



Contact Michael Santistevan, Public
Relations Coordinator

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Telephone 575.758.2258

Email msantistevan@kitcarson.com

Website www.kitcarson.com

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Among 2019 SEPA Power Player Awards Finalists

TAOS, NEW MEXICO — The Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) recently announced that Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is one of 21 finalists for the 2019 SEPA Power Players Awards. The SEPA Power Players Awards honor utilities, their industry partners, and individual thought leaders providing the vision, models and momentum for the electric power industry's smart transition to a clean, modern energy future. Awards are given in seven categories: Investor Owned, Public Power Utility and Electric Cooperative of the Year; and Innovative Partner, Power Player, Change Agent and Visionary of the Year.

KCEC is a finalist in the Electric Cooperative category, which honors cooperatives who demonstrate industry leadership through unique innovation in an effort to advance clean energy, distributed energy resources (DER), and grid modernization as resources to help meet the needs of their electricity consumers.

“By making bold business decisions and pursuing strategic partnerships, Kit Carson has made real progress towards our community's clean energy goals,” said Luis Reyes, KCEC CEO. “We are honored to be in the company of such innovative utilities and leaders.”

KCEC began integrating DERs into its grid in 2008. Because of contractual limitations on self-generation and ever-increasing rates, KCEC ended its contract with its generation and transmission supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and entered into a partnership with Guzman Energy for its wholesale power. Guzman's ability to provide affordable, reliable, clean power at a fixed rate enabled KCEC to integrate DERs into the grid, set audacious goals, and become a national leader among cooperatives. KCEC made the commitment in 2017 to reach the goal of 100% daytime solar by 2022 and is on track to meet that goal.

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative and Kaua'i Island Electric Cooperative are also Electric Cooperative finalists. This year's finalists were selected from a record-breaking competitive field of 97 nominations. Finalists for each of the 7 award categories will be honored and the winners will be announced at SEPA's 2019 Grid Evolution Summit gala dinner set for Monday, July 29, in Washington, D.C.

“As we continue to witness the U.S. electricity grid transition towards a clean and modern future, so often we fail to recognize the specific innovations and visionary projects making this all possible,” said Julia Hamm, SEPA’s President and CEO. “SEPA’s Power Player Awards are designed to highlight the innovative projects, partnerships, individuals and ideas transforming our industry. The sheer number of nominations is indicative of the heightened interest and accelerating change occurring across the country.”

In addition to being a finalist in the Electric Cooperative category, KCEC partners and works with two other finalists. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) was nominated as an Innovative Partner of the Year for its work on the Solar Utility Network Deployment Acceleration project. Bryan Garcia, the President and CEO of the Connecticut Green Bank, was nominated as Power Player of the Year for his work to develop the “Solar for All” program that expands solar access to low and moderate income households. KCEC is a member of NRECA and is part of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory’s Solar Energy Innovation Network with the Connecticut Green Bank through the Clean Energy States Alliance.

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About Kit Carson

Formed in 1944, Kit Carson is a member owned electric distribution cooperative in northern New Mexico and is the second largest cooperative in the state. Kit Carson is one of sixteen distribution electric cooperatives that serve rural New Mexico communities, serving nearly 30,000 members in Taos, parts of Colfax and Rio Arriba counties. To learn more about Kit Carson, visit www.kitcarson.com

About SEPA

The Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) is a nonprofit organization that envisions a carbon-free world by 2050. We are one of many entities globally required to make this vision a reality. To learn more about SEPA, visit <https://sepapower.org/>