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## **About the J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award**

The award was established in 2003 by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC) and the Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) Program Board. This competition falls under the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program and is administered by the CREC and CCC Program Board, with support from NRECA communication staff.

This award memorializes the late J.C. Brown and his unwavering dedication to the importance of communication as a vital link connecting electric cooperatives with each other and with their consumer-members, and to advancing the cooperative business model.

Individuals nominated for the J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award should demonstrate through their actions a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the strategic role of communication in employee, member and community relations. The executive should have a proven track record of advancing the role of communication at his or her electric cooperative, public power district, statewide association, or generation and transmission (G&T) system.



## J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award



### Critical Information

#### Award Cycle and Deadline

The 2021-2022 J.C. Brown Award cycle will begin accepting nominations on **Tuesday, September 14, 2021**. The deadline to submit a nomination is **Friday, October 29, 2021 at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**. Both payment and nominations must be completed prior to the deadline.

#### Eligibility

To be considered for this award, nominees must be currently serving as a CEO or general manager of a cooperative, public power district, statewide association, or generation and transmission (G&T) system and must be a voting member of NRECA.

An individual cannot win this award more than once. Nominations of individuals who have already received the J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award are NOT eligible to win a second time and their nominations will NOT be considered.

Nominations must be submitted by an employee of a cooperative and may NOT be entered by a marketing, advertising or PR agency or any other paid or outside consultant.

#### Disqualification

An entry may be disqualified for the following reasons:

- Payment was not received.
- The nomination was submitted after the deadline had passed.
- The individual nominated had already received the award.
- The nominee is no longer serving as a CEO or general manager at their cooperative.
- The cooperative is not a voting member of NRECA.
- The nomination entry was submitted by a marketing, advertising, or PR agency or any other paid or outside consultant.

The CREC, CCC and NRECA reserve the right to disqualify any entries that knowingly submitted false or misleading information and was not forthright on their entry form.

Entrants will be notified of disqualification via email and entry fees will not be refunded.



## J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award



### Payment Information

#### Nomination Fee

The nomination fee is **\$125** per entry. All payments and nominations must be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on October 29, 2021.

#### Payment Process

The nomination fee must be paid prior to receiving access to the entry form. Once the fee is paid, the nominator will be issued a confirmation email with a link to the entry form. Entries for which payment has not been received before the deadline will not be considered and will be disqualified.

#### Questions Regarding Payment

Questions regarding payment should be directed to the Accounts Receivable Department at 703.907.6875 or by email at [accountsreceivable@nreca.coop](mailto:accountsreceivable@nreca.coop).

**Please note:** Although the online payment portal and submission platform will accept nominations submitted until 11:59 PM EST, staff within the Accounts Receivable Department will only be available to assist you until 5:00 PM EST that day. Please plan accordingly.



## J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award



### Submission Information

#### Submitting Your Nomination

Please read all instructions carefully and provide all information requested in the entry form. Failure to provide the requested information will result in a loss of points.

All entries must be submitted using the online submission form provided within the confirmation email received after submitting your payment. The online submission form allows for uploading additional support materials, including video clips, PDFs and jpegs.

Entries must be submitted by an employee of the cooperative and may NOT be submitted by a marketing, advertising or PR agency or any other paid or outside consultant.

#### How to Submit Your Nomination

1. Visit [cooperative.com/jcbrown](http://cooperative.com/jcbrown)
2. Select the "Submit a Nomination" button to be taken to the payment portal.
3. Submit your payment information.
4. Check your email for a confirmation of payment and the link to the online submission platform.
5. Create an account on the Award Force submission platform.
6. Select the following information
  - a. Chapter: J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award
  - b. Category: 2022 J.C Brown Nomination Form
7. Complete the required information on all tabs.
8. Press the "Save + next" button to save the information on that page and advance to the next.
  - a. Please note: You must select the "Save + next" or "Save + close" to save your information before leaving the page. If you do not, your information will be lost and will need to be re-entered.
9. Press the "Save + close" button to save your nomination before submitting and to complete it at another time.
10. Press the "Submit entry" button to submit your nomination upon completion.

#### Nomination Entry Changes and Cancellations

Nominations and cancellations will be accepted until **October 29, 2021**.

Cancellations for entries are fully refundable until the deadline and can be made online:

[www.cooperative.com](http://www.cooperative.com) > Member Center > My Registrations.

#### Submission Questions

Questions regarding entry guidelines or specifics should be directed to the Award Program Manager, Alexis Dunnum at [alexis.dunnum@nreca.coop](mailto:alexis.dunnum@nreca.coop).



**J.C. Brown** CEO Communication Leadership Award



## Notification

The individual who submitted the nomination for the winning entry will be notified no later than **December 3, 2021**. All other individuals will be notified no later than **December 10, 2021**.

All entries are treated in a confidential manner. The individual being nominated will NOT be notified about their nomination, disqualification or for any other reason during the judging process. All communications regarding the nomination entry will be sent to the person who submitted the nomination.

## Award Recognition

The award will be presented to the winner at the CEO Close-Up Conference. Additionally, the winner and their communications team will be recognized in conjunction with the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program at the Connect Conference in May 2022.

Highlights of the winning entry will be displayed at the Spotlight Café at the Connect Conference and will be featured on the J.C. Brown Award webpage on cooperative.com, as well as other NRECA features or communications.



## Award Criteria

The nominations will be judged on the completion of the following four criteria. Each response is limited to 500 words. Point values have been assigned to each criterion to guide the panel of judges. The final score of each nomination will be determined by combining the four individual criterion scores.

Supporting evidence is optional and, while illustrative, will not enhance the point values assigned to the four criteria. If included, supporting material must be uploaded using the area provided in the online nomination form.

- (1) The Cooperative Difference (35 points)** – In what ways does the CEO’s commitment to communication, both internal and external, help advance the seven cooperative principles, philosophy and way of doing business?
  - Statement/evidence may include any type of leadership action, communication activity or product that promotes the cooperative principles to staff, consumer-members or other audiences.
- (2) Strategic Approach (25 points)** – In what ways does the CEO integrate communication into the organization’s strategic planning and management processes?
  - Statement/evidence may include, but is not limited to, a well-defined strategic communication plan, as well as adequate annual budgets and resources devoted specifically to communication.
    - i. Note: budget size alone is not a major factor; it is part of the overall plan.
  - How often is the strategic communication plan updated and reviewed for its effectiveness?
- (3) Integrated Approach (20 points)** – In what ways does the CEO demonstrate support for the cooperative’s communication staff?
  - Does the CEO view all employees of the organization as part of the communication team? For example, are staff members in all areas of the organization—particularly those who have contact with consumer-members—kept informed about the co-op’s priorities and kept up to date on important organizational developments?
  - Is there evidence of an effective employee communication program at the co-op, as well as two-way communication within the co-op, i.e., top-down and bottom-up?
  - Statement/evidence may include, but is not limited to, demonstrating how information on critical projects and management decisions is shared in timely and open fashion in executing the cooperative’s communication plan.
  - Other examples include a dedication to hiring professional communication staff people, as well as providing adequate educational and training opportunities for staff.



## J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award



**(4) Measures of Success (20 points)** – Please note indicators of the success of the cooperative’s communication/marketing programs during the CEO’s tenure, and on which he or she has had an influence. This criterion is not intended to be an evaluation or showcase of the cooperative’s communication products and services as defined in the larger Spotlight on Excellence awards program.

- Statement/evidence may include awards received by the cooperative during the CEO’s tenure but should not be limited to that. For example, the statement/evidence should include how the organization measures the success of its communication programs and projects, i.e., what evaluation techniques and methods are used to determine whether strategic communication goals have been met. CEO involvement or endorsement should be described.
- Statement/evidence should include how the organization’s communication programs have led to changes in thinking, attitudes or actions among consumer-members and/or other key publics, and how the CEO has been a part of this result.





## Judging Information

The J.C. Brown nominations are reviewed by a panel of three judges, consisting of one retired CEO or senior communicator from the electric cooperative industry, and two judges from outside the industry who possess senior-level experience. The identity of the three judges is not announced.

For each award cycle all three judges review all nomination materials for each candidate, regardless of how many nominations are submitted. Judges work independently on evaluating the entries and submit their evaluations to the Award Program Manager.

The winner is determined by having the highest average score across all three judges.

### Scoring

Judges consider the completeness of the entry forms and whether entrants followed all instructions. The effectiveness in achieving the stated goal will be heavily weighted in the scoring. Evaluations will be based on absolute scores rather than a comparison of entries.

### Judges' Evaluation Form

The evaluation form is the centerpiece of the awards judging. It lists four criteria—each weighted differently—with a maximum allowable number of points. All entries will be evaluated and scored independently by all judges. The work of all judges has equal weight when averaging nominees' individual scores.

Category	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
Cooperative Difference (Max 35)	35 - 29	28 - 22	21 - 15	14 - 8	7 - 1
Strategic Approach (Max 25)	25 - 21	20 - 16	15 - 11	10 - 6	5 - 1
Integrated Approach (Max 20)	20 - 16	15 - 13	12 - 9	8 - 5	4 - 1
Measure of Success (Max 20)	20 - 16	15 - 13	12 - 9	8 - 5	4 - 1

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. The Cooperative Difference | Maximum 35 points |
| 2. Strategic Approach         | Maximum 25 points |
| 3. Integrated Approach        | Maximum 20 points |
| 4. Measures of Success        | Maximum 20 points |

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Total Allowable Points	100 points
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### Sample Scoring Sheet for Judges

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_ Judge’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Cooperative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Summary for this entry, including all four criteria (to be completed after finishing evaluation of the four criteria on the following four pages)**

**Criterion 1. The Cooperative Difference (35 points maximum) \_\_\_\_\_ points**

*Answers the question, “In what ways does the CEO’s commitment to communication, both internal and external, help advance the seven cooperative principles, philosophy and way of doing business?”*

**Criterion 2. Strategic Approach (25 points maximum) \_\_\_\_\_ points**

*Answers the question, “In what ways does the CEO integrate communication into the organization’s strategic planning and management processes?”*

**Criterion 3. Integrated Approach (20 points maximum) \_\_\_\_\_ points**

*Answers the question, “In what ways does the CEO demonstrate support for the cooperative’s communication staff?”*

**Criterion 4. Measures of Success (20 points maximum) \_\_\_\_\_ points**

*Answers the question, “How successful were/are the cooperative’s communication and marketing programs during the CEO’s tenure?”*

Strengths:

- 1.
- 2.

Areas for improvement:

- 1.
- 2.