



# Girl Scouts River Valleys and NECA Minnesotas

## Introduction to Electrical Construction Initiative

A guide for NECA Chapters in developing a local program to introduce more girls to the electrical trade through partnership with the Girl Scouts and construction trade associations.

### **Proposed for**

Local Chapters of the National Electrical Contractors Association  
and Local Industry Partners

### **By**

Minneapolis Chapter NECA | St. Paul Chapter NECA | Power Partner MN

# This program is dedicated to – and the result of –

the leadership of John and Linda Schroepfer. John's former company, NEI Electric, is a NECA Member and John served as the St. Paul Chapter's Vice President. Even when health issues caused John to leave his company and position at NECA much too soon, John and Linda never stopped giving back to their community and to our industry. In 2018, Linda and John arranged for the first conversations between St. Paul Chapter, NECA, and Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. The rest is history. We owe a great debt of gratitude to John and Linda, and we dedicate this effort to you.

## Opening Statement

The purpose of this guide is to set forth an outline for NECA Chapters to follow in developing their own program that strives to introduce girls to the electrical industry through partnerships with the Girl Scouts and local industry partners. In turn, programs like these will bring more women into the electrical industry and the construction trades as a whole!

## Background

PLEASE READ THIS SECTION before jumping to the "Starting your own Local Program" section. This section will help in developing your own ideas for how your program can find success locally with the relationships and partnerships that you have in your area!

In Minnesota, our partnership with the Girls Scouts of River Valleys (GSRV) started in 2019. GSRV has a local program called 'Power Girls' that focuses on giving girls a chance to practice construction trades skills, learn from female mentors and see themselves in a trades career. The Minneapolis and St. Paul NECA Chapters and [Power Partner MN](#) (a Minneapolis LMCC marketing program) started the partnership with GSRV by financially sponsoring the Power Girls programs at the Board and LMCC levels. The first event was hosted as a virtual learning opportunity where girls were tasked with constructing LED flashlights. Heading into the summer of 2021 GSRV was able to put on their weeklong Power Girls Camp where campers have a different trade focused project on each day of the week. Our NECA Chapters hosted 'Electrical Day' on the very first day of camp. 63 girls scouts and 20+ female volunteers spent the day together in partnership and in mentorship working in groups on connecting power from a switch to a light bulb and a receptacle. Volunteers included trade school students, 1st through 5th year apprentices, journey workers, foremen, project managers, and executive leadership. Seven contractors were represented along with five industry partners who were key in donating tools and materials. The successes of the day were built on strong industry relationships, generous donations, and sponsorships for the future of women and the industry, and most importantly dedicated volunteers and mentors to young girls interested in the construction trades.

## Background (continued)

These three key factors have been pillars in our local growth with GSRV and the Power Girls Program. The MN NECA Chapters now host five total events in a year. One small scale event at each local inside JATC (110, 292, 343), one small scaled event at the Minnesota Statewide Limited Energy JATC, and our large event in the summers during Power Girls Week!

For more on ideas and what the programs look like check out the video links below. Please read on for our step-by-step general guide to building your local partnership between NECA and the Girl Scouts!

### Power Girls Week 2021 – Electrical Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMDXvyp2QBg>

### Power Girls Electrical Day @ St. Paul JATC

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_oYZtAD9Mtl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oYZtAD9Mtl)

### Power Girls LEA Day @ MN Limited Energy JATC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6OvlyrNBTo>

# Guidelines to Starting Your Own Local Program

The steps listed below are general guidelines towards creating the partnerships and program events. They are not to be followed exactly as listed rather starters for building your own local relationships and programs. Every area will have a different path towards program success. It is important to understand your area, your relationships, and your goals to implement these steps as best you see fit!

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## 1 Find your local Girl Scout Council

Link for Girls Scout Councils near you: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/council-finder.html>

Reach out to the council in your surrounding area and ask about the programs they offer and how electrical contractors can get involved. You will want to speak with council members with the job titles of “Director of Development” and/or “Program Lead.” These relationships are the starting point to building a program. They may not currently offer any construction themed events. Introduce them to programs like the Power Girls and other women in construction focused events.

You may want to consider the relative size of your local Girl Scout Chapter jurisdiction and the size of your Chapter’s jurisdiction. Depending on the circumstances, it may be worthwhile to consider working across multiple NECA Chapters to share the responsibilities and costs – as the St. Paul and Minneapolis Chapters do with the Girl Scouts of River Valleys.

## 2 Set up discussion between Girls Scout Council and NECA Board Members

In your discussions with the Girl Scouts Council, you will likely be presented a brochure for sponsorship levels. Give the Council a chance to present a brochure of sponsorship levels or something similar to your Board of Directors. It is important to determine what sponsorship level is a safe investment for the Chapter but also allows the Chapter and local electrical industry partners to develop the curriculum/projects for the events you plan to host in your program. If sponsorship levels are not presented or developed, determine the costs associated with hosting an event, and how those cost can be divided equally. It is helpful for the Chapter to control these early conversations, but as plans develop, you may want to expand beyond the Chapter and Board to talk to your local LMCC(s) and union(s).

**IMPORTANT** – talk to or design a program specific patch with your Girl Scout Council the participants will receive upon completion of the activity.

## 3 Develop your program details

Once a sponsorship level has been established the next step is to determine the scope of what can be done at that level. If your goal is to host a single event or multiple across the year, the following bullet points are key to consider when marketing the event not only to the Girl Scouts but also for volunteers.

### Date & Location

- Time of year indoors or out?
- Neutral camp site, local JATC, contractors' shop, local trade school?
- In person or virtual?

### Project Plan

- What are they building?
- Work with a local trade school or JATC for project ideas.
- Inside electrical theme, limited energy/low voltage theme?

### Age range of Girl Scouts

- What age is appropriate for the difficulty level of the project?
- We encourage projects that fit for a wide age range, get as many girls involved as possible! 4th grade to 12th grade is a good range.

### Group Sizes

- Do the projects need to be worked on in groups or individually?
- How many volunteers per group?

### Safety

- Emphasize the importance of safety!!
- Develop clear protocols should any accidents occur.
- Take participants through relevant safety talks and pre-construction stretching.

## 4 MOST IMPORTANT – Find your local female volunteers

Volunteers can make the biggest impact in your events! Reach out to your contractors, local JATC's, IBEW locals, trade schools etc. for volunteers. You will certainly need volunteers that are able to guide and mentor the girls scouts through their projects, this type of help is huge when it comes from field electricians and office staff who may have come from the field. While the field electricians will be able to provide the most guidance with the projects, make sure you emphasize volunteers of all professions are welcomed! The construction portion of the projects can be a learning experience for all, but the impact is made in numbers and in commitment! Welcome volunteers who are passionate about what they do and want to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

## 5 Work with local trade school or JATC on Project Details

Once you've established what you want your project to be, create a checklist for the following items to be completed.

- Project blueprint and instructions (remember the age range of your groups and where many of your volunteers are coming from)
- Tools & Materials
- Time to complete (On average how long does the project take to complete? Again, keeping in mind, the age range of your groups. Develop a project that keeps everyone busy).
- Has your local trade school hosted projects like this in the past?

## 6 Reach out to Trade Partners and Vendors

Similar to help from contractors and volunteers, industry partners and local vendors are a huge help and will likely want to be involved in the whole process. Ask if they are willing to donate materials, tools, gifts, and swag for the event. This is a great opportunity for everyone involved in building local relationships while giving the girl scouts a great experience. Impact is made in numbers and in commitment!

## 7 Communication

Throughout the entire process make sure to communicate efficiently, timely, and transparently. Everyone should know their role in preparing for the event. For example, ask yourself the following general questions in the planning phase...

- Who is providing the tools and material? How is it getting there?
- Do we have enough volunteers? Do they know where and when to be there? Are they aware of the project they will be working on?
- How many girl scouts will be there? If doing a gift, do you have enough for everyone?

## 8 Review Liabilities

In working with the Girl Scouts make sure there are clear discussions and plans for items such as insurance coverage, injury during the event, media release forms if someone is going to be taking pictures or videos for marketing purposes. Typically, Girl Scout Councils will have these things established so make sure to ask well before the event.

## 9 Execute the day

As NECA you should take on the program development with the mindset of a project manager. NECA and the industry partners will do a lot of the leg work leading up to the day, but when it comes event time, it's about the girl scouts and the volunteers!

## 10 Debrief

For future planning have internal discussions with everyone involved about the successes and failures of the day. What can be improved for future events? Can materials and project be kept and re-used? Maintain an active volunteer list as you'll find many volunteers will want to help again in future events.

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For help in getting, your local partnership going between NECA, and the Girl Scouts please feel free to reach out. You may also reach out for help in consulting with media and design components of your events. If you generate media, be sure to recognize all of your partners. This will make growing partnerships and expanding offerings more successful in the future. We hope this guide is just the beginning to many successful programs across the country!

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