



2021

SPOTLIGHT

on Excellence
Awards



WRITING AWARDS

1 BEST NEWS STORY (at-large category)

Gold

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association
Mental Health Resources Available
to Farmers and Ranchers
Ryan G. Hall
ryanh@mtco-ops.com

Silver

Colorado Rural Electric Association
Protecting Vital Electric Lines When Wildfires Blaze
Kylee Coleman
kcoleman@coloradocountrylife.org

2 BEST FEATURE STORY (at-large category)

Gold

Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of
Electric Cooperatives
On the Outside, Looking In
Steven Johnson
sjohnson@vmdaec.com

Silver

Minnesota Power Cooperative
Dinos, Drive-ins and Democracy
Kaylee Cusack
kcusack@minnkota.com

3 BEST COLUMN (at-large category)

Gold

Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of
Electric Cooperatives
Viewpoint - A Master Storyteller
Richard Johnstone
rjohnstone@vmdaec.com

Silver

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association
What's in a Name?
Ryan G. Hall
ryanh@mtco-ops.com

4 BEST EXTERNAL NEWS PUBLICATION

Classification 1

Gold

Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative
Dakota Valley News
Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative
pats@dakotavalley.com

Silver

Arrowhead Cooperative*
The Highline By Line
Arrowhead Cooperative
smcmanus@arrowhead.coop

Classification 2

Gold

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
NOEC's NE Connection
Sarah Wilhelm
sarah.wilhelm@noec.coop

Silver

Kauai Island Utility Cooperative
KIUC Currents
Kauai Island Utility Cooperative
spaik@kiuc.coop

Classification 3

Gold

United Cooperative Services
PowerTalk
United Cooperative Services
johnd@ucs.net

Silver

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
Sam Houston EC Local Pages
Rachel Frey
rfrey@samhouston.net

Classification 4

Gold

SLEMCO
SLEMCO Power
Mary Laurent
mary.laurent@slemco.com

Silver

CoServ
CoServ pages of Texas Co-op Power Magazine
Oscar Martinez
omartinez@coserv.com

Classification 5

Gold

Texas Electric Cooperatives
Texas Co-op Power Magazine
Charles Lohrmann
clohrmann@texas-ec.org

Silver

Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives
Oklahoma Living Magazine
Oklahoma Living Magazine
apolitano@oaec.coop

5 BEST INTERNAL NEWS PUBLICATION

Classification 1

Gold

Umatilla Electric Cooperative
"The Current" Employee Newsletter
Jodie Thomas
jodie.thomas@umatillaelectric.com

Classification 2

Gold

Aiken Electric Cooperative
WATTS On Line
Aiken Electric Cooperative
dligons@aiken-co-op.org

Silver

Appalachian Electric Cooperative
The Hotline
Becky Burks
beckybutcherburks@gmail.com

Classification 3

Gold

Singing River Electric Cooperative
Singing River Electric's Online Newsletter
Lorri Freeman and Amanda Parker
aparker@singingriver.com

Silver

Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
OEC Quarterly Plug
Brianna Wall
brianna.wall@okcoop.org

Classification 4

Gold

Flint Energies
Three Phase
Flint Energies
jlacey@flintemc.com

Silver

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
REC Powerlines - March, July and August issues
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
bwolfe@myrec.coop

Classification 5

Gold

Texas Electric Cooperatives
TEC Report
Chris Burrows, Texas Electric Cooperatives
cburrows@texas-ec.org

Silver

Texas Electric Cooperatives
Safety Watch
Tom Widlowski, Texas Electric Cooperatives
twidlowski@texas-ec.org

6A BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATION - Small

Classification 1

Silver

Southern Rivers Energy
New Member Welcome Guide
Kathryn Green
kathryn@srivers.net

* Asterisk denotes a first-time entrant

Classification 2

Gold

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.*
PLEC Benefits Flyer
Deborah K. Anderson
danderson@ple.coop

Silver

Kauai Island Utility Cooperative
Anahola Service Center
Shelley Paik
spaik@kiuc.coop

Classification 3

Gold

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
Board Election Ballot Booklet
Rachel Frey
rfrey@samhouston.net

Classification 4

Gold

United Power
Tri-State Newsletter Insert
Zach Kinder
zkinder@unitedpower.com

Silver

CoServ
SmartHub: New Year. New Bill. New Account Number
Phyllis Thomas
omartinez@coserv.com

Classification 5

Gold

Indiana Electric Cooperatives
Parts of a Bucket Truck Infographic
Stacey Holton
mbarth@indianaec.org

Silver

Dairyland Power Cooperative
Dairyland Power Cooperative's
2019/2020 Sustainability Report
Catherine Thomson
katie.thomson@dairylandpower.com

6B

BEST SPECIAL PUBLICATION - Large

Classification 1

Silver

Southern Rivers Energy
Social Media Playbook
Kathryn Green
kathryn@srivers.net

Classification 2

Gold

Northeastern REMC*
COVID-19 Response Internal/
External - Northeastern REMC
Christy Phend & Chris Todd
c_phend@nremc.com

Silver

Delta-Montrose Electric Association
DMEA Member Handbook
Laura Sanders
laura.sanders@dmea.com

Classification 3

Silver

Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
Get Charged! Elementary STEAM Education
Tory Tedder-Loffland
tory@okcoop.org

Classification 4

Gold

Delaware Electric Cooperative
Delaware Living 2020
Jeremy Tucker
jtucker@delaware.coop

Silver

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative
Biomass Booklet
Leslie Khamsivone
lkhamsivone@novec.com

Classification 5

Gold

Georgia System Operations Corporation
Family of Companies Brochure
Beth Coffey
beth.coffey@gasoc.com

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Silver

Northwest Public Power Association
NWPPA: Who We Are Brochure
Brenda Dunn
brenda@nwppa.org

BEST ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

Classification 1

Gold

Garkane Energy
Purposeful Planning + Disciplined
Planning = Financial Strength
Garkane Energy
neal.brown@garkane.com

Silver

SEMO Electric Cooperative
2020 Annual Report
Team SEMO
sean@gosemo.com

Classification 2

Gold

Delta-Montrose Electric Association
2019 DMEA Annual Report
Laura Sanders
laura.sanders@dmea.com

Silver

MiEnergy Cooperative
Driving Change 2019 Annual Report
MiEnergy Cooperative
btesch@mienergy.coop

Classification 3

Gold

East Central Energy
2019 ECE Annual Report: Energy to Keep You Moving
Jenny Long
jenny.long@ecemn.com

Silver

Baldwin EMC
Baldwin EMC's 2019 Annual Report
Baldwin EMC
mgeans@baldwinemc.com

Classification 4

Gold

United Power
Charging Forward - 2019 Annual Report
United Power Communications Team
zkinder@unitedpower.com

Silver

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative
NOVEC 2020 Annual Report
Leslie Khamsivone & Priscilla Knight
lkhamsivone@novec.com

Classification 5

Gold

Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative
Year in Review
Alicia Doran
adoran@northeast-power.coop

Silver

East Kentucky Power Cooperative
East Kentucky Power Cooperative Annual
Report: Preparation. Strength. Resilience
Member Services
kevin.osbourn@ekpc.coop



* Asterisk denotes a first-time entrant

DIGITAL AWARDS

8 MOST INNOVATIVE USE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Classification 1

Gold

Firelands Electric Cooperative, Inc.
[2020 Lineman Appreciation Week Videos](#)
Tracy Gibb
tgibb@firelandsec.com

Silver

Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative
[Who Are We? Meet Your Community Co-op](#)
Tricounty REC
bperkins@tricountyrec.com

Classification 2

Gold

Northeastern REMC*
[Director Candidate Training](#)
Tennille Merkle, Chris Todd
t_nicolette@nremc.com

Silver (tie)

Four County Electric
[Co-ops Vote Video](#)
Four County EMC
janetsmith@fourcty.org

Wake Electric Membership Corporation

[Wake Electric's New Website](#)
Rachael Benedict
rachael.benedict@pemc.coop

Classification 3

Gold (tie)

Flathead Electric
[Plan Before You Plant](#)
Flathead Electric
w.ostrom-price@flathead.coop

GVEC

[GVEC Unplugged Podcast](#)
GVEC
cboos@gvec.org

Silver (tie)

South Plains Electric Cooperative
[Youth Tour Spotlight Series](#)
South Plains Electric Cooperative
wbryant@spec.coop

Ozarks Electric Cooperative

[Thank You](#)
Ozarks Electric Cooperative
kbianconi@ozarksecc.com

Classification 4

Gold

Pedernales Electric Cooperative
[Welcome to the Cooperative](#)
Christopher J. Martinez
elizabeth.rozyskie@peci.com

Silver

CoServ
[As A Meter Of Fact](#)
Oscar Martinez
omartinez@coserv.com

Classification 5

Gold

Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives
[OAEC Website](#)
Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives
apolitano@oaec.coop

Silver

Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives
[Co-op Impact Videos](#)
Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives
apolitano@oaec.coop

9 BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

(at-large category)

Gold

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
[Alyssa's Energy Tip Tuesday](#)
Alyssa Dussetschleger
alyssa.dussetschleger@bluebonnet.coop

Silver

GreyStone Power
[Tropical Storm Zeta: Social Media Response](#)
Amanda Busby
amanda.busby@greystonepower.com

10 BEST DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Classification 1

Gold

Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative
[Hope Isn't Cancelled](#)
Samantha Kuhn
skuhn@ppec.coop

Silver

Riverland Energy Cooperative
[License to Live Safety Video](#)
Ben Bella
balesch@riverlandenergy.com

Classification 2

Silver

White River Valley Electric Cooperative
[Proposed 2020 Bylaw Amendments](#)
White River Valley Electric
ccunningham@whiteriver.org

Classification 3

Gold

Farmers EC
[Teleworking](#)
Jim Nimmo
jnimmo@farmersselectric.coop

Silver

Farmers EC
[Farmers HR Insurance Plan Options Recap](#)
Jim Nimmo
jnimmo@farmersselectric.coop

Classification 4

Gold

United Power
[Finance Video, Annual Meeting](#)
United Power Communications Team
zkinder@unitedpower.com

Silver

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative
[Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative "Spirit of SVEC" Video](#)
Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative
pknight@svec.coop

Classification 5

Gold

Sho-Me Power Electric Cooperative
[We Work for You](#)
Sho-Me Power Electric Cooperative
ghamilton@shomepower.com

Silver

East River Electric Power Cooperative
[Powering Your Safety](#)
East River Electric Power Cooperative
sebsen@eastriver.coop



* Asterisk denotes a first-time entrant

ARTISTIC/DESIGN/OTHER AWARDS

11 BEST PHOTO *(at-large category)*

Gold

SLEMCO

Picking Up The Pieces - A Lineman's Point of View

Jonathan Hebert - Lineman Class A
jonathan.hebert@slemco.com

Silver *(tie)*

Flathead Electric

Sunset in the Flathead Valley

Sharilyn Fairweather
w.ostrom-price@flathead.coop

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative Clean Up

Don Johnson
johnsond@tvec.coop

12 BEST WILD CARD

Classification 1

Gold

Grand Valley Power

Pine Gulch Fire Response

Dana Pogar
dpogar@gvp.org

Silver

Southern Rivers Energy

Virtual Prayer Chain

Kathryn Green
kathryn@sriver.net

Classification 2

Gold

Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation

Co-op Cooks

Rachael Benedict
rachael.benedict@pemc.coop

Silver

TCEC

75th Anniversary Commemorative Gift Set

TCEC
info@tcec.coop

Classification 3

Gold

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

Annual Meeting/Election Magazine Dustcover

Don Johnson
johnsond@tvec.coop

Silver *(tie)*

Coweta-Fayette EMC

EMC Socks

Coweta-Fayette EMC Communication Department
cphillips@utility.org

Mountain View Electric Association, Inc.

Bathroom Blog

Megan Morse
megan.m@mvea.coop

Classification 4

Gold *(tie)*

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

2020 Bluebonnet Wall Calendar: Standing Proud/Courthouses of Central Texas

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
melissa.segrest@bluebonnet.coop

CoServ

2020 Calendar: CoServ Critters

Oscar Martinez
omartinex@coserv.com

Silver

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

PEC's Butterfly Way Station

Ruth Verette
elizabeth.rozyskie@peci.com

Classification 5

Gold

East Kentucky Power Cooperative

COVID-19 Response

Member Services
kevin.osbourn@ekpc.coop

Silver

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

Annual Meeting Invite Postcard

Ryan G. Hall
ryanh@mtco-ops.com

13 BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN

Classification 1

Silver

South Alabama Electric

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Andy Kimbro
andyk@outhaec.com

Classification 2

Gold

Northcentral Electric Cooperative

Chevy Bolt Wrap

Justin Jaggars
jjaggars@northcentralelectric.com

Silver

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative

NOEC & Subsidiary Brand Manual

Sarah Wilhelm
sarah.wilhelm@noec.coop

Classification 3

Gold

Carroll EMC

Merry Christmas from Carroll EMC

Brittany Shadix
brittany.Shadix@cemc.com

Silver

Holy Cross Energy

PureServe Your Lifestyle

Anna Johnson
kjohnson@holycross.com

Classification 4

Gold

Cobb EMC

EV Experience

Brooke Melton
brooke.melton@cobbemc.com

Silver

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Unmanned Aerial System Brings Reliability to New Heights

Rachelle Baker, John Larsen
elizabeth.rozyskie@peci.com

Classification 5

Gold

Ohio's Electric Cooperatives

Bicycles Built for You

Anita Cook
acook@ohioec.org

Silver

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives

2020 Photo Calendar

Jessica Hawkins
jhawkins@kyelectric.coop

14 BEST INDIVIDUAL AD

Classification 1

Gold

Grand Valley Power

Cooperative Youth Tour Ad

Dana Pogar
dpogar@gvp.org

Classification 2

Gold

San Isabel Electric Association

Don't Get Left In the Dark

Paris Elliot
paris.elliott@siea.com

* Asterisk denotes a first-time entrant

Classification 3

Gold

GVEC
Branded Streaming Commercials
GVEC
cboos@gvec.org

Silver

Holy Cross Energy
Reflect During the Peak
Anna Johnson
kjohnson@holycross.com

Classification 4

Gold

Pedernales Electric Cooperative
Friday Night Fever
John Larsen, Ruth Verette,
Elizabeth Rozyskie, Marjorie Smith
elizabeth.rozyskie@peci.com

Silver

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
We're All In This Together
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
bwolfe@myrec.coop

Classification 5

Gold

Minnkota Power Cooperative
All In on All-of-the-Above Energy
Minnkota Power Cooperative
kcusack@minnkota.com

Silver

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives
Travel Giveaway Houseboat Rental
Katy Hurt
khurt@kentuckyliving.com

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BEST EVENT

Classification 1

Gold

Grand Valley Power
Glow Halloween
Grand Valley Power
cwharton@gvp.org

Silver

Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative*
Drive-In Annual Meeting Movie Night
Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative
bperkins@tricountyrec.com

Classification 2

Gold

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
2020 Annual Meeting Event
Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
sarah.wilhelm@noec.coop

Silver

Stearns Electric Association*
Donut Dash
Whitney Ditlevson
wditlevson@stearnselectric.org

Classification 4

Gold

GreyStone Power Corporation
Beam Signing Barbecue
Erin Harper, Brandon Knight
erin.harper@greystonepower.com

Silver

CoServ
High School Graduations at Texas Motor Speedway
Oscar Martinez
omartinez@coserv.com

Classification 5

Gold

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina
Virtual Youth Experience
Van O'Cain
van.ocain@ecsc.org

Silver (tie)

Cooperative Energy
20/20 Experience: Cooperative Energy's
Virtual All-Employee Meeting
Cooperative Energy Corporate Communications
speterson@cooperativeenergy.com

Central Iowa Cooperative
Momentum is Building - Efficiency is Coming
Touchstone Cooperatives of Iowa
dawn.sly-terpstra@cipco.net



Congratulations to the Best COVID-19 Response Winner

To celebrate the ingenuity and tenacity of cooperative communicators, the Council of Rural Electric Communicators decided to award a special prize to the Best COVID-19 Response entry among this year's Spotlight on Excellence Awards winners. Showing creativity, ability to improvise and the principle of Concern for Community, the winner of this one-time award goes to Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative.

DRIVE-IN ANNUAL MEETING MOVIE NIGHT

Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative | Malinta, OH

Learn more about their winning entry by visiting the Spotlight on Excellence Awards Library of Leading Practices on cooperative.com.

* Asterisk denotes a first-time entrant

FEATURED AWARDS

16 BEST TOTAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Classification 2

Gold

Dixie Electric Power Association
Dixie Electric Crisis Communication
- 4 Tornadoes; 1 Pandemic
Lydia Walters
lydiawalters@dixieepa.com

Classification 3

Gold

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative
Employee Communication During COVID-19
Sam Houston EC Communications Department
rfrey@samhouston.net

Silver (tie)

CHELCO
We're in This Together
Bonnie Whitfield, Emily Cowan and Tyler Wood
bwhitfield@chelco.com

Palmetto Electric Cooperative
Give 5
Palmetto Electric Cooperative
msantorum@palmetto.coop

Classification 4

Gold

CoServ
CoServ SmartHub
CoServ Communications Team
omartinez@coserv.com

Silver

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
No Turning Back
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
Melissa.Segrest@bluebonnet.coop

Classification 5

Gold

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina
Virtual Youth Experience
Van O'Cain
van.ocain@ecsc.org

Silver

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative
Let's Power Savings: 2020 Digital
Marketing Pilot Campaign
Christi Scruggs
christi.scruggs@powersouth.com



Edgar F. Chesnutt Award Winner

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina are the recipients of the 2021 Edgar F. Chesnutt Award for Best Total Communication Program, the highest honor bestowed by the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program.

Their entry 'Virtual Youth Experience' received glowing reviews from the judges. The judges noted this entry was a terrific overview of the event and applauded the efforts to create a professional virtual program while still having a personal touch. "Congratulations on a well-implemented program. This had a lot of moving parts and it's something your team should be extremely proud of!"

2021 WINNER

The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina | Cayce, SC

About the Award: The Chesnutt Award is presented to the co-op whose entry in the Best Total Communication Program category receives the highest score from a panel of judges consisting of individuals from nationally accredited universities and communication and marketing professionals in the private sector.

This award is named after Edgar F. Chesnutt, who served as manager of corporate communication with Arkansas Electric Cooperatives from 1961 until 1987.

J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award Winner

The recipient of the 2021 J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award is Randy Smith, general manager at Dixie Electric Power Association in Laurel, Mississippi.

This year's panel of three judges consisted of communication and management experts in both the private sector and electric co-op industry. The judges praised Smith's commitment to strong communications noting, "His role in strategic planning and his leadership in the community are but a few examples of how this man truly understands the power of solid communications and what it can achieve."

2021 WINNER | RANDY SMITH

Dixie Electric Power Association | Laurel, Mississippi

About the Award: The J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award recognizes an electric cooperative or public power district chief executive officer or general manager who is committed to advancing communication at the cooperative and in the electric cooperative industry.

This 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-members.

LaBerge Award for Excellence in Strategic Communications Award Winner

The recipient of the 2021 LaBerge Award for Excellence in Strategic Communication is Joe Arnold, Vice President of Strategic Communications at Kentucky Electric Cooperatives.

A panel of three senior co-op communicators evaluated the LaBerge Award nominations and praised Arnold's leadership and his positioning of Kentucky Electric Cooperative as a valued source of information for their members. One judge noted, "The collaborative nature of his work is a great example of the cooperative principles that guide what we do. I know the communicators he serves benefit from his expertise and leadership."

2021 WINNER | JOE ARNOLD

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives | Louisville, KY

About the Award: The LaBerge Award for Excellence in Strategic Communications recognizes an individual communicator as a leader, practitioner and contributor across the cooperative network. This individual demonstrates personal excellence, influence and impact.

This award honors the late Justin LaBerge, NRECA senior leadership communication manager and his spirit, commitment and passion for electric cooperatives.

