

Press Release



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North Carolina's Blue Ridge Energy Wins National Co-op Communication Award for Launch of Community Solar Program

SALT LAKE City, Utah – Blue Ridge Energy is the 2018 recipient of the Edgar F. Chesnutt Award for Best Total Communication Program among America's electric cooperatives, the highest honor in the [Spotlight on Excellence](#) Awards program.

Located in Lenoir, North Carolina, Blue Ridge Energy established a new community solar program in response to consumer requests for additional renewable energy options. Their communications campaign was so effective that every panel in the solar array was sold in just 10 months.

"Blue Ridge Energy's impressive understanding of their consumer and community needs is clearly evident in their marketing and communications strategy in support of this new solar project," said Scott Peterson, NRECA's senior vice president of communications. "By working towards meeting its member expectations for renewable energy and a better future for their members, Blue Ridge Energy demonstrated a genuine concern for community. NRECA applauds their dedication and commitment to effective communications."

Blue Ridge Energy segmented their communications outreach into four distinct phases, a key step towards successfully promoting their new community solar program. Communications methods included traditional and digital channels to reach every relevant demographic.

"We are honored to be named the 2018 recipient of the Edgar F. Chesnutt Award for Best Total Communication Program," said John Coffee, chief operating officer for Blue Ridge Energy. "Blue Ridge Energy's community solar program was truly a group effort. I'm proud to be recognized for our dedication to find renewable energy options that meet our member's needs while promoting a healthy environment."

Blue Ridge Energy received their award at CONNECT '18, a national communications, marketing and member services conference organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Edgar F. Chesnutt, for whom the award is named, was manager of corporate communication with Arkansas Electric Cooperatives in Little Rock from 1961 until 1987. The Spotlight on Excellence

Awards competition recognizes the top-rated communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related organizations. The competition is in its 30th year.

A complete list of winners is available [Spotlight on Excellence](#).

The [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association](#) is the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. As local businesses built by the consumers they serve, electric cooperatives have meaningful ties to rural America and invest \$12 billion annually in their communities.

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