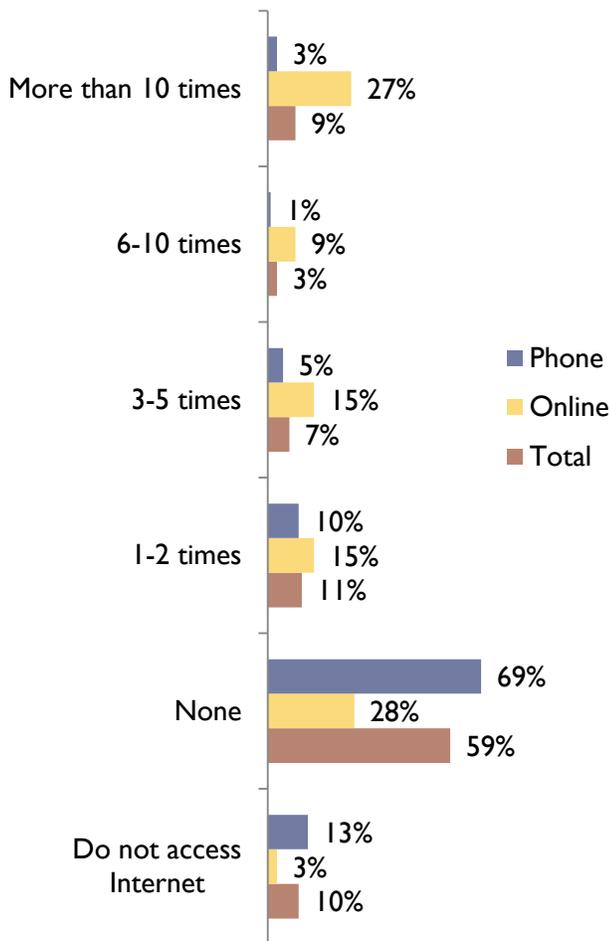
Frequency of Members' Facebook Use



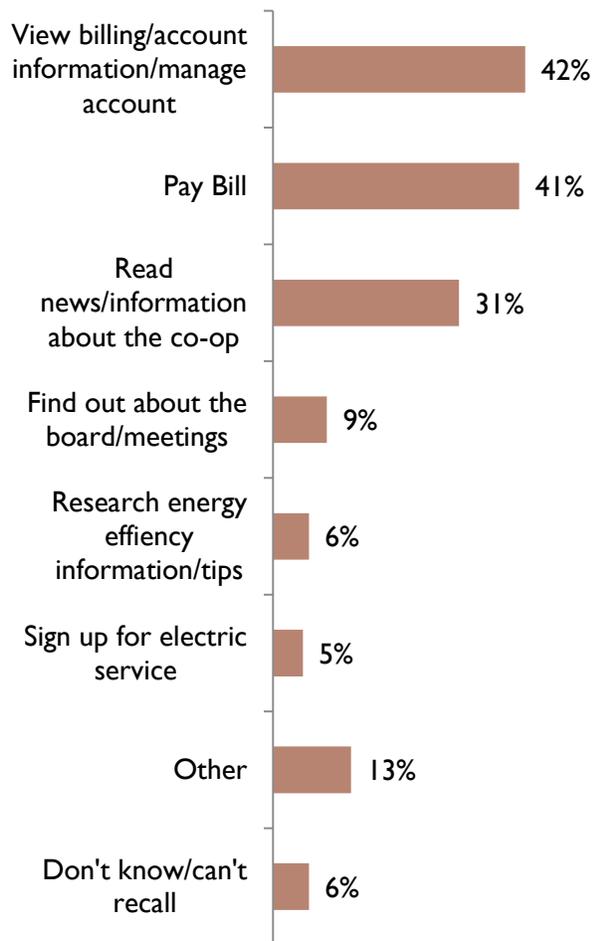
While ninety percent of members have access to the internet, 30% have visited Beartooth’s website at least once in the past year. Members are most likely to visit the website to view their billing/account information or manage their account; pay a bill; and/or read news or information about Beartooth.

Online respondents, younger members, and newer members tend to be more likely than their counterparts to have visited the website, although not all of the differences are significant.

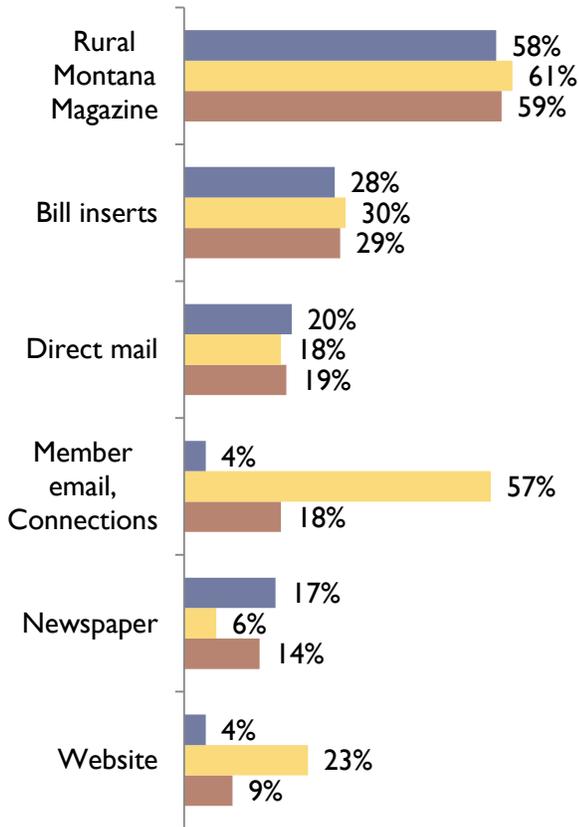
Visits to Beartooth Website in Past Year



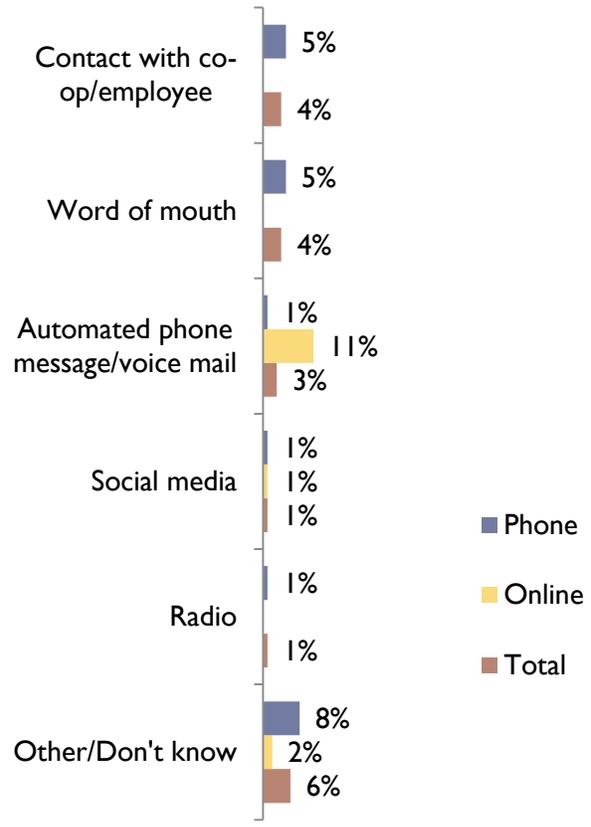
Reasons for Visiting Website (Multiple Responses Possible; n=104)



Where Members See Information About Beartooth
(Top 6 Sources)



Where Members See Information About Beartooth
(Rest of Sources)



Members are most likely to see information about Beartooth Electric through *Rural Montana*. Online respondents are also likely to see information through the member email, Connections.

Phone respondents are significantly more likely than online respondents to see information about the co-op through the newspaper while online respondents are more likely to see information through Connections, the co-op website, and an automated phone message/voicemail.

Younger members are significantly more likely than older members to see information through a bill insert and direct mail while older members are more likely to see information through Connections, the newspaper, and *Rural Montana*.

Member Identity

More than half have member identity, viewing themselves as a member-owner or both a member-owner and a customer.

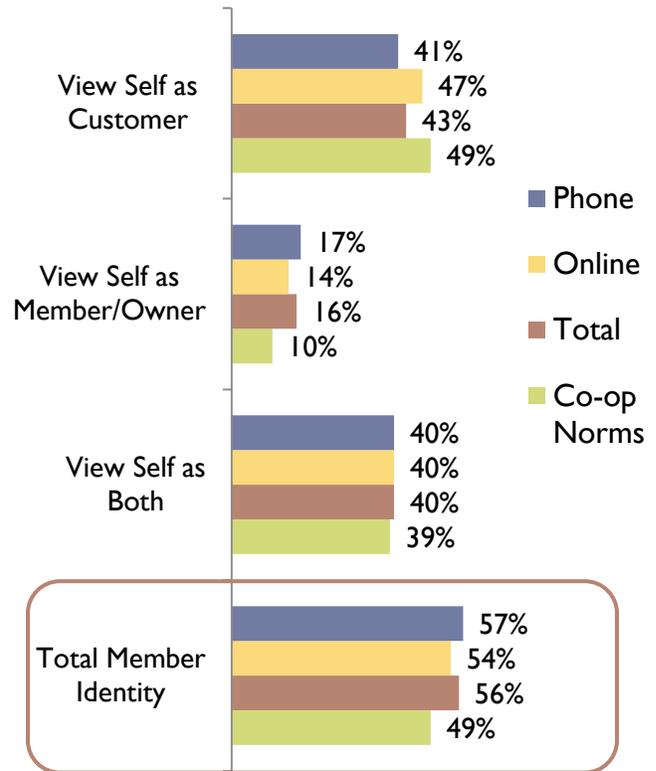
Older members, longer-tenured members, and those living alone or with one other person are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to have member identity.

“Members” give more positive evaluations than do those who view themselves as “customers” on all of the performance attributes as well as overall satisfaction with almost all of the differences being statistically significant. “Members” are also significantly more likely to:

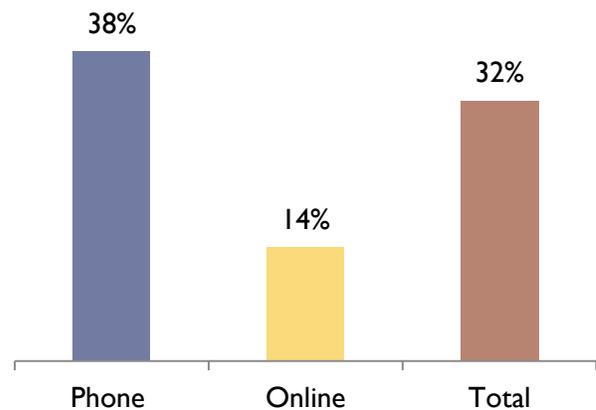
- Agree that Beartooth keeps members well informed about news and current events in the cooperative and the Board of Trustees makes good decisions for the cooperative
- See information about Beartooth Electric through the newspaper or Rural Montana Magazine
- Personally know a Beartooth Electric employee

Although “Members” are no more likely than “Customers” to have visited BEC’s website, they are significantly more likely to have visited it to find out about the board or board meetings.

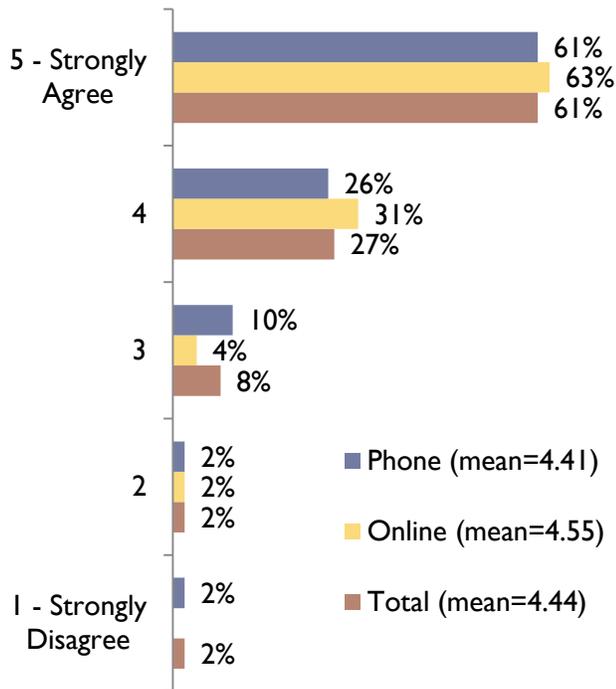
Member Identity



Know a Beartooth Employee



Keeping Members Well Informed About News and Current Events



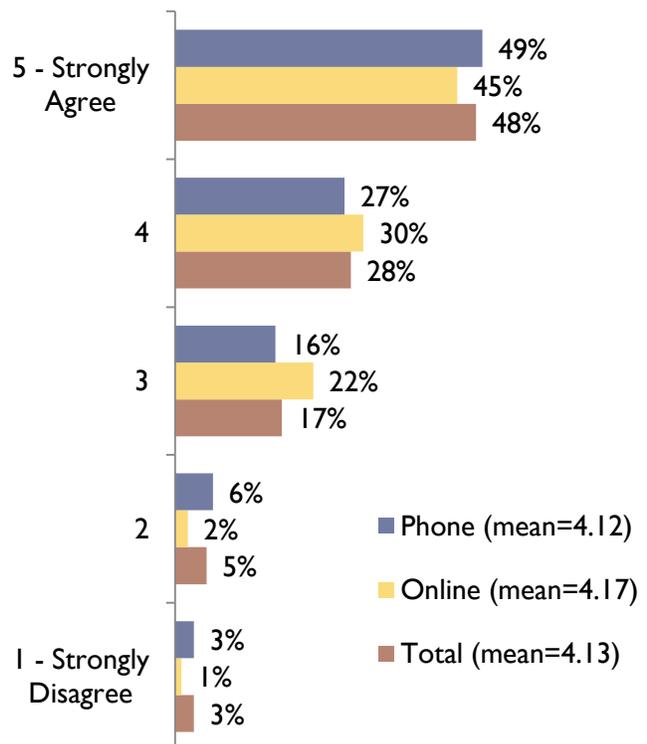
Nearly nine in ten members indicate agreement with the statement “Beartooth keeps me well informed about news and current events in the cooperative,” giving a rating of “4” or “5 – strongly agree.”

Online respondents, those more satisfied with the co-op overall, and females are significantly more likely than their counterparts to agree with this statement.

There is less agreement with the statement “I trust the Board of Trustees to make good decisions for the cooperative” although the mean rating of 4.13 still indicates overall agreement.

Those more satisfied overall, older members, and females are significantly more likely than their counterparts to agree with this statement.

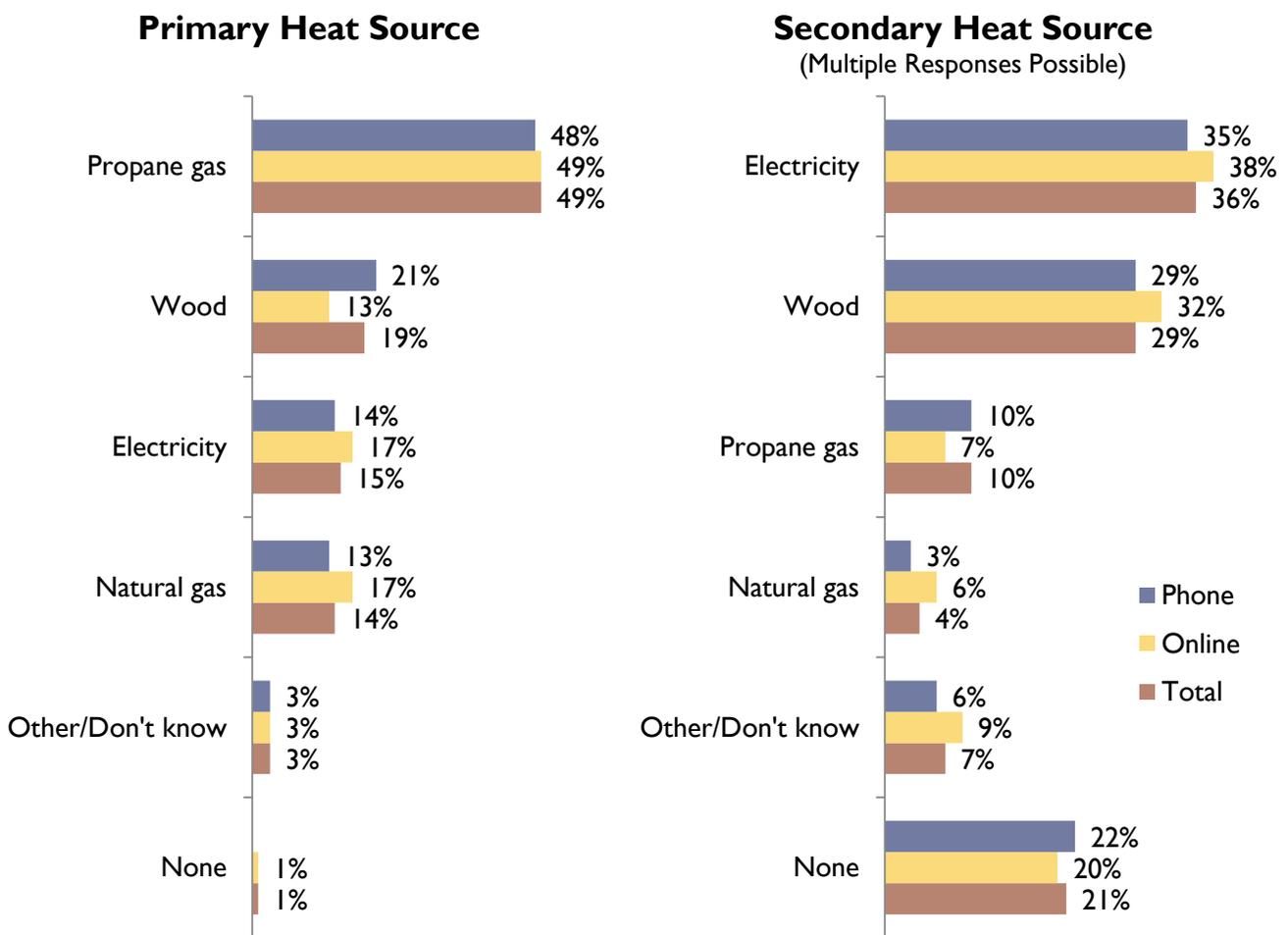
Trusting the Board to Make Good Decisions



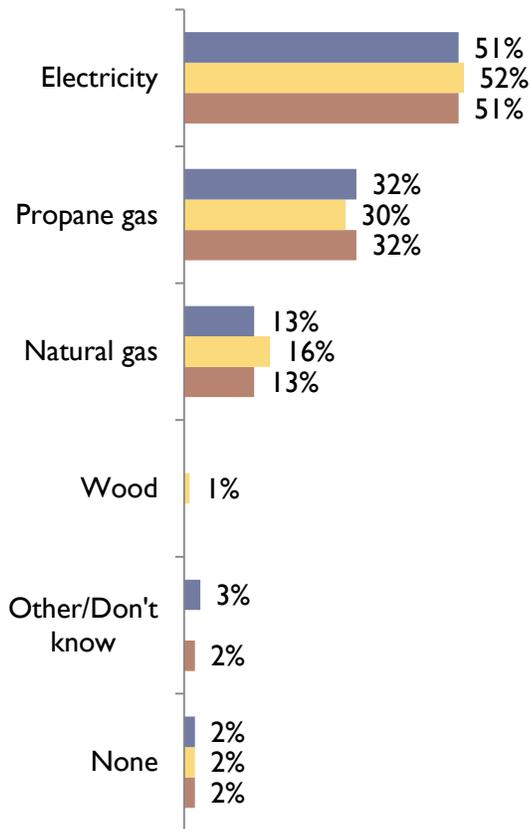
Energy Usage

Members are most likely to use propane gas as their home’s primary heat source. Just over half use electricity as their primary (15%) or secondary (36%) heat source.

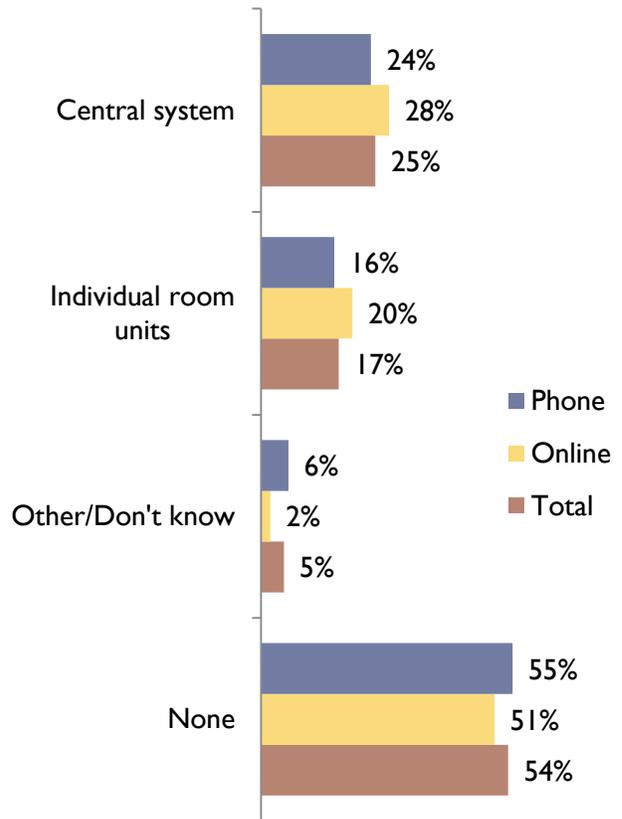
Seasonal residents are significantly more likely to use electricity as their primary energy source while year-round residents are significantly more likely to use natural gas.



Primary Water Heating Energy Source



Air Conditioner System (Multiple Responses Possible)



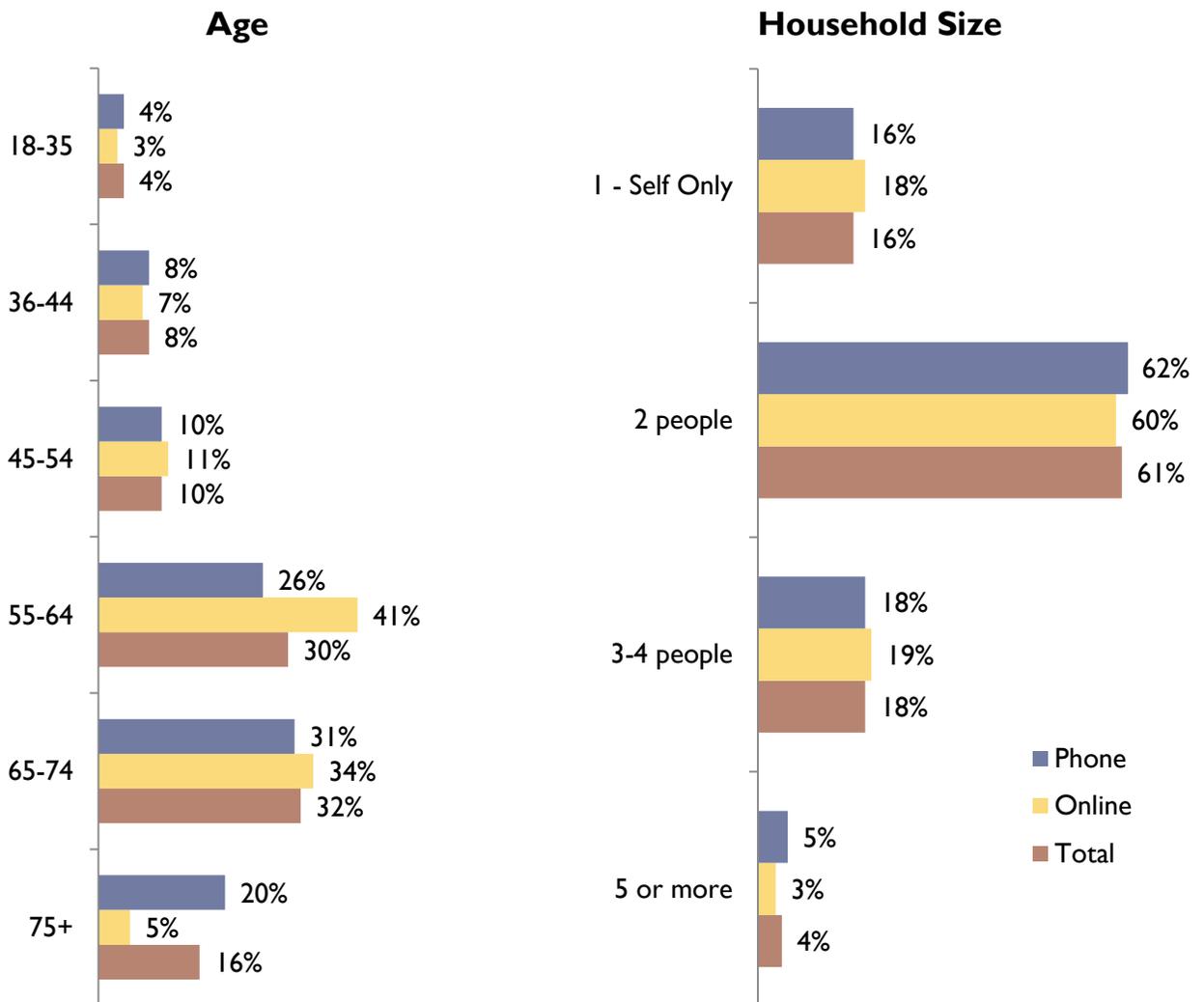
Half of the members use electricity as the primary energy source for heating water followed by 32% who use propane gas. Those with higher electric bills/use, seasonal residents, and less affluent members are significantly more likely than their counterparts to heat their water with electricity.

Twenty-five percent of members use a central air conditioning system while more than half have no air conditioner. Younger members, newer members, those with higher electric bills/use, those in larger households, year-round residents, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to use a central air conditioning system while each of the counterparts are more likely not to air condition their home, although some of the differences are not significant.

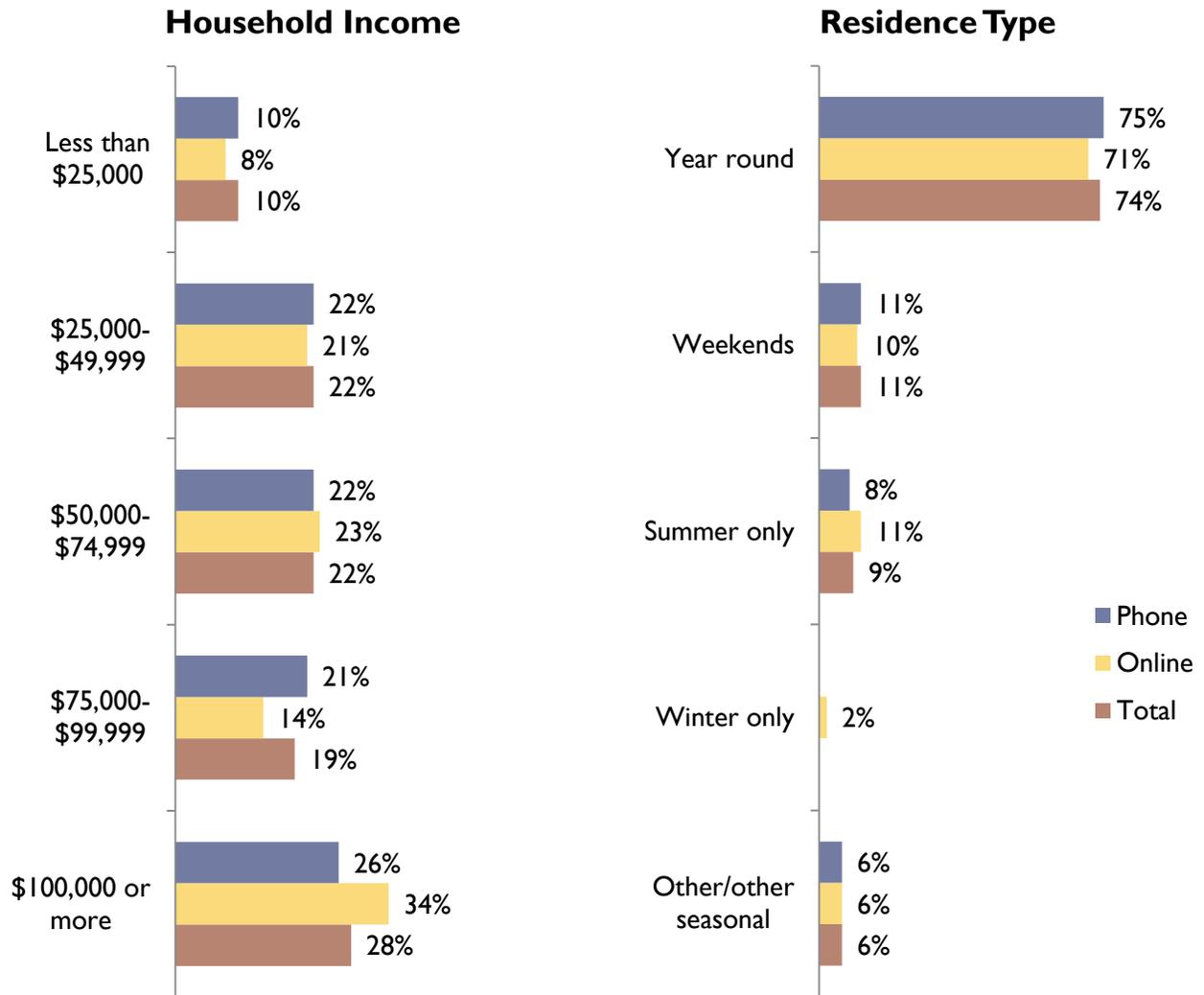
Member Demographics and Segmentation

Sixty-two percent of the responding members are between the ages of 55 and 74 and 77% live alone or with one other person.

Very few members are under the age of 45 (12%). Twenty-two person of households have three or more people.



Household income is distributed fairly evenly, although 10% of households have income less than \$25,000 and 28% have income of \$100,000 or more. The majority of members (74%) live in the residence served by BEC year round. Eleven percent use their residence on weekends and 9% use it only in the summer.



Those 75 or older are significantly more satisfied with BEC than those who are younger than 75. Longer-tenured members, those in smaller households, and females also tend to give higher satisfaction ratings than their counterparts, but few of the differences are statistically significant.

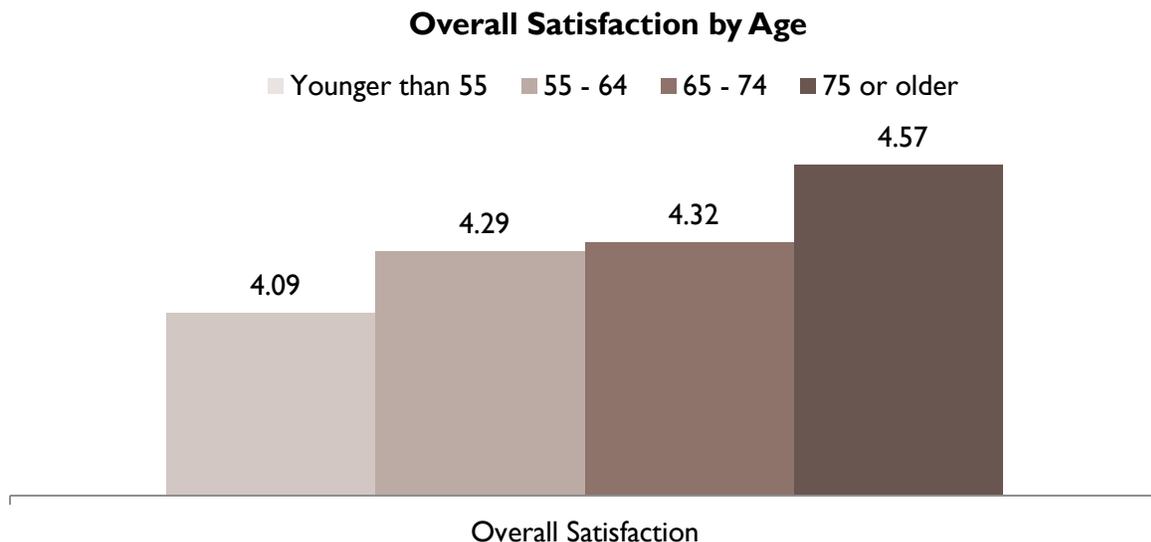
These member segments, along with those paying lower monthly electric bills, also tend to give more positive evaluations for performance attributes, although not all of the differences are statistically significant.

In addition to giving higher satisfaction and performance ratings, older members are also significantly more likely to:

- Feel the Board of Trustees makes good decisions for the cooperative
- Have member identity
- Have seen information about BEC in Rural Montana and/or a newspaper
- Use the residence served by BEC seasonally

Conversely, younger members are significantly more likely than older members to:

- Have installed a programmable thermostat, a more efficient air conditioning system, and/or improved insulation in the past two years
- Be interested in community solar panels at any price point
- Have a smartphone with internet access, have high speed internet, spend more time online, use Facebook (and use it more frequently)
- Have seen information about the co-op in a bill insert and/or direct mail
- Use the residence served by BEC as their primary year-round residence



Overall satisfaction is highest among members in District 7, but differences from other districts are not statistically significant.

Significant differences in the attribute ratings and other questions are shown in the table below.

Significant Differences by District		
Attributes	Highest Ratings	Lowest Ratings
<i>Having friendly, courteous employees</i>	4, 7	6
<i>Being easy to reach</i>	4	3, 5, 6
<i>Resolving issues or problems</i>	7	2, 3, 6
<i>Providing enough info to help manage energy wisely</i>	7	1, 3, 6
<i>Operating with concern for the environment</i>	7	1, 3
<i>Making renewable energy choices available</i>	1, 2, 5, 7	6
<i>Working to keep rates low</i>	4	2
<i>Keeping outages to a minimum</i>	5	6
<i>Restoring power quickly after an outage</i>	4, 7	3, 6
Other		
<i>Agree: Beartooth keeps members well informed</i>	3, 7	4
<i>Improved insulation in past 2 years</i>	2	3
<i>Installed more efficient water heater in past 2 years</i>	5, 7	3
<i>Had energy audit online or in person in past 2 years</i>	3	1, 7
<i>Installed energy saving light bulbs in past 2 years</i>	1, 2, 4	7
<i>Installed programmable thermostat in past 2 years</i>	2	1, 4, 7
<i>Has smartphone with internet access</i>	2, 3, 4, 7	1, 5
<i>Has high speed internet</i>	1	5
<i>Use Rural Montana for co-op information</i>	5	2
<i>Personally knows BEC employee</i>	3, 4, 5, 6	1
<i>Electricity primary heat source</i>	3	6, 7
<i>Propane primary heat source</i>	1, 5, 7	3, 4
<i>Central air conditioner system</i>	1, 2, 7	3, 4, 5, 6
<i>No air conditioner</i>	3, 4, 5	1, 2, 6, 7
<i>Primary, year-round residence</i>	1, 2, 7	3, 6

Verbatim Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, members were given the opportunity to share any comments, concerns, or questions they had. Forty-two percent of the respondents offered input.

Among those who commented, the following table provides a breakdown of the subjects mentioned and the number of comments that were positive, negative, or neutral. A full listing of comments can be found in Appendix B.

Subject/Topic	Total # Comments	Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>Rates/Fees</i>	48	8	38	2
<i>Operations/Engineering – blinks, outages, tree trimming, AMI/AMR</i>	43	36	5	2
<i>Renewable Energy</i>	31			
<i>Management/Board</i>	31	24	4	3
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	22	22	0	0
<i>Member Services/Marketing – resolving issues, customer service reps</i>	16	16	0	0
<i>Member Identity/Loyalty</i>	6	3	2	1
<i>Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits</i>	4	1	0	3
<i>Finance/Billing</i>	4	1	2	1
<i>Newsletter/Information</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Additional Services</i>	1	0	0	1

Appendix A:

Key Driver/Factor Explanation

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to reduce the many service attributes rated in the survey to a core set of issues. This analysis shows how consumers unconsciously think about or group the many different performance attributes. Four factors were found and named Rates, Member Service, Electric Service, and Social Responsibility.

The performance quality attributes that make up each factor are listed below in order of the performance attribute most related to the factor down to the attribute least related to the factor.

Rates Factor

- Charging reasonable energy rates
- Charging reasonable base rates
- Working to keep rates low

Member Service Factor

- Having friendly, courteous employees
- Being easy to reach
- Resolving issues or problems

Electric Service Factor

- Restoring power quickly after an outage
- Keeping outages to a minimum

Social Responsibility Factor

- Making renewable energy choices available to you
- Operating with concern for the environment

The attribute *providing enough information to help you manage energy wisely* is not included in the factors found because it is not highly correlated with other attributes.

Key Driver Analysis

To help determine where expectations are and are not being met for co-op members, we calculate importance scores for the factors and attributes. The importance scores were derived using the beta scores from a regression of the factors and attributes on overall satisfaction. What we are looking for is significance. If a factor or attribute is positively significant, it has a positive relationship with satisfaction. If the factor/attribute receives a high rating, overall satisfaction also receives a high rating. That is, the more a factor or attribute influences overall satisfaction, the higher its importance score.

Factors and attributes that are found to be significant in the regression are labeled as key drivers of overall satisfaction and shown in the figure.

Separate analyses were done to find the key drivers of value among residential members of Beartooth Electric Cooperative. Rather than regressing the factors and attributes on overall satisfaction, they were regressed on the attribute “delivering good value for the money”. The key drivers of value are shown in separate figures.

Appendix B:

Verbatim Responses

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In order to present comments in their entirety, verbatim responses may appear under more than one heading. The portion of the comment pertaining to the section is in black, while portions covered under other areas are colored in gray.

Overall Satisfaction – Positive Responses

I'm satisfied/Good company/No problems (22 general comments like this)

Management/Board – Positive Responses

Because I've paid attention to the magazine, I know they've been through a tough time with the breakup and I think they've done a great job getting out of that bankruptcy. I am impressed with bringing rates down, and financially I think they are getting along very well. It is impressive. I wish the base rates were lower, but I also realize that there are a tremendous number of Beartooth members and they have to all pay something.

I am thankful for the Board members' professional service.

I appreciate all the Board has done to keep us informed of all decisions and the option to express our opinions. I am proud to be a member of Beartooth Electric.

I appreciate the work of the new Board of Trustees and what they have done to get the co-op back on track.

I guess when we first moved back, our bill doubled in the first month. That was a shocker. They were in a group that was putting up a generator up by Great Falls. When they got out of that group, the rates almost doubled. They are coming down some now, so they must have found some cheaper energy. The Board is working really hard keeping the energy rates down, especially in the last 3 or 4 years. So I'm really happy about that.

I have been very happy with their turnaround and changes in the last 3 years. They are very pleasant to deal with.

I have seen my electric rates drastically decrease over the last 3 years. I think BEC has done an excellent job with the co-op and served their customers and communities well. I am excited to see them looking at renewable energy sources. Keep up the great work.

I like the continuity in the sense of their workforce (longevity of employees) in the community and their communication (they speak English) as well as their speedy response; adapting to innovation change cautiously.

I like them. They do what they were developed to do.

I think since they went through their bankruptcy, I think they are trying to do a good job. I am pleased with them. Electricity does not go out much and when I do have an outage, they get out here quickly. I do try to attend the meetings.

I think that the current Board of Directors got them out of a big hole and deserve a lot of credit for doing so.

Additional Comments
Management/Board – Positive Responses
(continued)

I think they are doing a pretty good job now. They have had their problems and whatnot, but I would like to think there are good people on the Board now.

I think they have done excellently in dealing with the issue with Southern and how they have handled all that. Very well done.

I think they have improved over the last couple of years. When we had other people in there running it, they were always in debt and it was ruined by a CEO who got a great retirement when he resigned. I think the co-op is much fairer now.

It has been okay, I know you guys are struggling.

Keep working for us.

My BEC is used primarily only in the summer months at a cabin we have had since 1968, so I am a long time member. My service has always been reliable. I live in Oklahoma and work for a deregulated retail electric provider in the state of Texas, so I am familiar with challenges of electric co-ops. I feel BEC does a great job.

The Board has done an excellent job of getting us out of deep water.

The rate reductions that they have had over the last 2 years I believe is very important to the consumer. I believe it's a great decision to lower the rates.

There are a couple things. Since the present Board got elected, they have done a good job considering the issues they inherited (trying to fix what that prior Board had gotten the co-op into). I am concerned about renewable sources they have gotten into at the present time. I do not agree with wind and solar farms (large scales). They do a pretty good job of customer service overall.

They are doing a good job. The present Board took over after the previous one bankrupted them. The Board has recovered from past issues and I am happy about that.

They are really local orientated. We have good contact with them. We have neighbors on the Board and they are part of the community.

They do a good job. I trust the people who are there now.

They have done a good job getting out of a mess.

Management/Board – Negative Responses

I felt it was a bad idea for Beartooth Electric to build a power plant in Great Falls because it made energy prices go up. People told the Board of Directors that this would be a bad idea because people are moving away from coal.

Additional Comments
Management/Board – Negative Responses
(continued)

It is sad that they got involved in the arrangement with Yellowstone Valley, Magic City, and Great Falls. The little guys were left hung out to dry and the co-op was left with bankruptcy, basically. We need to figure out a way to get rates down. Hopefully having the solar will help get rates more manageable.

Put more time into legislation. We need more people to fight for the consumer.

So I know the last few years they have had some real issues and there was some talk about merging with another co-op and using that to try and reduce prices. I am absolutely opposed to doing that, I'd rather pay higher prices than merge because we would lose any sense of autonomy and we would lose our power by doing that. Once the co-op merges with another there is no coming back from it.

Management/Board – Neutral Responses

I don't feel the rural segment of Beartooth Electric will get a fair deal if Dave Peterson leaves. I hope you can find an agricultural representative that understands Ag problems and advocates for them.

I think prices are too high and I would like to get out. I would like the co-op to go with the Wyoming co-op. I feel like the co-op they are in is very right wing. They don't push other types of electricity.

I think the base rates are a little pricey. I realize that the co-op is having a hard time right now, but I think there are ways they work on that.

Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses

Bluetooth Electric has been prompt in doing what I ask them to do.

I am generally satisfied with their service.

I am very happy with the services.

I am very happy with your service. We moved here from Pennsylvania and we find that the service is better than we've had in the past. We are very happy.

I am very thankful for them and I think they have done a great job. We have our glitches here and there, but they get power back on very fast. I am very happy with them.

I believe now the co-op is working in our best interests, even though the rates are a bit high. We are getting good value for our money. In the 22 years that I have been a member, I have seen outages drop by about 95%+. I have not used my generator for 4 years. They are very responsive when I've called with questions or concerns (changing billing).

I know when we've had power outages, they've done great at getting the power back up and running. I am very grateful.

Additional Comments
Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses
(continued)

I really appreciate the linemen that are willing to go out in all kinds of weather to get our power back on.

I think Beartooth Electric does a great job providing power out here in the boondocks. Any time we have had a brownout or power outage they quickly located the problem and fixed it. Whenever I call the main office in Red Lodge, they have always answered my questions and were always a pleasure to deal with. I thank them for providing us electricity here in Clark.

I think it is convenient to have electric on the mountain. I think that the rates have gone up, but it is nice to have electric. The service guys that come out are excellent and very personable and they have to deal with tough conditions. I would give them a lot of credit!

I think since they went through their bankruptcy, I think they are trying to do a good job. I am pleased with them. Electricity does not go out much and when I do have an outage, they get out here quickly. I do try to attend the meetings.

I think they do a really good job. They come out and trim trees. They also call when they have a power outage to let us know what is going on. And they get it [back] on quickly. We are satisfied with their service.

In almost 30 years I can count on one hand the power outages. Pretty good record!

My BEC is used primarily only in the summer months at a cabin we have had since 1968, so I am a long time member. My service has always been reliable. I live in Oklahoma and work for a deregulated retail electric provider in the state of Texas, so I am familiar with challenges of electric co-ops. I feel BEC does a great job.

Never had a problem with them. Electricity went out one time, pulled the line down. We called them and they came out quickly.

No complaints about service, but I do feel the cost of my electricity could be lower.

Pretty much trouble free service.

Thank you for great service.

The linemen do a fantastic job; we appreciate it. We would also like to not be the highest rate co-op in the nation.

The service being reconnected after an outage. I do appreciate them giving us a call ahead of time, it is really appreciated. I am also interested in the solar panels and would like information emailed to me.

The service guys have done a real good job.

Their service has improved remarkably over the last 5 or so years since the new Board. I am very happy with them and before that I was very dissatisfied.

They are doing a good job and the linemen are good.

Additional Comments
Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses
(continued)

They are super. They moved a transmission line for me and they will still stop and see how we are doing.

Unhappy about baseline rates, but services are excellent. Very happy with outage response on New Year's Eve.

Very happy with the services.

Very impressed with the power reliability and have had zero known outages since becoming a customer/member. Previous energy company averaged two or three per year. Thank you!

We appreciate having electricity.

We appreciate the service. They are helpful and are quick to get outages resolved regardless of the weather.

We are very happy with the services provided by the Beartooth Electric Cooperative.

We are very pleased with the service.

We depend on them and they provide good service. I think they are good people.

We have been very, very happy with the service they have given us so far. Cost is not the problem for a community solar panel, but it wasn't available to us.

We live in Clark and have to say with the wind we have few outages and when we do they are usually taken care of in a reasonable time. Thanks to all your employees!

We spend 7 months a year in Montana. When we got to Montana last June, one of the legs to the house burnt out on a Friday and we had no power. Three guys fixed the power and were very generous and helpful and in two hours, power was restored. It was very nice of them when they could have had other obligations and I was very happy with their service.

We thought they had really good customer service when we had a problem with our meter and they came right out.

Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses

Beartooth Electric had 3 line power across from Fishtail and wanted to run it through my land. Beartooth claimed they had an easement, but is pissed off because they didn't. Feel like they are hard balling me. Stated, I can go nine innings.

I am not a happy camper about the short term outages.

I do not appreciate the sudden power surges unrelated to any weather event.

I've been kind of irritated about blips I have been getting in power. I don't know what the cause is, but it is something I just live with now.

Additional Comments
Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses
(continued)

They are getting better than they used to be and I think they are going to get there. I tried to get 3 phase for irrigation; they used to provide the transformer, but now you have to pay for the transformer, \$2,000 for each transformer, and you need three of them. I think that is ridiculous.

Operations/Engineering – Neutral Responses

I say keep the light on, laughingly.

I would like to see any security lights that they put up to have a cover on them so they do not shine in the night sky. That's why I gave a "4" on environmental because I believe that is light pollution.

Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Positive Responses

Been good to deal with.

Every time I've had to deal with them, the people themselves were just outstanding, predominantly the linemen and others who come over to the cabin to work. I'm super impressed with the people I've dealt with.

I believe now the co-op is working in our best interests, even though the rates are a bit high. We are getting good value for our money. In the 22 years that I have been a member, I have seen outages drop by about 95%+. I have not used my generator for 4 years. They are very responsive when I've called with questions or concerns (changing billing).

I get wonderful cooperation every time I call. They are giving me a free meter tomorrow.

I just appreciate the price of the electricity and the bill inserts and the fact that when I have to call, they have been extremely nice.

I like the continuity in the sense of their workforce (longevity of employees) in the community and their communication (they speak English) as well as their speedy response; adapting to innovation change cautiously.

I really appreciate being able to contact them during outages. They are very friendly.

I think Beartooth Electric does a great job providing power out here in the boondocks. Any time we have had a brownout or power outage they quickly located the problem and fixed it. Whenever I call the main office in Red Lodge, they have always answered my questions and were always a pleasure to deal with. I thank them for providing us electricity here in Clark.

I think they do a really good job. They come out and trim trees. They also call when they have a power outage to let us know what is going on. And they get it [back] on quickly. We are satisfied with their service.

The service being reconnected after an outage. I do appreciate them giving us a call ahead of time, it is really appreciated. I am also interested in the solar panels and would like information emailed to me.

Additional Comments**Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Positive Responses
(continued)**

There are a couple things. Since the present Board got elected, they have done a good job considering the issues they inherited (trying to fix what that prior Board had gotten the co-op into). I am concerned about renewable sources they have gotten into at the present time. I do not agree with wind and solar farms (large scales). They do a pretty good job of customer service overall.

They are a fine organization and have exceptional employees and being part of the cooperative is a big privilege for us.

They are really local orientated. We have good contact with them. We have neighbors on the Board and they are part of the community.

They have been very cooperative with me. They have been quite friendly. The only thing that bothers me is the price; it is a little high. But, I am not familiar with the other power companies, but I have heard from other people that they think it is high and I think it is high.

We appreciate the good will and earnest work on the part of Arleen Boyd, Laurie Beers, and others who have given selflessly of their time and interest. We are also grateful for tips on energy saving and have benefited from my husband's remodeling to install new windows, better insulation, and a better thermostat.

We depend on them and they provide good service. I think they are good people.

Billing/Finance – Positive Responses

In the last few years they have done a lot better job in billing and everything. We have been with them for 40 years.

Billing/Finance – Negative Responses

I receive my retirement money on the 1st of the month and can only pay my bill then. Having the bill due at the end of the month, with NO grace period, puts my bill "OVER DUE" when I go online to pay it. I've brought this up before with my district representative and got nothing.

The co-op needs to get bills sent at the same time each month. Sometimes I get my bill on the 4th and sometimes I get it on the 15th. I pay bills on the 10th and half the time the bill isn't even here!

Billing/Finance – Neutral Response

I just wish they would implement their low income program again to help those of us out who are having a hard time paying their electric bill.

Additional Comments (continued)

Rates/Fees – Positive Responses

I appreciate that they have lowered their rates.

I have seen my electric rates drastically decrease over the last 3 years. I think BEC has done an excellent job with the co-op and served their customers and communities well. I am excited to see them looking at renewable energy sources. Keep up the great work.

I just appreciate the price of the electricity and the bill inserts and the fact that when I have to call, they have been extremely nice.

I think they do a good job and my rate went down. It was wonderful.

They have been good to me. Their rates are reasonable.

Because I've paid attention to the magazine, I know they've been through a tough time with the breakup and I think they've done a great job getting out of that bankruptcy. I am impressed with bringing rates down, and financially I think they are getting along very well. It is impressive. I wish the base rates were lower, but I also realize that there are a tremendous number of Beartooth members and they have to all pay something.

I believe now the co-op is working in our best interests, even though the rates are a bit high. We are getting good value for our money. In the 22 years that I have been a member, I have seen outages drop by about 95%+. I have not used my generator for 4 years. They are very responsive when I've called with questions or concerns (changing billing).

I can say your rates are getting better, but they are still high. The base rates are high. You pay \$33 just to have a meter and that is kind of pricey.

Rates/Fees – Negative Responses

Any answer which was not a '5' is simply due to how much of my SSDI check goes for electricity. Nothing about Beartooth Electric. I am hopeful that come spring and summer the cost will go down due to not needing to use electricity to heat the apartment. Regarding the solar panels, the landlord would have to make that decision and investment. That is why I selected \$500. There are six apartments on the property. That would be \$3,000 she would have to pay, simply for a resident's bill to be lowered. I don't think she would see the need.

Find some way to get our rates lowered.

Get rid of the base fee. That is my only complaint.

I feel the hook up rates is very high such as energy rate and base rate.

I feel the rates are high.

I have 4-5 meters at another location and I am not happy about paying a base charge per meter.

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

I guess when we first moved back, our bill doubled in the first month. That was a shocker. They were in a group that was putting up a generator up by Great Falls. When they got out of that group, the rates almost doubled. They are coming down some now, so they must have found some cheaper energy. The Board is working really hard keeping the energy rates down, especially in the last 3 or 4 years. So I'm really happy about that.

I think prices are too high and I would like to get out. I would like the co-op to go with the Wyoming co-op. I feel like the co-op they are in is very right wing. They don't push other types of electricity.

I think that the co-op does a good job, but I would like to see prices go down.

I think the base rates are a little pricey. I realize that the co-op is having a hard time right now, but I think there are ways they work on that.

I want to understand why the utility bills are so high compared to other cooperatives. I am also interested in more information about solar panels and how they work.

I would like to see the rates go down.

I would like to see them lower their rates since they are considered the highest. I would change co-ops if I could. I am not interested in solar since my neighbors are off the grid and they have to replace their appliances every year due to this.

I'd like to see the base rate go down.

I'll take a rate deduction if it were offered.

It is only two of us and we are gone 12 hours a day and use a wood stove to heat our house and still pay over \$200 a month. My daughter pays half that amount and is not with Beartooth and has the heat set higher in the same size home without a wood stove. I feel the rates are way high. I have even checked into solar.

It is sad that they got involved in the arrangement with Yellowstone Valley, Magic City, and Great Falls. The little guys were left hung out to dry and the co-op was left with bankruptcy, basically. We need to figure out a way to get rates down. Hopefully having the solar will help get rates more manageable.

Like to see power cost drop.

Lower their prices.

No complaints about service, but I do feel the cost of my electricity could be lower.

Please continue to get rate reductions through solar. I own a vacant lot and I think it is silly to pay the minimum each month on this lot until it is sold.

Taxes are too high and rates are too high. I only use the fireplace for weekends and my bill will jump from \$35 to \$60.

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

The base rates are high. For a vacation home base rate we have to pay \$30-\$35, and in the wintertime we are not there at all.

The electrical bills are kind of high.

The first year I moved to Montana, I got a letter from the co-op saying I would receive a credit/refund or shareholder type thing, so I went into the office and asked the lady in there about it and she said they haven't done that in years. I don't understand why they even sent me that then if it wasn't something they still did. I would also like the \$35 charge to go off my bill and not be something I have to pay for, but oh well.

The linemen do a fantastic job; we appreciate it. We would also like to not be the highest rate co-op in the nation.

The rates are too high.

The rates need to be reduced. The cooperative needs to come and present the rebates that would be available if I were to go with solar or wind. The cooperative needs to come and present the economics of going with solar or wind programs.

They have been very cooperative with me. They have been quite friendly. The only thing that bothers me is the price; it is a little high. But, I am not familiar with the other power companies, but I have heard from other people that they think it is high and I think it is high.

They need to work to reduce rates. Be comparable with Northwest Energy, which is in town. Contact only if it is about solar panel information.

They should bring down the base rate.

They should lower their electricity price.

Unhappy about baseline rates, but services are excellent. Very happy with outage response on New Year's Eve.

Used to be able to just shut off the electric with no charge, but now when we are not there and not using any electric we are still charged. I don't feel that is right at all.

We love them, but their rates are so high compared to everywhere else.

Because I've paid attention to the magazine, I know they've been through a tough time with the breakup and I think they've done a great job getting out of that bankruptcy. I am impressed with bringing rates down, and financially I think they are getting along very well. It is impressive. I wish the base rates were lower, but I also realize that there are a tremendous number of Beartooth members and they have to all pay something.

I believe now the co-op is working in our best interests, even though the rates are a bit high. We are getting good value for our money. In the 22 years that I have been a member, I have seen outages drop by about 95%+. I have not used my generator for 4 years. They are very responsive when I've called with questions or concerns (changing billing).

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

I can say your rates are getting better, but they are still high. The base rates are high. You pay \$33 just to have a meter and that is kind of pricey.

Rates/Fees – Neutral Responses

I know they are trying to reduce prices and I encourage them to keep doing so.

I think it is convenient to have electric on the mountain. I think that the rates have gone up, but it is nice to have electric. The service guys that come out are excellent and very personable and they have to deal with tough conditions. I would give them a lot of credit!

Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Positive Responses

We appreciate the good will and earnest work on the part of Arleen Boyd, Laurie Beers, and others who have given selflessly of their time and interest. We are also grateful for tips on energy saving and have benefited from my husband's remodeling to install new windows, better insulation, and a better thermostat.

Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Neutral Responses

I want to see the co-op keep working on environmental energy efficiency projects. I would be in favor of seeing solar going forward.

I would love to have an energy audit done, but every time I call about it, they say I cannot get one.

The co-op should provide opportunity for energy audits.

Additional Services – Neutral Responses

I am very interested in BEC investing in community solar and would be interested in investing even though I already have solar panels. I would like to see BEC promote more energy conservation for members including possible ways to help finance upgrades.

Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Positive Responses

I just appreciate the price of the electricity and the bill inserts and the fact that when I have to call, they have been extremely nice.

Well, at least now they don't have the articles about global warming in their newsletter. That is good.

Additional Comments (continued)

Member Identity / Loyalty – Positive Responses

I appreciate all the Board has done to keep us informed of all decisions and the option to express our opinions. I am proud to be a member of Beartooth Electric.

I appreciate being a part of the co-op and I know the co-op tries their hardest to keep me satisfied. I appreciate all they do.

They are a fine organization and have exceptional employees and being part of the cooperative is a big privilege for us.

Member Identity / Loyalty – Negative Responses

I would like to see them lower their rates since they are considered the highest. I would change co-ops if I could. I am not interested in solar since my neighbors are off the grid and they have to replace their appliances every year due to this.

The first year I moved to Montana, I got a letter from the co-op saying I would receive a credit/refund or shareholder type thing, so I went into the office and asked the lady in there about it and she said they haven't done that in years. I don't understand why they even sent me that then if it wasn't something they still did. I would also like the \$35 charge to go off my bill and not be something I have to pay for, but oh well.

Member Identity / Loyalty – Neutral Responses

I think since they went through their bankruptcy, I think they are trying to do a good job. I am pleased with them. Electricity does not go out much and when I do have an outage, they get out here quickly. I do try to attend the meetings.

Renewable Energy

Any answer which was not a '5' is simply due to how much of my SSDI check goes for electricity. Nothing about Beartooth Electric. I am hopeful that come spring and summer the cost will go down due to not needing to use electricity to heat the apartment. Regarding the solar panels, the landlord would have to make that decision and investment. That is why I selected \$500. There are six apartments on the property. That would be \$3,000 she would have to pay, simply for a resident's bill to be lowered. I don't think she would see the need.

How much credit or return would I receive should I provide money for a solar panel?

I am a little interested in the solar panel and would like to receive more information.

I am in favor of going the solar route. I have read about it in the paper that we receive.

I am wondering why they are not looking into wind energy anymore.

Additional Comments
Renewable Energy
(continued)

I am very interested in BEC investing in community solar and would be interested in investing even though I already have solar panels. I would like to see BEC promote more energy conservation for members including possible ways to help finance upgrades.

I appreciate them doing this survey. I am all for expending in solar and wind energy in our area especially. It would be nice if the co-op could help it be a little more accessible for their customers to get solar and wind energy. I feel like it's something our area needs and would be highly beneficial. Please have the co-op leave me a message if I do not answer because I would love to help in any way I can to get this going in our area.

I don't know how many panels I would need. Not sure of the process.

I don't understand the venture going with solar. I am curious as to why you would choose that.

I feel strongly about staying away from the alternative energy if it requires subsidies to be profitable. The goal of this business is to make money and serve the customer, not to appease those with wild ideas. To keep it short, if renewable energy can stay in the black on its own, do it. If not, forget it. Thank you.

I have seen my electric rates drastically decrease over the last 3 years. I think BEC has done an excellent job with the co-op and served their customers and communities well. I am excited to see them looking at renewable energy sources. Keep up the great work.

I like Beartooth a lot. And if they could make renewable options available at an affordable price that I can have at my property, I would be all in.

I think they are doing as good as they can with what is pending at this point trying to find the cheapest power available through natural resources.

I want to see the co-op keep working on environmental energy efficiency projects. I would be in favor of seeing solar go forward.

I want to understand why the utility bills are so high compared to other cooperatives. I am also interested in more information about solar panels and how they work.

I would like more information about renewable energy.

I would like more information sent to me about wind power by email or mail.

I would like net metering.

I would like to see them lower their rates since they are considered the highest. I would change co-ops if I could. I am not interested in solar since my neighbors are off the grid and they have to replace their appliances every year due to this.

I'm interested in gathering more information on the solar. Also, I would like information sent out in the mail.

I'm interested in the solar project; please send me more information.

Additional Comments

Renewable Energy

(continued)

Please encourage net metering.

Tell them to get up a community solar panel or wind. That is what they should be heading towards. Whichever one is most feasible for the area.

The rates need to be reduced. The cooperative needs to come and present the rebates that would be available if I were to go with solar or wind. The cooperative needs to come and present the economics of going with solar or wind programs.

The service being reconnected after an outage. I do appreciate them giving us a call ahead of time, it is really appreciated. I am also interested in the solar panels and would like information emailed to me.

The solar panel question would have been a little easier to assess if you'd given an indication of how much of a reduction in dollars or percentile of the bill each panel would result in. As worded, you're asking people to answer a question with no information to base that answer on.

There are a couple things. Since the present Board got elected, they have done a good job considering the issues they inherited (trying to fix what that prior Board had gotten the co-op into). I am concerned about renewable sources they have gotten into at the present time. I do not agree with wind and solar farms (large scales). They do a pretty good job of customer service overall.

There are big huge wind turbines about 12 miles from my property. I think they were just put up within the last year. I'd be interested to know where that power goes and if we are getting any of the benefits of that since they are placed in our local area. There are solar panels in that same area. Maybe if I could get information on that by mail that would be okay.

They need to work to reduce rates. Be comparable with Northwest Energy, which is in town. Contact only if it is about solar panel information.

We have been very, very happy with the service they have given us so far. Cost is not the problem for a community solar panel, but it wasn't available to us.

We installed a solar system when we built our home 3 years ago. There appears to be NO transparency into how our solar use affects our electric bill. I see NOTHING about what solar energy we generate goes back to the grid or how it affects our bill. I called to try to understand this and was told there was a reconciliation at the end of the year. But I have never seen this. So I actually have no idea whether any of this is working the way we had hoped. Very frustrating!

Other Comments

I appreciate them doing this survey. I am all for expending in solar and wind energy in our area especially. It would be nice if the co-op could help it be a little more accessible for their customers to get solar and wind energy. I feel like it's something our area needs and would be highly beneficial. Please have the co-op leave me a message if I do not answer because I would love to help in any way I can to get this going in our area.

Additional Comments
Other Comments
(continued)

I have not had a problem with them. Some of the concerns I have is a new fella that moved in by my cabin. They got a trailer house that sits there. I know they bought the piece of property and I was going to buy it but we were a little slow. If they drill the well up there, because our well on our property is one of the last grandfathered in. If those guys drill a well up there, they did it illegally. It would be nice to find out if they did. If they did, they should be in trouble.

My grandson is a contractor and they are always calling him and giving him work.

Survey asks some questions that made inappropriate assumptions. I am independent of needing power from the grid. Questions are meaningless if it was already implemented. I am not interested in alternative energy uses or have not implemented any in the last two years, but I have implemented many energy alternative sources, but more than 2 years ago. I received the survey beforehand to review and gave comments about it. I think the co-op should be cautious in concluding a numerical value in reference to the solar and wind (i.e. if someone already implemented, it gives the impression there is no interest, when there is.) Kevin Owens can call me back if he'd like.

This is a family used summer cabin only. Many questions don't really apply.

Appendix C: Questionnaire

**2018 BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
RESIDENTIAL MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY
FINAL DRAFT 2/22/18**

INTRODUCTION:

May I please speak with the head of household who has or shares responsibility for the electric utility bills?
Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Beartooth Electric Cooperative, your electric service provider. They have asked us to conduct a confidential survey with co-op members about the service they receive. As a cooperative member, you have a say in how your co-op is run. *(If asked – you are with NRECA Market Research Services – you are NOT with the cooperative)* **LET ME ASSURE YOU WE ARE NOT SELLING OR SOLICITING ANYTHING.** May I have about 10 minutes of your time to ask you some questions now? *[If hesitant, please offer the following option.] If you would like to first verify the legitimacy of this survey with Beartooth Electric Cooperative (Phone # 406-446-2310), I would be happy to schedule a convenient time to call you back or set up an online survey at your convenience.*

Yes ... **Continue** No ... When would be a more convenient time for me to call back?
Date to call: _____ Time to call: _____ (Mountain time)

Setup an online survey Respondent's set-up info here-- _____
*****Screen to ensure not interviewing employee or Board member*****

I. How do you classify this residence?

- Primary residence (year-round)
- Occasional (weekends)
- Winter only (e.g. Dec-Feb)
- Summer only (e.g. Jun-Aug)
- Other (specify) _____

Member Satisfaction and Performance Ratings

2. Using a 5-point scale where 1 is "very dissatisfied" and 5 is "very satisfied," how satisfied overall would you say you are with Beartooth Electric?

Very Dissatisfied					Very Satisfied	DK
1	2	3	4	5	6	

3. Now, on a 5-point scale where 1 means "very poor" and 5 means "excellent," how would you rate Beartooth Electric on the following on... [RANDOMIZE.]

	Very Poor				Excellent	DK
a. delivering good value for the money	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. having friendly, courteous employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. being easy to reach	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. resolving issues or problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. providing enough information to help me manage energy wisely	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. operating with concern for the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. making renewable energy choices available to me	1	3	3	4	5	6

4. For each of the following statements, please use a 5-point scale again, but this time 1 means you “strongly disagree” and 5 means you “strongly agree”. **[RANDOMIZE.]**

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	DK
a. Beartooth keeps me well informed about news and current events in the cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	
b. I trust the Board of Trustees to make good decisions for the cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Rates and Fees

5. How would you rate Beartooth Electric on the following using a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent?” **[RANDOMIZE.]**

	Very Poor					Excellent	DK
a. charging reasonable energy rates	1	2	3	4	5	6	
b. working to keep rates low	1	2	3	4	5	6	
c. charging reasonable base rates	1	2	3	4	5	6	
d. keeping outages to a minimum	1	2	3	4	5	6	
e. restoring power quickly after an outage	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Energy Usage

6. What is the primary energy source for heating your home? **[DO NOT READ LIST]**

- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Propane
- Wood
- None
- Other (Specify) _____

7. What secondary energy sources, if any, are used for heating your home? **[DO NOT READ LIST. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.]**

- None
- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Propane
- Wood
- Other? (Specify) _____

8. What is the primary energy source for heating water in your home? **[DO NOT READ LIST]**

- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Propane
- None
- Other? (Specify) _____

9. How do you air condition your home? **[DO NOT READ LIST. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.]**

- Central system
- Individual room units
- Not at all
- Other? (Specify) _____

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

10. Which of the following energy projects have you implemented in the last two years? **[RANDOMIZE]**

	10. Have	10.a. Plan to
a. Improved insulation (e.g. attic, floor, wall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Installed more efficient heating system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Installed more efficient air conditioning system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Installed more efficient water heater	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Had an energy audit online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Installed energy saving light bulbs (LED)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Installed a programmable thermostat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Installed a Solar system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Installed a Wind system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Other? (Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.a. Do you plan to implement any of these in the next 12 months?

[IF THE RESPONDENT ASKS, THE LIST CAN BE READ TO THEM AGAIN.]

11. Beartooth Electric is considering building a community solar project. You would have the option to purchase a solar panel at the project and would receive a bill credit for the energy the unit produces. To receive a direct benefit from solar energy and support the use of renewable resources, how interested would you be in investing \$900 in a solar panel(s). Would you say you are extremely interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested?

extremely interested **[SKIP TO Q11.a. ONLY IF EXTREMELY INTERESTED.]**

somewhat interested **[SKIP TO Q11.b.]**

not at all interested **[SKIP TO Q11.b.]**

Don't know **[SKIP TO Q11.b.]**

11.a. How many solar panels would you be interested in purchasing at this price?

One Two Three Four Five or more Don't know

[SKIP TO Q12.]

11.b. If the price were \$700 for a solar panel, would you be extremely interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested?

extremely interested **[SKIP TO Q11.c. ONLY IF EXTREMELY INTERESTED.]**

somewhat interested **[SKIP TO Q11.d.]**

not at all interested **[SKIP TO Q11.d.]**

Don't know **[SKIP TO Q11.d.]**

11.c. How many solar panels would you be interested in purchasing at this price?

One Two Three Four Five or more Don't know

[SKIP TO Q12.]

11.d. If the price were \$500 a solar panel, would you be extremely interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested?

extremely interested **[SKIP TO Q11.e. ONLY IF EXTREMELY INTERESTED.]**

somewhat interested **[SKIP TO Q12.]**

not at all interested **[SKIP TO Q12.]**

Don't know **[SKIP TO Q12.]**

11.e. How many solar panels would you be interested in purchasing at this price?

One Two Three Four Five or more Don't know

[SKIP TO Q12.]

Communication

I2. From what sources do you most often see or hear information about Beartooth Electric?

[RANDOMIZE. DO NOT READ LIST; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.]

- Automated phone message/voice mail
- Bill inserts (information included with billing statement)
- Direct mail
- Member email (Connections)
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Rural Montana Magazine*
- Social media (Facebook)
- Website, www.beartoothelectric.com
- Other mention: _____
- Don't know

I3. Do you have a smartphone (one that can use the internet)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

I4. Do you have high speed internet service?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

I5. About how many hours a week do you spend on line? Please include all devices including desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones.

- Less than one hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 6-9 hours
- 10 hours or more
- Not at all **[SKIP TO Q19]**
- Don't know

I6. During the past year, approximately how many times have you visited your co-op's website? **[DO NOT READ LIST]**

- None **[SKIP TO Q18]**
- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- 6-10 times
- More than 10 times
- Don't know

I7. What were the reasons for visiting your co-ops website?

[DO NOT READ LIST. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY; PROBE FOR 'ANY OTHER REASONS'.]

- Pay my bill
- View billing information/account information/manage my account online
- Sign up for electric service
- Read news and information about the cooperative
- Find out about the board/board meetings
- Research energy efficiency information/energy saving tips
- Other (specify) _____
- Don't Know / Don't Recall

18. How often do you use Facebook?

- once a day or more
- a few times per week
- once a week or less
- Not at all/don't use FB

Member Identity and Loyalty

19. Do you view yourself as a member/owner or a customer of your electric cooperative, or both?

- 1 Member/Owner
- 2 Customer
- 3 Both
- 4 Don't Know

20. Do you personally know an employee of Beartooth Electric?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Demographics

I want to thank you for your patience. We are almost finished. I have just a few final questions that are used for classification purposes only.

21. Into which category does your age fall? **[READ LIST]**

- 1 18 to 35
- 2 36 to 44
- 3 45 to 54
- 4 55 to 64
- 5 65 to 74
- 6 75 and over
- 7 Refused

22. How many people live in your household?

- 1-self only
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more
- 7 DK/Refused

23. Just for statistical and research purposes, please stop me when I get to your total household income last year, before taxes? **[READ LIST]**

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- \$100,000 to under \$150,000
- \$150,000 to under \$200,000
- \$200,000 or more
- Don't Know
- Prefer Not to Answer

24. Gender of respondent: **[DO NOT ASK]**

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

Additional Comments you would like to make about Beartooth Electric: _____

Thank you so much for your participation. Have a wonderful evening.

Respondent's First Name (for verification purposes): _____

Telephone Number: _____