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KCEC Wildfire Mitigation Update: July 09, 2025

Taos, NM - As summer activity increases across northern New Mexico, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) remains focused on protecting our members and communities during this year's wildfire season. With many visitors and events bringing increased traffic to our service territory, KCEC has been actively performing vegetation management, clearing brush, and inspecting our power lines to reduce the risk of ignition across Taos, Colfax, and Rio Arriba counties. KCEC is working closely with local fire departments and emergency management to monitor weather conditions, and we are prepared to respond rapidly in the event of a fire-related emergency. Our crews are on standby, and we encourage all members to report any downed lines, trees on lines, or other hazards immediately to our 24/7 dispatch center to help us prevent potential incidents. We also remind members and visitors to avoid parking or driving over dry grass and to practice fire-safe activities while enjoying the beautiful mountains and trails. If weather conditions require heightened precautions, KCEC will perform the necessary actions to ensure the safety of its members.

"KCEC's service area attracts a substantial influx of visitors and tourists, significantly elevating the potential fire danger in our forests. To meet this challenge head-on, KCEC is fully committed to maintaining its operational services. Our dedicated crews work with unwavering focus and determination to ensure the reliability and safety of our system, ready to tackle any challenges that may arise. We appreciate our members' understanding and cooperation as we take every precaution to ensure safety while continuing to provide reliable services throughout our communities this summer," says KCEC CEO Luis Reyes.

Crews will continue performing maintenance on all circuits (main line and taps). Crews will continue to tighten all hardware, which includes hotline clamps, transformer connections, cross-arm braces, and secondary connections to the weather head on service drops. The circuits that will continue in July are:

- Upper Red River
- Ranchitos Circuit (40% complete)
- Questa (Tree Trimming Service Orders)
- Ute Park (50% complete)
- Lower Llano San Juan and Santa Barbara (85% complete)
- Ojo Sarco and Vallecitos (90% complete)
- Los Pinos (90% complete)
- Taos (Service Orders)

KCEC continues to prioritize the safety of our members and communities by placing specific areas of our service territory on non-reclose operation during high fire risk periods. This means that if a power line experiences a fault, it will remain off until our crews can inspect the line to ensure it is safe to re-energize, reducing the potential for ignition in dry and windy conditions. While this may result in longer outage times, it is a critical step to protect

lives, property, and the beautiful landscapes of northern New Mexico during this wildfire season. We appreciate our members' understanding and cooperation as we take every precaution to ensure safety while continuing to provide essential services throughout our communities this summer.

The following areas have been placed on non-reclose:

- Rockwall to Mora County Line
- Chamisal to El Valle and Ojo Sarco
- Idlewild
- Lake View Pines
- Elizabeth Town
- Eagle Nest into Ute Park
- Green Mountain
- Upper Red River
- Hidden Lake
- Black Lake Resorts
- Vallecitos, Canon Plaza
- La Peta, Servilleta, Las Tablas
- Taos Canyon and Valle Escondido

KCEC is actively enhancing wildfire mitigation efforts in northern New Mexico by converting overhead power lines to underground systems, with a focused effort in **Taos Ski Valley**. This initiative aims to reduce the risk of wildfires ignited by electrical infrastructure in this high-risk, forested mountain area. By burying power lines, KCEC minimizes the potential for vegetation contact and damage from extreme weather, thereby decreasing fire hazards and increasing reliability for residents and businesses in Taos Ski Valley. Through these efforts, KCEC underscores its commitment to protecting the environment and providing reliable service to its members while addressing the growing threat of wildfires in Taos Ski Valley.

The cooperative is investing in resilience by implementing microgrids and battery energy storage systems in Taos, Penasco, and El Rito West. These systems will ensure critical power is maintained during fire events and extreme weather conditions. Construction for these projects is expected to begin this year. The measures aim to protect both infrastructure and communities, especially as the wildfire season intensifies. These projects will enhance KCEC's electrical system during extreme weather and emergencies.

Northern New Mexico remains in the grip of a challenging wildfire season, with significant fires fueling regional concern. Persistent hot, dry, and windy conditions—often under Red Flag warnings—are exacerbating fire behavior and leading to evacuations, trail and road closures, and air quality advisories across multiple counties. Smoke from these wildfires has significantly impacted local air quality, prompting health recommendations for residents in Taos and surrounding areas to monitor forecasts and limit outdoor exposure as necessary. Smoke from active fires is impacting air quality across Northern New Mexico, prompting health advisories in several counties. Local and federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service and the New Mexico State Forestry, are urging residents to stay alert, prepare evacuation kits, and avoid activities that increase the risk of fire.

KCEC is committed to ensuring the safety of its members by implementing comprehensive measures to prevent wildfires caused by electrical systems. We are actively collaborating with key stakeholders, including local fire departments, environmental organizations, and community leaders, to develop and enhance strategies aimed at fire prevention in the region. Through regular inspections, upgraded infrastructure, and community outreach programs, KCEC is dedicated to mitigating the risks associated with wildfires and protecting our landscapes and communities from potential hazards.

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.

[KCEC Green Hydrogen Safety Assessment Project](#)
[KCEC Green Hydrogen Project](#)
[KCEC Microgrid Project](#)

KCEC owns and operates 20 solar arrays across its service area to ensure system reliability. This June, KCEC will begin constructing its second-largest solar array in Amalia, NM, adding 8.75 MW of solar generation and battery storage. Once completed, KCEC's total solar generation will be approximately 52 MW and 25 MW of battery storage.

On April 29, 2025, KCEC announced the launch of the KCEC Hydrogen Safety Assessment project in partnership with ENTRUST Solutions Group. This initiative aims to demonstrate the safety and various applications of hydrogen as a reliable source of electricity, focusing on Questa, NM, Penasco, NM, and the Town of Taos. KCEC is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to construct these hydrogen facilities, emphasizing safety and quality.

Once completed, these clean hydrogen, solar, and battery facilities will significantly enhance the sustainability and resilience of KCEC's entire electrical system, providing affordable, reliable, and safe energy generation. For more information on these projects, please visit kitcarson.com.

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 or COO Richard Martinez at rmartinez@kitcarson.com. Visit us at kitcarson.com for more details.