Lunch at the Walmart: Rural Strategies that Work

BECC 2017
Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act or Smart Grid Law passed in 2011, authorized $3.2 billion smart grid investments.

Established a $50 million literacy and education fund—outside of the utilities—for raising awareness of smart grid, smart meters, and AMI enabled technologies, 30% of which must reach low-income, senior, and “hard-to-reach” populations

3 BROAD OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- Grassroots Tactics
- Culturally Relevant Messages
- Intersecting Conversations
Central Illinois looks empty if travelled through at high speed
There is social capital there—
You have to know where to look for it

Social capital may be:
• Political
• Commercial
• Service
• Religious
Go where people are gathered

Are these all you see on state highways as you drive around?
Then go to the local Walmart and see if they’ll let you offer a lunch-and-learn to their employees in the break room
Communities are not interchangeable and people like you to know that
Small-town competition between Virden, Mason City and Petersburg

If you’re not from here you may not understand that we love our state

**Pro tip:** Things with Lincoln will work better than things without Lincoln
Service Clubs still exist in small towns and they are still important to people—our groups use them to connect.
These both dot the landscape in rural Illinois. One of them has people in it.
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