



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 11, 2026**

**Contact:**  
**Michael Santistevan, PR**  
msantistevan@kitcarson.com

## **Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Provides Wildfire Mitigation Progress Update for North Central New Mexico: March 11, 2026**

**Taos, NM — March 11, 2026** — Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is continuing wildfire mitigation efforts across North Central New Mexico as the region faces dangerously dry weather conditions, little to no precipitation, and periods of high winds that significantly increase wildfire risk. These unusually warm and dry conditions are not typical for this time of year, and KCEC is taking proactive steps to reduce wildfire risk and protect communities, forests, and critical electric infrastructure.

As part of its wildfire mitigation strategy, KCEC has implemented advanced monitoring and inspection technologies to better identify potential risks in heavily forested and remote terrain.

KCEC is using [Firescape technology](#), an AI-based wildfire risk analysis platform that uses weather data to evaluate vegetation density, terrain, and environmental risk factors to proactively identify areas of elevated wildfire concern. Firescape technology allows KCEC to identify areas experiencing high-risk wind and weather conditions and to proactively notify members in those areas when elevated wildfire risk is present in its service territory.

In addition, the cooperative has deployed [Voltair drone inspections](#) to conduct aerial inspections of power lines and other electric infrastructure in rugged or difficult-to-access areas. These drone inspections allow crews to efficiently identify potential hazards such as vegetation encroachment, damaged equipment, or structural concerns while improving safety and response times. KCEC recently deployed Voltair to perform aerial inspections in the Sipapu, Taos Canyon, and Upper Red River areas, enabling crews to safely inspect power lines and infrastructure located in heavily forested and difficult-to-access terrain.

### **Current Maintenance and Wildfire Mitigation Work Areas**

KCEC crews are continuing scheduled system maintenance and reliability work across multiple circuits in the service area to ensure safe, dependable electric service. Crews are inspecting equipment, tightening hardware, and completing preventative maintenance as part of KCEC's ongoing wildfire mitigation and system reliability efforts. Additionally, crews are conducting inspections and operational checks of Overcurrent Relay (OCR) protection equipment to ensure proper system performance and safeguard critical infrastructure. Maintenance work will extend into next week with crews deployed throughout the service area to complete work orders and carry out further preventative maintenance. Crews are also prioritizing vegetation management, infrastructure inspections, and preventative upkeep at various locations.

### **Current maintenance locations include:**

- **Ranchos Circuit — Valerio Road area**
- **Twining Circuit — El Prado**
- **REA circuit**

- **Additional crews are scheduled next week across multiple areas for system maintenance and work orders**

Alongside wildfire mitigation activities, KCEC is also advancing several community microgrid projects designed to improve energy resilience and reliability across North Central New Mexico. Engineering and design work for the microgrid installations is currently approximately 60 percent complete, with site preparation and earthwork planning underway in the Village of Taos Ski Valley, Peñasco, and El Rito West. Groundbreaking for these projects is currently scheduled for **late June or early July**, pending final engineering and site preparation. The battery energy storage systems for these microgrids are already on order with the manufacturer, though industry-wide supply chain delays have impacted delivery timelines. Despite these delays, KCEC continues to move forward with project planning and infrastructure preparation. The microgrid systems have also been expanded from the originally planned configuration, with larger battery capacity and longer energy duration to provide greater operational flexibility and improved reliability during outages, extreme weather events, or wildfire-related disruptions. These investments represent an important step toward strengthening local energy independence and grid resilience for rural communities across the region.

Significant progress has been made on KCEC's innovative hydrogen energy project, a vital initiative poised to enhance long-term energy reliability and resilience throughout Northern New Mexico. Over the past year, KCEC has achieved key milestones in planning, engineering, and safety, including securing federal funding, finalizing preliminary site layouts, completing environmental reviews, and launching comprehensive safety and technology assessments. The cooperative has also completed water testing and thoroughly evaluated critical system components, including electrolyzers, hydrogen storage systems, compression equipment, and power generation technologies, ensuring strict compliance with federal standards and industry best practices. With these essential steps in place, the project is confidently advancing toward construction readiness, underscoring its commitment to a sustainable and secure energy future.

In parallel with engineering and environmental progress, KCEC completed significant safety and technology evaluations to support responsible project development. In March 2026, KCEC completed a formal Hydrogen Safety Assessment with ENTRUST Solutions Group, which included a structured hazard and risk analysis to evaluate operational, environmental, and facility risks associated with hydrogen production, compression, storage, and generation systems. The assessment helped establish safety protocols, monitoring systems, and operational safeguards that will guide the project as it moves toward construction readiness. KCEC also completed vetting of key technologies, including electrolyzers, hydrogen storage systems, compression equipment, and fuel cell generators, to ensure the selected systems meet federal standards and Rural Utilities Service requirements while supporting safe, reliable operation for the long-term benefit of cooperative members and the surrounding communities.

“The progress we’ve made on the hydrogen project represents a major step forward in strengthening energy resilience for Northern New Mexico,” said Luis A. Reyes, CEO of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative. “By combining renewable energy with long-duration hydrogen storage, we are creating a system that can deliver reliable power during extreme weather, winter storms, and wildfire-related disruptions. This project complements our broader wildfire mitigation and grid resilience efforts by providing the ability to store energy and keep critical infrastructure powered even when transmission lines are impacted, helping ensure our members and communities remain safe and connected.”

KCEC will continue providing updates as wildfire mitigation work and infrastructure improvements progress throughout the cooperative's service territory. For more information, please visit [kitcarson.com](http://kitcarson.com)

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### **About Kit Carson Electric Cooperative**

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 16 electric cooperatives that serve rural New Mexico communities, serving nearly 30,000 members in Taos, Colfax and Rio Arriba counties. To learn more about Kit Carson, visit [www.kitcarson.com](http://www.kitcarson.com).