



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2026

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KCEC Accelerates Wildfire Mitigation, Strategic Planned Maintenance, and Grid Resilience Efforts as Extreme Heat, Dry Conditions, and Critical Fire Danger Intensify Across Northern New Mexico

TAOS, NM — Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) is continuing to expand its comprehensive wildfire mitigation, grid resilience, and clean energy initiatives across Northern New Mexico as the region faces intensifying drought, unseasonably warm temperatures, and elevated wildfire risk heading into the spring and summer seasons. Current conditions across the region remain unusually warm, dry, and windy for this time of year, with temperatures reaching into the 80s and little to no precipitation in the forecast. These factors, combined with low humidity, below-average snowpack in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and persistent dry fuels, are significantly increasing wildfire danger across KCEC’s service territory and throughout much of Northern New Mexico.

“As extreme heat and a complete lack of moisture continue to dry out our landscapes, wildfire risk across Northern New Mexico is reaching critical levels,” said Luis A. Reyes, CEO of KCEC. “These are not typical conditions; everything is dry, fuels are highly volatile, and the risk of ignition is significantly elevated. KCEC is taking decisive, proactive action to protect our communities and strengthen the resilience of our electric system. Through a combination of aggressive wildfire mitigation, strategic planned outages, advanced inspection technologies, and long-duration hydrogen energy storage, we are working to reduce risk today while building a stronger, more reliable energy future for Northern New Mexico.”

In response to these worsening conditions, KCEC continues to build on its proactive wildfire mitigation strategy, utilizing advanced technologies and field-based operations to reduce system risk and protect communities, forests, and critical infrastructure. The cooperative continues to deploy Firescape, an AI-based wildfire risk analysis platform that evaluates vegetation density, terrain, and real-time weather data to identify high-risk areas and provide early warning notifications to members. In addition, KCEC has expanded the use of Voltair drone inspections to conduct detailed aerial assessments of power lines and infrastructure in remote, forested, and difficult-to-access terrain, allowing crews to identify potential hazards more efficiently and safely.

As a direct result of these enhanced inspection efforts, KCEC will be implementing a series of planned power outages across portions of its service territory in the coming weeks and months. These outages are a critical component of the cooperative’s wildfire mitigation and system hardening strategy and will allow crews to safely perform targeted maintenance, remove hazardous vegetation, replace or repair equipment identified through drone inspections, and address priority risk areas before peak wildfire season. Outage locations and timing will be based on data-driven risk assessments, inspection findings, and system priorities, with advance notice provided to affected members whenever possible. While these temporary outages may cause inconvenience, they are necessary to reduce the likelihood of wildfire ignition, prevent unplanned outages, and ensure the long-term safety and reliability of the electric system.

At the same time, KCEC is advancing major investments in long-term energy resilience, including its long-duration energy storage hydrogen facility, a transformative project designed to strengthen regional energy independence and reliability. Building on significant progress in engineering, safety validation, environmental review, and federal coordination, the hydrogen project integrates renewable energy with hydrogen production,

storage, and generation systems to provide dispatchable power during outages, extreme weather events, winter storms, and wildfire-related disruptions. This system will enable long-duration energy storage beyond the capabilities of traditional battery systems, provide backup power for critical infrastructure and rural communities, and enhance grid flexibility during emergencies. The hydrogen project complements KCEC's broader investments in microgrids and distributed energy systems, positioning Northern New Mexico as a leader in rural energy innovation and resilience.

Community microgrid projects in Taos Ski Valley, Peñasco, and El Rito West continue to move forward, with expanded battery storage capacity and longer-duration systems designed to provide localized resilience during outages and emergencies.

KCEC crews are actively deployed across the service territory, performing system maintenance, detailed inspections, and proactive wildfire mitigation to strengthen grid reliability and reduce risk.

Current operations are focused on key areas, including **Cabresto Canyon and Taos Canyon**, where crews are working on multiple circuits to enhance infrastructure resilience and ensure continued safe and dependable electric service.

These efforts are part of KCEC's ongoing commitment to protecting communities, improving system performance, and minimizing the threat of wildfire across northern New Mexico. Residents may notice increased crew presence in these areas and are encouraged to exercise caution near active work zones.

Kit Carson Propane and Kit Carson Internet are actively preparing for the upcoming high-risk season. Both divisions are conducting system readiness checks, reinforcing infrastructure where needed, and coordinating response planning to ensure continued service reliability and support for members during potential wildfire events and emergency conditions.

KCEC will continue providing regular updates on wildfire mitigation efforts, planned outage schedules, and energy infrastructure projects as they progress throughout the cooperative's service territory. Members are encouraged to stay informed through official KCEC communication channels and to take appropriate precautions during periods of elevated wildfire risk.

For more information, visit www.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.