



# LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

## NRECA and The Council of Rural Electric Communicators Announce The 2024 LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

**Call for Entries | Deadline: March 8, 2024**

Visit [cooperative.com/laberge](https://cooperative.com/laberge) for more information

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### About the LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

The LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications was established by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC) in 2019. The competition falls under the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program and is administered by NRECA and the CREC.

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, by demonstrating excellence in the roles of advocate, manager and innovator at their electric cooperative, public power district, statewide association, or generation and transmission (G&T) system. The nominee should 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 nominated individual should be a leader with personal excellence, influence and impact both as a practitioner and contributor across the cooperative network.



## LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

### Submission Information

#### Submission Preparation

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

All entries must be submitted using the online submission platform. The link will be provided within the confirmation email which will automatically be sent after processing your payment. If you do not see an automatic confirmation email, please contact [anne.prince@nreca.coop](mailto:anne.prince@nreca.coop).

The online submission allows for uploading supporting materials, including video clips, PDFs and .jpps.

#### Submission Instructions

1. Visit [cooperative.com/laberge](http://cooperative.com/laberge)
2. Select the “Submit a Nomination” button to link to the payment portal.
3. Submit your payment information.
4. Check your email for payment confirmation and the link to the online submission platform.
5. Create an account on the Award Force submission platform or log in to an existing account if you have already created one.
6. Select the following information:
  - a. Chapter: LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications
  - b. Category: 2024 LaBerge Nomination Form
7. Complete the required information on all tabs shown on the screen.
8. Select **“Save + Next”** to save the information on that page and advance to the next tab. Select the “Save + close” option to save the information and close out the entry to continue at another time.
  - a. You must select either button to save your information before leaving the page.
  - b. If you do not save your info, your content will be lost and must be re-entered.
9. Press the “Submit entry” button to submit your nomination upon completion.
10. You may log in to your account and revise your materials (even if they have been submitted), up until the deadline. After the deadline, you will lose access to any editing permissions and the judges will review the submission from the last day of the submission period.



## LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

### 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 March 8, 2024.

#### Payment Process

The nomination fee must be paid before 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.

#### 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).

### Notification

The individual who submitted the nomination for the winning entry will be notified no later than **April 1, 2024**. All other individuals will be notified no later than **April 5, 2024**.

All entries are treated confidentially. All communications regarding the nomination entry will be directed to the person who submitted the nomination. The nominee will not be notified about their nomination, disqualification, or for any other reason during the award period.

### Submission Feedback

Individuals who submit a nomination can receive feedback on their submission. The feedback will include a general summary of their entry; areas of strength; areas of improvement; numeric score and comparison to other entries and the winning entry. Feedback will be available after the Connect Conference. You will receive an email notification letting you know when this review period is open.

### Award Recognition

The LaBerge Award will be presented to the winner at the Connect Conference in May during the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program at the end of the General Session.

Highlights of the winning entry will be displayed at the Spotlight booth at the Connect Conference and will be featured on the LaBerge Award webpage on [cooperative.com](http://cooperative.com), as well as other NRECA features or communications.



## LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

### Critical Information

#### Award Cycle and Deadline

The deadline for the 2024 nominations is **March 8, 2024**. Both payment and nominations must be completed before the deadline.

The award will be presented annually unless the judges conclude that no nominee adequately meets the award's criteria.

#### Eligibility

To be considered for this award, the nominee's cooperative must be a voting member of NRECA of a cooperative, public power district, statewide association, or generation and transmission (G&T) system at the time of submission. Non-winning nominations from last year's competition may be resubmitted.

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. However, nominations can be submitted by co-op employees who are employed at a cooperative other than where the nominee is currently employed.

#### 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 has already received the award.
- 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.
- Any or all the submissions exceeded the word count.

NRECA and the CREC reserve the right to disqualify any entry 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.



## LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

### Judges' Scoring Information

#### Judges

NRECA's LaBerge Award program manager recruits three judges for the annual award cycle, which may include 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. Judges work individually and independently to evaluate the entries. The identity of the judges remains anonymous.

#### 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 lists three criteria. All entries will be evaluated and scored independently by all judges. The work of all judges has equal weighting when averaging nominees' scores.

#### Evaluation/Scoring Breakdown

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

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Total Points = 100



# LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

## Criteria for LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

Three criteria 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.

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

**(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)? Note specific examples and/or proof points.

**(2) Education, Training, and Information (20 points)** – How has the nominee demonstrated personal excellence in delivering education, training and information? What are specific examples of demonstrated excellence in the roles of Technician, Artist, and Listener?

**(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?

**Optional Supporting Materials (0 points)** – You may upload one file that contains supporting materials. Supporting material 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 submission platform.

LaBerge Award Judging Rubric					
Category	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
Cooperation Among Cooperatives (20 points)	17-20	13-16	9-12	5-8	1-4
Education, Training & Information (20 points)	17-20	13-16	9-12	5-8	1-4
Always On Approach (60 points – 15 points per criterion below)					
Communication as an integral part of a strategic plan	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
Member Engagement	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
Multiple communication channels & platforms	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3
Positioning of the co-op	13-15	10-12	7-9	4-6	1-3



## LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

### Submission Tips

Your nominee may be an outstanding communicator, but unless you provide solid proof points, your score sheet won't reflect what you see in your nominee.

Successful entries should:

1. Closely match your responses to each of the questions and prompts.
2. Provide proof points and details such as examples, evidence, and data to support your contention.
3. Recognize that every question is important. Past winners have scored in the highest part of the "excellent" range across all categories. See the score chart.
4. Include optional supporting material to provide additional context and dimension for your contentions.

Don't get discouraged if your submission doesn't win this time. Every cycle is different. It often takes more than one cycle to win.

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