The Spotlight on Excellence Awards recognizes a body of outstanding work produced by electric co-op communications and marketing professionals across Co-op Nation. Winners of the 2017 Spotlight on Excellence Awards represent leading practices across all communication platforms and position them as the best in the field through their superior accomplishments that have lasting impact, demonstrate a high level of professionalism and deliver exceptional results.

Because the system of finite scoring is used, some categories and classifications may not have a full slate of winners. Gold winners scored 90 points or more in their category and classification, while Silver winners scored at least 80 points. The Spotlight on Excellence Award is an initiative of the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and is NRECA’s highest communication honor. Awards are presented for best projects and programs for the year that embody high standards of quality and achievement.

### Writing Entries

#### 1. BEST NEWS STORY (At-large category)*

**GOLD**

VMDAEC

Inaugural SVCC class launches students into ‘higher education’

Bill Sherrod

bsherrod@vmdaec.com

**SILVER**

Arizona G&T/Arizona Electric Co-ops

Apache Generating Station vital to economy

Geoff Oldfather

goldfather@azgt.coop

#### 2. BEST FEATURE STORY (At-large category)*

**GOLD**

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina

Fighting for survival

Keith Phillips

keith.phillips@ecsc.org

**SILVER (TIE)**

Ohio’s Electric Cooperatives

Lessons in Humility: Climbing Kilimanjaro for rural electrification

Samantha Rhodes

srhodes@ohioec.org

Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association

Un-bee-lievable Helpers

Ryan G. Hall

ryanh@mtc-coops.com

#### 3. BEST COLUMN (At-large category)*

**GOLD**

Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives

A Bright Future

Anna Politano

editor@ok-living.coop

**SILVER**

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

The Power of Human Connections

Keith Stapleton

mpedigo@samhouston.net

#### 4. BEST EXTERNAL NEWS PUBLICATION

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**

Federated Rural Electric & Brown County Rural Electrical Association

Connections

info@federatedrea.coop

**SILVER**

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Light Conversation

btesch@tec.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**

Southwestern Electric Cooperative

The Southwestern

Joseph Richardson

joe.richardson@sweci.com

**SILVER**

Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative

“Suwannee Valley Currents”

jmb1@svvec-Coop.com

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**

United Cooperative Services

PowerTalk

mauri@united-cs.com

**SILVER**

East Central Energy

ECE Co-op Advantage

Tina Lanhart

tina.lanhart@ecemn.com

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**

SLEMCO

SLEMCO Power

mary.laurent@slemco.com
4. BEST EXTERNAL NEWS PUBLICATION - cont

**SILVER**
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative  
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative pages  
Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 5**

**GOLD**
PREA  
Penn Lines  
peter_fitzgerald@prea.com

**SILVER**
Northwest Public Power Association  
Bulletin  
brenda@nwppa.org

5. BEST INTERNAL NEWS PUBLICATION

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**SILVER**
Southern Rivers Energy  
Employee Lines  
Kathryn Claxton  
kathryn@srivers.net

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**
United Cooperative Services  
United Perspective  
mauri@united-cs.com

**SILVER**
Mountain View Electric Assn.  
Watts Up - Employee Newsletter  
Nikki Ricciardi  
schafer-s@mvea.org

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative  
Powerlines  
bwolfe@myrec.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 5**

**GOLD**
Ruralite Services  
On Line | Writing and Photography Tips for Utility Communicators  
Megan McKoy-Noe  
megann@ruralite.org

**SILVER**
Hoosier Energy  
EnergyLines  
enelys@tepni.com

6. BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATION (Small)

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**
Garkane Energy  
Half-Price Power  
Neal Brown  
neal.brown@garkane.com

**SILVER**
Boone REMC  
"Welcome to Boone REMC!" (new member packet)  
Mandy Saucerman  
mmsaucerman@bremc.com

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**
Central Electric Cooperative  
Power Outage Guide  
clinville@cec.coop

**SILVER**
Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation  
Back to School Youth Opportunities  
rachael.benedict@pemco.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative  
2016 Sam Houston EC Board of Director Election Ballot  
pedigo@samhouston.net

**SILVER**
Farmers Electric Cooperative  
HR Recruiting brochure  
Jim Nimmo  
jnimmo@FarmersElectric.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**
Middle Tennessee EMC  
Cooperative Solar Brochure  
josh.clendenen@mtmemc.com

**SILVER**
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative  
Meet Bluebonnet’s Community Representatives  
Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 5**

**GOLD**
Ruralite Services  
Ruralite Services’ Welcome Guide  
Megan McKoy-Noe  
megann@ruralite.org

**SILVER**
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association  
Classroom Ag Reader  
arosier@tristategt.org
6. BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATION (Large)

CLASSIFICATION 1
GOLD
The Victory Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc.  
Victory Electric Program and Services Guide  
Kennedy St. George  
kennedy@victoryelectric.net

SILVER
Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative  
Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative Member Handbook  
Diana Hersch  
diana@hwe.coop

CLASSIFICATION 2
GOLD
Diverse Power Incorporated  
Place and Plate  
ken.pope@diversepower.com

SILVER
Cullman Electric Cooperative  
Along These Lines - Cullman EC 80th Anniversary book  
brianbl@cullmunec.com

CLASSIFICATION 3
GOLD
Palmetto Electric Cooperative  
Creating a Cooperative Culture Handbook  
thunter@palmetto.coop

SILVER
Cass County Electric Cooperative  
2016 Contractor Guide  
CCEC Marketing/Communications Team  
pkoepp@kcplh.com

CLASSIFICATION 4
GOLD
Delaware Electric Cooperative  
Delaware Living, 2016  
jtucker@delcoop.com

CLASSIFICATION 5
GOLD
PowerSouth Energy Cooperative  
PowerSouth 75th Anniversary Coffee Table Book  
christi.scruggs@powersouth.com

SILVER
East Kentucky Power Cooperative  
EKPC Strategic Plan  
nick.comer@ekpc.coop

7. BEST ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

CLASSIFICATION 1
GOLD
Southern Rivers Energy  
Erin Cook and Kathryn Claxton  
kathryn@srivers.net

SILVER
Firelands Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
80 Years: Electrifying Your Past, Energizing Your Future  
Tracy Gibb and Andrea Gravenhorst  
tgibb@firelandsec.com

CLASSIFICATION 2
GOLD
Kootenai Electric Cooperative  
2015 Annual Report: The Call to Serve  
Erika Neff  
eneff@kec.com

SILVER
Mohave Electric Cooperative  
70th Anniversary Report  
zspencer@mohaveelectric.com

CLASSIFICATION 3
GOLD
Baldwin EMC  
Baldwin EMC Annual Report 2015  
Michelle Geans  
rebecca.shobe@baldwinemc.com

SILVER
United Power  
eller@unitedpower.com

CLASSIFICATION 4
SILVER
Pedernales Electric Cooperative  
2015 PEC Annual Report  
clinton.lancaster@peci.com

CLASSIFICATION 5
GOLD
Corn Belt Power Cooperative  
"Connecting To Our Future"  
kathy.taylor@cbpower.coop

SILVER
Allegheny Electric Cooperative  
Allegheny Annual Report  
peter_fitzgerald@prea.com
8. MOST INNOVATIVE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA

CLASSIFICATION 1
GOLD
Crawford Electric Cooperative
Digital Communication During Crisis-Level Outage
lhengstenberg@crawfordelectric.com

SILVER
Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative
Energy Bike Brings Kid Power to Light
Diana Hersch
Diana@hwco.coop

CLASSIFICATION 2
GOLD
Northeastern REMC
Northeastern REMC Operation RoundUP Video
m_defreeuw@nremc.com

SILVER
Mid-South Synergy
MSS Votes
ehubbard@midsouthsynergy.com

CLASSIFICATION 3
GOLD
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
Capital Credits video
mpedigo@samhouston@net

SILVER
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
Operation Roundup video
mpedigo@samhouston@net

CLASSIFICATION 4
GOLD
Jackson EMC
Energy Use 101
April Sorrow
asorrow@jacksonemc.com

SILVER
Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative
Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative website
mrobertson@novec.com

CLASSIFICATION 5
GOLD
Ruralite Services
Ruralite Services’ Social Media Support Program
Victoria Hampton
Victoria@ruralite.org

SILVER
Cooperative Energy
My Electric Cooperative Landing Page site
agriffith@cooperativeenergy.com

9. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (At-large category)

GOLD
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
Operation: Boots on the Ground
bwolfe@myrec.coop

SILVER
Lake Country Power
Mission: ZERO — Total restoration without injury
gschulzettenberg@lakecountrypower.com

10. BEST DIGITAL STORYTELLING

CLASSIFICATION 1
GOLD
CVEA
Allison Creek Hydro
Sharon Crisp
crisp@cvea.org

SILVER (TIE)
SEMO Electric Cooperative
#alljobsmatter
Glen Cantrell
glen@gosemo.com

CLASSIFICATION 2
GOLD
White River Valley Electric Cooperative
Power to the Members
dbradford3@hotmail.com

SILVER (TIE)
Mid-South Synergy
New Hire Video
Eric Hubbard
ehubbard@midsouthsynergy.com

Bandera Electric Cooperative
Bandera Electric 77th Annual Meeting video
a.zink@banderaelectric.com

CLASSIFICATION 3
GOLD
Southside Electric Cooperative
Day in the Life of a Lineman - Reality Show and Trailer
Lauren Irby
lauren.irby@sec.coop

SILVER
Choptank Electric Cooperative
Down to the Wires
Deborah Rementer
debbie@choptankelectric.coop
BEST DIGITAL STORYTELLING - cont

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD
Magic Valley Electric Cooperative
Engaging Millennials
lreyes@magicvalley.coop

SILVER
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
Bluebonnet Milestones 2015 video
Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

CLASSIFICATION 5

GOLD
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association
The Sharpest Tale in the West
aronier@tristategt.org

SILVER
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
Cooperative Solar Animated Video
Green Power EMC
eyvonne.jordan@opc.com

11. BEST HARD COPY REINVENTION

No winning entries
12. BEST PHOTO (At-large category)*

**GOLD**  
Palmetto Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
“Storm a ‘Brewin’ at Harbour Town  
Missy Santorum  
msantorum@palmetto.coop

**SILVER**  
Rock Energy Cooperative  
Substation protectors  
Barbara Uebelacker  
b.u@rock.coop

13. BEST WILD CARD

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**  
Butler Rural Electric Cooperative  
80th Anniversary Cake Pops  
Jade Guthrie  
jade@butlerural.coop

**SILVER**  
San Luis Valley REC  
Powering A Vital Valley  
Andrea Oaks-Jaramillo  
a.jaramillo@slvrec.com

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**  
Navopache Electric  
High Voltage Safety Demo  
Elizabeth Neal  
en@navopache.org

**SILVER**  
Wiregrass Electric Cooperative  
You Are Our Reason: 2017 Calendar  
WEC Member Services Division  
dalbritton@wiregrasselectric.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**  
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative  
Employee Appreciation Coupons  
mopedgo@samhouston.net

**SILVER**  
Farmers Electric Cooperative  
Golf Ball Marker (Poker Chip)  
Jim Nimmo  
jnimmo@FarmersElectric.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**  
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative  
REC Linemen Banners  
twolfe@myrec.coop

**SILVER**  
Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation  
Sharing Change Sign Up Card  
josh.clendenen@mtmemc.com

**CLASSIFICATION 5**

**GOLD**  
Cooperative Energy  
Sunny Days Ahead - Solar PR Box  
agoffin@cooperativeenergy.com

**SILVER**  
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association  
Pedal the Plains Jerseys – Farm Bureau and FFA  
arosier@tristategt.org

14. BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**  
Crawford Electric Cooperative  
The Seven Cooperative Principles Poster  
lhengstenberg@crawfordelec.com

**SILVER**  
Consolidated Electric Cooperative  
Look at Both Sides - Safety Promotion  
Nikki Vanderkooi  
phawk@consolidated.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**  
Victoria Electric Cooperative  
Core Values Logo  
Brittany Marsh  
bmarsh@victoriaelectric.coop

**SILVER**  
Mid-South Synergy  
#YourCrew Truck & Trailer Wrap  
ehubbard@midsouthsynergy.com

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**  
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative  
myPrePay Logo  
mopedgo@samhouston.net

**SILVER**  
United Power  
Making Life Better Logo  
Laurel Eller  
ller@unitedpower.com

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**  
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative  
The State of Solar / A Solar Power Timeline  
Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

**SILVER**
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
*Power of Community - Trailer Wrap*
bwolfe@myrec.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 5**

**GOLD**
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association
*Classroom Ag Reader*
arosier@tristategt.org

**SILVER**
Texas Electric Cooperatives
*Crowdfunding*
Texas Co-op Power
clohrmann@texas-ec.org

15. **BEST INDIVIDUAL AD**

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**
Garkane Energy
*Our Workdays Never End*
Neal Brown
neal.brown@garkane.com

**SILVER**
San Miguel Power Association
*Come to the 2016 SMPA Annual Meeting*
Alex Shelley
alex@smpa.com

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**
Central Electric Cooperative
*Rebranding ad*
blattos@mycentral.coop

**SILVER**
Delta-Montrose Electric Association
*Scholarships_Engineer*
Phil Sanchez
becky.mashburn@dmea.com

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**
Farmers Electric Cooperative
*Football Season ad*
Jim Nimmo
jnimmo@FarmersElectric.coop

**SILVER**
Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
*Potshots at Transformers Print Ad*
mpedigo@samhouston.net

**CLASSIFICATION 4**

**GOLD**
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
*We’ve Got This – Power On*
bwolfe@myrec.coop

16. **BEST EVENT**

**CLASSIFICATION 1**

**GOLD**
Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative
*Paulding Putnam Electric Honor Flight Fundraiser*
evillitzer@pppec.coop

**SILVER**
Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
*Solar Project Dedication Event*
Tresa Hussong
amyh@ilec.coop

**CLASSIFICATION 2**

**GOLD**
Yampa Valley Electric Association
*YVEA Solar Farm Raising Event*
Shawn Stoehr
sstoehr@yvea.com

**SILVER**
Aiken Electric Cooperative
*TSE AEC RUN UNITED 2016*
mgooffray@aikenco-op.org

**CLASSIFICATION 3**

**GOLD**
Mountain View Electric Association
*Live Wires & First Responders*
schaefer-s@mvea.org

**SILVER**
Flint Energies
*Open House*
Marian McLemore
mmclemore@flintemc.com
16. BEST EVENT - cont.

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD
Berkeley Electric Cooperative
Youth Tour 2016
johannac@bec.coop

SILVER
GreyStone Power Corporation
Military Service Recognition Breakfast
Ashley Kinnard, Rita Harris, Lanette Toler
vicks.harshbarger@greystonepower.com

*An At-large category is judged without consideration to the size of the cooperative.

17. BEST TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD
Northwestern REC
80th Anniversary Celebration
lking@northwesternrec.com

SILVER
Garkinane Energy
Half-Price Power
neal.brown@garkane.com

CLASSIFICATION 2

GOLD
Delta-Montrose Electric Association
Cooperative Spirit Reaching New Heights
becky.mashburn@dmea.com

SILVER
Tri-County Electric Cooperative
TCEC Community Solar
jjgraham@tceccoop.com

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD
Flint Energies
FireStarter: An economic development program
mmclemore@flintemc.com

SILVER
DEMCO
DEMCO Communication Strategy During 1,000-year Flood
davidl@demco.org

CLASSIFICATION 5

GOLD
Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association
WE CAN
arosier@tristategt.org

SILVER
Hoosier Energy
Tapping into the Power of the Sun
Mary Lynn Beaver, Trina Pardue, Chris Johnson, Ben Turner, Eric Neely, Crystal Rogers, Claire Gregory
mbeaver@hepn.com

The Edgar F. Chesnutt Award Winner
will be announced at Connect ‘17
in the Opening General Session
See you in Tampa!

J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award

The J.C. Brown award memorializes the late J.C. Brown, who – as editor and publisher of NRECA’s RE Magazine – is best remembered for his dedication to communication as a vital link connecting electric cooperatives with each other as well as with their consumer-owners. The panel of five judges consisted of communication and management experts in academia, business and industry, including electric co-ops. Although it is part of the Spotlight on Excellence Awards Program, the award was presented at the yearly national conference for co-op CEOs sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

2017 Winner - Curtis Wynn, CEO
Roanoke Electric Cooperative
Aulander, NC