



SPOTLIGHT on Excellence 2017

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@mtco-ops.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@sweeci.com

SILVER

Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative

["Suwannee Valley Currents"](#)

jonl@svcec-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@sriver.net

CLASSIFICATION 3

GOLD

United Cooperative Services

[United Perspective](#)

mauri@united-cs.com

SILVER

Mountain View Electric Assn.

[Watts Up - Employee Newsletter](#)

Nikki Ricciardi

schaefer-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

meganm@ruralite.org

SILVER

Hoosier Energy

[EnergyLines](#)

eneely@hepn.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

msaucerman@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@pemc.coop

CLASSIFICATION 3

GOLD

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

[2016 Sam Houston EC Board of Director Election Ballot](#)

mpedigo@samhouston.net

SILVER

Farmers Electric Cooperative

[HR Recruiting brochure](#)

Jim Nimmo

jnimmo@FarmersElectric.coop

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD

Middle Tennessee EMC

[Cooperative Solar Brochure](#)

josh.clendener@mtemc.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

meganm@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](#)

brianl@cullmanec.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@kwh.com

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD

Delaware Electric Cooperative

[Delaware Living, 2016](#)

jtucker@decoop.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

[Southern Rivers Energy 2015 Annual Report: The Power of Values](#)

Erin Cook and Kathryn Claxton

kathryn@sriver.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

[Making Life Better - 2015 Annual Report](#)

leller@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

Digital Entries

8. MOST INNOVATIVE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD

Crawford Electric Cooperative

[Digital Communication During Crisis-Level Outage](#)

l.hengstenberg@crawfordelec.com

SILVER

Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative

[Energy Bike Brings Kid Power to Light](#)

Diana Hersch

Diana@hwe.coop

CLASSIFICATION 2

GOLD

Northeastern REMC

[Northeastern REMC Operation RoundUP Video](#)

m_defreuw@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

VictoriaH@ruralite.org

SILVER

Cooperative Energy

[My Electric Cooperative Landing Page site](#)

agriffin@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](#)

gschulzetenberg@lakecountrypower.com

10. BEST DIGITAL STORYTELLING

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD

CVEA

[Allison Creek Hydro](#)

Sharon Crisp

crisp@cvea.org

SILVER

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

debbier@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](#)

arosier@tristategt.org

SILVER

Oglethorpe Power Corporation

[Cooperative Solar Animated Video](#)

Green Power EMC

yvonne.jordan@opc.com

11. BEST HARD COPY REINVENTION

No winning entries

Artistic/Design/Other 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

barbu@rock.coop

13. BEST WILD CARD

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative

[80th Anniversary Cake Pops](#)

Jade Guthrie

jadeg@butlerrural.coop

SILVER

San Luis Valley REC

[Powering A Vital Valley](#)

Andrea Oaks-Jaramillo

ajaramillo@slvrec.com

CLASSIFICATION 2

GOLD

Navopache Electric

[High Voltage Safety Demo](#)

Elizabeth Neal

eneal@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](#)

mpedigo@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](#)

bwolfe@myrec.coop

SILVER

Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation

[Sharing Change Sign Up Card](#)

josh.clendener@mtemc.com

CLASSIFICATION 5

GOLD

Cooperative Energy

[Sunny Days Ahead - Solar PR Box](#)

agriffin@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](#)

mpedigo@samhouston.net

SILVER

United Power

[Making Life Better Logo](#)

Laurel Eller

leller@unitedpower.com

CLASSIFICATION 4

GOLD

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

[The State of Solar / A Solar Power Timeline](#)

Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

14. BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN - cont.

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](#)

lmattox@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

SILVER

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

[REC Hands - Power On](#)

bwolfe@myrec.coop

CLASSIFICATION 5

GOLD

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc.

[Hurricane Matthew](#)

Van O'Cain

van.ocain@ecsc.org

SILVER

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association

[We Can Power our Future](#)

Amy Rosier

arosier@tristategt.org

16. BEST EVENT

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD

Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative

[Paulding Putnam Electric Honor Flight Fundraiser](#)

ewillitizer@ppecc.coop

SILVER

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative

[Solar Project Dedication Event](#)

Tresa Hussong

amyjh@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](#)

mgouffray@aiken-co-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

vicki.harshbarger@greystonepower.com

CLASSIFICATION 5

GOLD

Cooperative Energy

[Sunny Days Ahead - Solar Rollout PR Events](#)

agriffin@cooperativeenergy.com

SILVER

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives

[Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives 75th Anniversary "Power for the Ages" Annual Meeting](#)

Nancy McDonald

nmcdonald@aiiec.coop

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

Featured Entry

17. BEST TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS

CLASSIFICATION 1

GOLD

Northwestern REC

[80th Anniversary Celebration](#)

lking@northwesternrec.com

SILVER

Garkane Energy

[Half-Price Power](#)

neal.brown@garkane.com

CLASSIFICATION 2

GOLD

Delta-Montrose Electric Association

[Cooperative Spirit Reaching New Heights](#)

becky.mashburn@dmae.com

SILVER

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

[TCEC Community Solar](#)

jgraham@tcec.coop

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