



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 16, 2025**

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### **KCEC Wildfire Mitigation Update: April 16, 2025**

**Taos, NM**— Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is actively engaged in and concerned about ongoing wildfire threats. Our region has been experiencing more frequent fire weather watches and extreme wind advisories while the communities and forests feel the effects of a winter season with low precipitation. As we approach the summer fire months, KCEC emphasizes the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders.

"We cannot afford to be complacent regarding wildfire mitigation. Our families and communities depend on KCEC to take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of wildfires in our service area," says KCEC CEO Luis A. Reyes Jr. "KCEC is working with first responders, experts in the field, and key public officials to provide members with information and resources to make informed decisions regarding their families and properties."

KCEC is collaborating with Taos County and UNM-Taos to offer a series of panel discussions on wildfire prevention in the region. The Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series is designed to equip community members with essential resources and information to enhance their preparedness for potential wildfires.

"UNM-Taos proudly stands at the forefront of these vital community discussions, co-sponsoring conversations essential to our shared future." Mary Gutierrez, Chancellor of UNM-Taos, passionately emphasizes that healthy forests are integral to our environment and the lifeblood of the unique ecosystem surrounding the Enchanted Circle.

### **Session 1: State of the Forest**

Date: April 17, 2025

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: UNM-Taos, Bataan Hall, 121 Civic Plaza Dr, Taos, NM

#### **Panelists:**

- **Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales** - NM Senator District 6
- **Kristina Orteza** - NM House Representative District 42
- **Owen Burney** - John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center
- **Brent Davidson** - U.S. Forest Service – Southwestern Region 3
- **George Track** - Taos Pueblo

#### **Moderator:**

JR Logan - Taos County Forest and Watershed Health Program Manager

We encourage you to join us for the upcoming sessions of the Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series. Wildfires significantly threaten the northern New Mexico communities within the Enchanted Circle. These fires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries and can adversely affect residents, businesses, governmental entities, municipalities, tribal organizations, hospitals, and other anchor institutions. The more prepared our communities are, the more effectively we can mitigate and respond to the devastation that a wildfire may bring if it occurs in our vicinity.

As of April 15, 2025, the Carson National Forest Service indicates that the fire danger level remains at MODERATE. KCEC is resuming extensive maintenance work in several areas to ensure our members continue to have reliable power and internet services. Many fire departments throughout the region have implemented daily burn bans. KCEC will monitor weather conditions and take appropriate action as necessary.

### **Information from Taos County and the Town of Taos**

"We have received numerous calls about small brush fires near highways and roads. Many of these incidents are linked to vehicles towing trailers with chains and idling for long periods. The chains can produce sparks, and overheated engines can ignite fires if they come into contact with arid brush. We advise everyone to exercise caution when pulling over to the side of roads or highways", says Eddie Joe Abeyta, Fire Chief for Taos Fire Rescue.

"Taos County is prepared for a wildfire. We take significant steps behind the scenes to ensure readiness for a wildfire or natural disaster. Attached are helpful resources to prepare residents," says Bobby Lucero, Taos County Emergency Management Director.

Members have access to proactive forest fire prevention resources and information. Taos County recommends having "go bags" ready in case of an emergency. A list of resources is available to assist residents of our communities.

### **KCEC Service Territory Essential Community Resources**

**[ENCHANTED CIRCLE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS SERIES](#)** - The Enchanted Circle Wildfire Preparedness Series is designed to equip community members with essential resources and information to enhance preparedness for potential wildfires.

**[Taos County Wildfire Plaza Website](#)** - Taos County Wildfire Plaza is a place for people to share news, information and resources related to forest and watershed restoration and wildfire risk reduction.

**[Be Prepared for Wildfires – Ready.GOV](#)** - Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn in natural areas like forests, grasslands or prairies. These dangerous fires spread quickly and can devastate not only wildlife and natural areas but also communities.

**[Taos County Emergency Checklist Information](#)**- The following checklists are helpful guides for stocking up on essential items and preparing for emergencies.

### **HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRES**

Wildfire risk reduction steps that can make your home safer during a wildfire

**[Fire Prevention Programs](#)** - Your Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide

**[Ready, Set Go New Mexico](#)**

This page has information about embers, insurance, Ready Set Go, and other aspects of fire prevention and education.

**[Living With Fire page](#)**

**[Ready Set Go page](#)**

These resources can help members prepare for wildfire events and provide steps homeowners can take to protect their properties. KCEC encourages members to review this information and take the necessary precautions for their families and homes. This guidance will also be beneficial when dealing with homeowners' insurance applications or renewals. KCEC encourages members to contact family and friends in rural areas, as many individuals in our communities require medical assistance.

In conclusion, KCEC owns or operates 20 solar arrays across its service area to ensure the reliability of its system. This year, KCEC is constructing its second-largest solar array in Amalia, NM, adding 8.75 MW of solar generation. Once completed, KCEC's total solar generation will be approximately 50 MW. Additionally, KCEC has three battery storage microgrid projects scheduled to begin construction this year, which will help support the system during extreme weather and emergencies. For more information on these projects, please visit [kitcarson.com](http://kitcarson.com)

**[KCEC Green Hydrogen Project](#)**

**[KCEC Microgrid Project](#)**

**On April 22, 2025**, KCEC will break ground on an additional 8.75 MW solar array and a corresponding 8.75 MW battery energy storage system with a four-hour capacity (35 MWh). KCEC encourages the public to attend. For more details, please [click here](#).

KCEC would like to thank Taos County, the Town of Taos, the Forest Service, NM State Forestry, the Taos County Chamber of Commerce, Taos Ski Valley, Taos Community Foundation and UNM-Taos for their input and collaboration.

For further information, please contact CEO Luis Reyes at [lreyes@kitcarson.com](mailto:lreyes@kitcarson.com) or COO Richard Martinez at [rmartinez@kitcarson.com](mailto:rmartinez@kitcarson.com). Visit us at [kitcarson.com](http://kitcarson.com) for more details.

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