



LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

The Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA Announce The 2021 LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications Call for Entries

Deadline: March 13, 2021

Go to cooperative.com/laberge for more information

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About the LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

The award was established by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC) and was first conferred in 2019. The competition falls under the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program and is administered by the CREC and the Council of Cooperative Communicators (CCC) Program Board, with support from NRECA communication staff.

The award memorializes the late Justin LaBerge, who served as a senior leadership communications manager for NRECA. Individuals nominated for the LaBerge Award should have made significant strategic contributions of individual efforts to cooperative communications.

Individuals nominated for the LaBerge Award must embody the principles of the Always On Communication model (see LaBerge page on cooperative.com), demonstrating excellence in the roles of advocate, manager and innovator at his or her electric cooperative, public power district, statewide association, or generation and transmission (G&T) system. He or she will also have a proven track record in the roles of technician, artist and listener, and a commitment to service to a wider co-op audience. The nominee should be a leader with personal excellence, influence and impact both as a practitioner and contributor across the cooperative network. The nominee’s cooperative must be a voting member of NRECA.



LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

Entry Fees, Deadlines, and Critical Information

The deadline for electronic receipt of 2021 nominations at NRECA is March 13, 2021. Nominations must be made online (see [LaBerge Award page](#) for more information). The award will be presented annually unless the judges conclude that no nominee adequately meets the award's criteria. Non-winning nominations from last year's competition may be resubmitted.

Fees

The entry fee is \$125. The fee must be paid prior to receiving access to the entry form. Payment and entry must be submitted using the online form on the LaBerge Award webpage by **March 13, 2021**. Once the fee is paid, you will be issued a confirmation page with a link to the entry form. Entries for which payment has not been made will be disqualified.

Entry Changes and Cancellations

Before starting the online nomination form, you may want to prepare your written responses using the LaBerge Award [sample nomination form](#). This contains identical information as the online form.

Note: You cannot save the online form and come back to it later. You will also want to reference the "Always On" document on the webpage. There are three criteria; each has a 500-word limit. You may submit optional support materials as well, but they do not replace your responses on the entry form.

Entries, cancellations and changes will be accepted until **March 13, 2021**. Cancellations for entries are fully refundable. Cancellations to the entire entry and additional entries can be made online via cooperative.com > Member Center > My Registrations. Any other changes must be submitted in writing to Accounts Receivable at accountsreceivable@nreca.coop.

Payment Questions

Questions regarding payment should be directed to the Accounts Receivable Department at 703.907.6875 or by email at accountsreceivable@nreca.coop.



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Submission of Entries

Please read all instructions carefully and provide all information requested in the entry form. Failure to provide all requested information could cause you to lose points. All entries must be submitted using the online form provided after payment on the LaBerge Award webpage. This form allows for uploading additional support materials, including audio and video clips, PDFs (preferred) and .jggs.

1. Entries must be made by an employee of the cooperative and may NOT be entered by a marketing, advertising or PR agency or any other paid/outside consultant.
2. Use the online entry form to enter all your submissions. You cannot go back into the entry once you press "Submit".
 - a. Note: Use the [sample nomination form](#) to prepare a draft of your entry.
3. All entries are treated in a confidential manner. The nominee will **NOT** be notified that he/she is being considered.

Disqualification

Entries for which payment is not received will be disqualified.

Entrants will not be notified of disqualification, nor will entry fee or judges' fees be refunded. The CREC, CCC and NRECA reserve the right to pull an award if it is revealed that an entrant was not forthright on his/her entry form.

Retention of Entries and Review by Peers

Highlights of the winning entry will be displayed at the Spotlight Café at CONNECT and will be featured on cooperative.com and in other NRECA features or communications.

Submission Questions

Questions regarding entry guidelines or specifics should be directed to Alexis Dunnum at alexis.dunnum@nreca.coop.

Notification

The submitter for a winning entry will be notified no later than April 9, 2021. All other submitters will be notified no later than April 16, 2021.



LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

Award Recognition, Oversight and Judging Information

Award Recognition

The award will be presented to the winner at the CONNECT conference in May 2021. Additionally, the nominator and senior leaders will be invited to attend all Spotlight celebrations and activities associated with the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program at the CONNECT conference.

Program Oversight

The LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications receives oversight from the Awards and Recognition Committee of the CREC.

Judges

NRECA's LaBerge Award program manager recruits three judges for the annual award cycle, including representatives for the Certified Cooperative Communicators (CCC) program and/or Cooperative Communicators Association (CCA) and an active or retired CEO or senior communicator from the electric cooperative industry. The same three judges review the nomination materials for each candidate, regardless of how many nominations are submitted. Judges work individually and independently on evaluating the entries. The identity of the judges remains confidential.

Scoring

Judges consider the completeness of the entry forms and whether entrants followed all instructions. The effectiveness of entries 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 three 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 weighting when averaging nominees' individual scores.

1. Cooperation Among Cooperatives	Maximum 20 points
2. Education, Training and Information	Maximum 20 points
3. "Always On" Approach	Maximum 60 points

Total Allowable Points	100 points



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LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications Criteria

There are three criteria that are defined below. Written descriptions are limited to 500 words per criterion. Point values have been assigned to each criterion to guide the panel of judges. (Supporting evidence is optional and, while illustrative, will not enhance the point values assigned to the three criteria. If included, supporting materials must be uploaded using the area provided in the online nomination form.)

Note: There is a [sample nomination form](#) that can be used to replicate the online form [here](#).

- (1) Cooperation Among Cooperatives (20 points) – How has the nominee lived out the cooperative principle of “Cooperation Among Cooperatives” through service to a wider co-op audience (statewide, regional and/or national levels)?
- (2) Education, Training and Information (20 points) – How has the nominee demonstrated personal excellence delivering education, training and information? What are specific examples of demonstrated excellence in the roles of Technician, Artist and Listener? (Please refer to [Always On](#) document on the [LaBerge webpage on cooperative.com](#).)
- (3) “Always On” Approach (60 points) – How has the nominee embodied the principles of the “Always On” Communication model to advance strategic electric co-op communication? What are specific examples of demonstrated excellence in the roles of Advocate, Manager and Innovator? (Refer to the [Always On](#) document on the [LaBerge webpage on cooperative.com](#).)

Optional Supporting Materials (0 points) – You may upload one file that contains supporting materials. These materials are optional and will not be used in judges’ scoring. Please note that the file size should not exceed 5 MB.



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LaBERGE AWARD JUDGING RUBRIC					
CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
Cooperation Among Cooperatives (20 points max)	17-20	13-16	9-12	5-8	1-4
Education, Training and Information (20 points max)	17-20	13-16	9-12	5-8	1-4
Always On Approach (60 points max; 15 per criterion)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication as an integral part of strategic plan 	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member engagement 	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple communication channels and platforms 	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning of the co-op 	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3

The “Always On” communication model (located on the [LaBerge page on cooperative.com](#)) serves as the foundation for this award.

Each entry is judged on its own merits and not in comparison to other entries.

Each entry may earn up to 100 points. The maximum point counts for each section are weighted differently. Twenty points are available in each of the first two sections, and a total of sixty points are available in the final section (15 points for each of four criteria).

Supporting materials are optional. If the narrative is well done in terms of writing and details, the written narrative can be sufficient. With respect to the supporting materials, there are no minimum requirements for number of pieces, and entrants are not required to submit specially prepared reports of other documents beyond the 500-word written descriptions.

Any materials that are submitted, however, must be in an electronic form and within size (25 MB total) requirements.