

currents

Cover Photo: Navopache EC crews must work on rugged terrain when they make repairs

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I'm not one to wish away time. It's too precious. Especially when the end of the path becomes closer than its beginning.



David Lock, GCSECA CEO

It's difficult to resist the urge to want to fast-forward into 2021, though – given the bleak year that this one has been. But while 2020 will go down as amongst our worst, it would be a disservice to dismiss the entire 366 days (yes, of course it had to be Leap Year) as nothing but a horror show. As I'm writing this in early November and Thanksgiving eases onto the horizon, I want to reflect on some good things that happened in 2020 for Arizona's cooperatives and our members.

- Way back in January, we had an excellent Annual Meeting and Conference. Gov. Doug Ducey joined us, and we had very successful visits with legislators and members of the Arizona Corporation Commission.
- When the pandemic hit, Arizona's co-op family lived the 7th Cooperative Principle – Concern for Community. We secured test kits for critical utility and health care workers. We made masks and provided other personal protection equipment for our members and for vulnerable populations. We served food to shut-in seniors and to those facing

challenging economic times. We distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the less fortunate. We created a Mutual Aid Agreement to ensure we would assist others, if needed.

- We successfully engaged with state and national policymakers. The Arizona Legislature, during its fractured session, passed only 90 bills of 1,200+ introduced. Our bill enabling co-ops to provide broadband services was one. At the Arizona Corporation Commission, we gained key policy decisions that enable our co-ops the flexibility to operate their organizations. In Congress, we secured support from the state's delegation on several bills that can positively impact co-ops' finances.
- We celebrated Grand Canyon's 70th Anniversary by publishing a history book – charting the course our statewide has followed through many interesting and challenging times, including the current ones.

No one wants another 2020 and everyone is rooting hard for 2021. But a year like 2020 offered Arizona's co-ops an opportunity to be nimble and responsive and to walk our talk. We showed our innovation and compassion and ability to provide a vital service – in the most trying of times. It wasn't all bad.

Dave Lock

2020 Federal and ACC Election Results



As President-elect Joe Biden focuses on the transition to fully take power on January 20th, 2021, speculation over his Cabinet appointments has begun. The president-elect is expected to nominate a mix of progressives, moderates and even a few Republicans as he seeks to satisfy a broad coalition. For the rural electric cooperatives, we are closely watching to see who will lead federal agencies of jurisdiction, including the Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Interior. The first 100 days

of the Biden Administration will predict how impactful his four-year term will be. He is expected to lead off by signing Executive Orders overturning many of President Trump's directives. Of course, he will also have to seek legislative actions and compromise on many of the challenges facing the nation, such as the pandemic, a projected economic recession, millions of Americans unemployed, and precarious international and geo-political affairs.

U.S. Senate: Republicans currently hold a 50-48 Senate seat advantage. In the state of Georgia, where candidates need to win by 50% plus 1, the two Senate races must now be decided by run-off elections. Those elections have been scheduled for January 5, 2021, and decide control of the Senate. Both parties have already converged on the state with a deluge of campaign funds for the final 2020 election battle.



U.S. Senate Special Election: Incumbent Sen. Martha McSally was never able to close the polling or fundraising deficit built by Sen.-elect Mark Kelly. McSally also experienced some headwinds after Cindy McCain endorsed Vice President Biden, a close friend of the late Sen. John McCain. In the end, Kelly received more votes than Vice President Biden and Donald Trump. Because McSally was appointed to the seat, Kelly was sworn in immediately after the election results were canvassed and certified. He will serve out the remaining two years of McCain's term and stand for re-election in 2022.

Understanding the landscape, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has already said he wants to work with the House to pass a pandemic relief package during the lame-duck session and before President-elect Biden is sworn in. He's open to an omnibus funding package that would include funding outside of the current levels provided under a continuing resolution. That opens an opportunity for the cooperatives to have the RUS repricing bill (Flexible Financing for Rural America Act (S. 4152, H.R. 7483)) included in the package.



Arizona Congressional Delegation: The Democrats are expected to control the U.S. House in the 117th Congress where 218 members are needed for a majority. In Arizona, all congressional incumbents easily fended off their challengers. Early on, the only close race was Congressional District 6 occupied by Rep. David Schweikert. It appears that the district's Republican party registration advantage helped. Although marred by a campaign finance ethics scandal, Republicans remained loyal and voted to re-elect Schweikert. Once the 2020 U.S. census population projections are certified and approved by Congress, AZ is expected to gain a congressional district.

Depending on redistricting lines drawn, the 10th Congressional District could be located in the Mesa/Gilbert part of the East Valley which has experienced significant population growth.

Arizona Corporation Commission

All three Democratic Corporation Commission candidates ran on Clean Elections funding as the Solar Team and received approximately \$6-8 million dollars in Independent Expenditure support from outside groups. In the end, only Democrat Anna Tovar secured a seat on the Commission. She garnered the most votes in the race ranking first, followed by the three Republicans (Lea Marquez Peterson, Jim O'Connor, Eric Sloan). Democrats Bill Mundell and Shea Stanfield placed 5th and 6th, respectively.



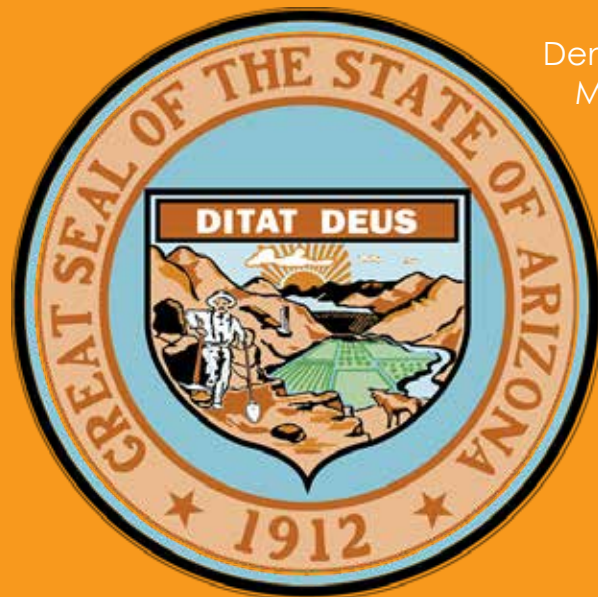
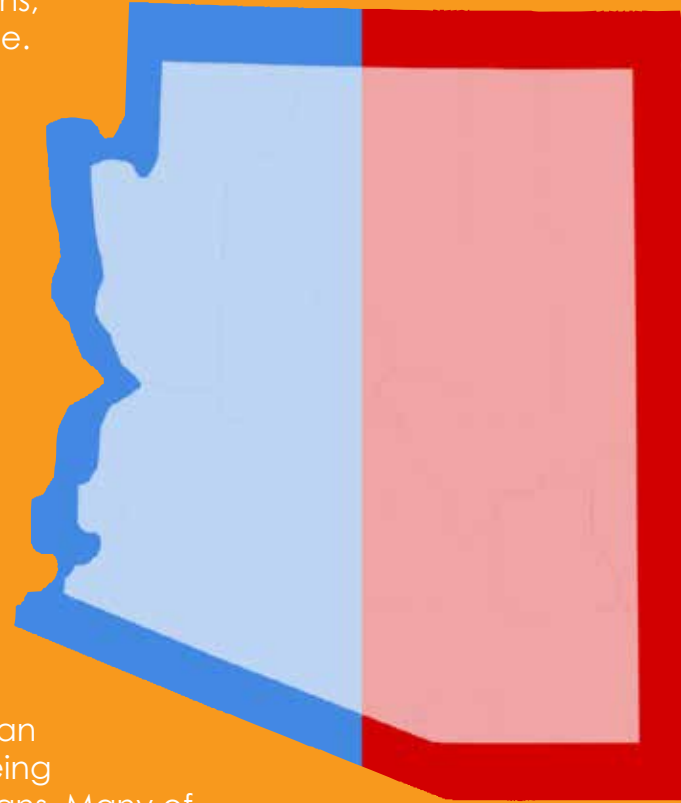
Photo: Marquez Peterson, Jim O'Connor and Anna Tovar

The 2021 Commission will be controlled by a 3-2 Republican majority. It is expected that due to seniority, Justin Olson will be voted chairman. As chairman, Olson may put the Revised Energy Rules at risk. Both he and Commissioner Marquez Peterson voted against the emission-based standard amendment which included renewable energy requirements. As chair, Olson may also prioritize the Retail Electric Competition issue.

Election Brings New Faces to Arizona Legislature; Republicans Maintain Majorities

As Yogi Berra said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." Turns out, that's true. Just prior to the election it seemed a forgone conclusion that Democrats would take the Arizona House and make a push to tie the Senate. The day after the election, however, both chambers remained in Republican hands. With several hundred thousand ballots left to count at that point, the outcome remained uncertain.

Control of the Arizona House appeared to hinge on three races: Rep. Kevin Payne's reelection (R – 21), political newcomer Joel John (R – 4) and former Rep. Brenda Barton (R – 6). The lead for each was fairly slim; in Rep. Payne's case his lead was only 44 votes on the morning after the election. However, at this time the ballots that were being added to the tallies were breaking decisively for Republican candidates; so decisively that some batches being counted were breaking 2-1 in favor of Republicans. Many of these ballots were "late earlys," meaning an early ballot that was not mailed, but instead dropped off at a polling place. As these ballots were being verified and counted in the days that followed Election Day, they were expanding the lead of the aforementioned candidates and thereby solidifying the Republican majority for the next two years.



Democrats did win two seats, however, with Christine Marsh beating Senator Kate Brophy McGee in Legislative District 28 (North Central Phoenix) and Judy Schwiebert defeating Rep. Anthony Kern, while garnering the most votes in Legislative District 20 (Phoenix/Glendale). While this tightened the margin in the Senate, the result was a wash in the House as Joel John defeated Rep. Gerae Peten in Legislative District 4 (Yuma/Gila Bend/Buckeye).

AzGT Employees Line Up, Drive Up For Free Flu Shots

When Robert Bivens pulled up to the flu shot clinic set up in the north parking lot of the Benson campus, he wasn't just thinking of himself when it comes to preventing a case of the flu.

"You don't want to see any of your family, your loved ones, friends, anybody getting sick because there's something that you got that you could have prevented, and you pass it on to somebody else," Bivens said.

Bivens, AzGT transmission maintenance manager, was one of more than 40 AzGT employees who took advantage of the drive-up flu shot clinic on September 24.

More than 20 Apache Station workers took advantage of the flu shot clinic offered the day before at the Apache Station firehouse.

Overall, it was a great turnout, said Shannon Garner, HR generalist I, who worked with Safeway pharmacy managers to schedule the clinics, which were held earlier this year than in previous years.

"We want to get them done early so our employees can stay healthy and when we're able to come back to work we have a safe, healthy environment here," said Garner.

"We offer this every year for our employees and I think this year it's more important for everybody to be safe and because of the pandemic flu shots are even more important this year," Garner said.

Michael Harrington, pharmacy manager for the Safeway store in Benson, said the pandemic is prompting more people than ever to get their flu shots.

"It's definitely raised awareness and the recommendations are for everybody to get a flu vaccination this year and people are definitely heeding that advice," said Harrington.

"The big thing is, with COVID, we don't want to have a major flu outbreak and then also have a flare up of COVID" because of the negative impact that would have on hospitals and other medical care facilities, Harrington said.

Bivens said more people need to be aware of concerns like that because of how a jump in flu cases on top of the potential for spikes in COVID cases could combine and spread through the community.

"I think (COVID) has opened up a lot of people's eyes on being sick and how fast something can spread from one person to the other, and that underscores just how important it is to keep your protection on, get your flu shots, so that you stay safe and healthy. Having three grandkids, I don't want to be sick and maybe not know it and pass it on to them and make them sick," Bivens said.

Harrington credited the G&T for "being proactive" every year.

"It's exciting to have a company that is so proactive for its employees and takes care of their health needs," Harrington said.

Garner said everyone involved worked hard to set up and operate the clinics.

"Our facilities guys were great with getting the tables set up, marking off the parking lot, putting up the tents, getting water, so it was a real group effort," Garner said.



Not Just Winter Preparedness.... Overall Preparedness!



Navopache Electric Cooperative is getting ready to celebrate its 75th anniversary and the team is proud to have reached this milestone in serving its members for so long. NEC is blessed in that the territory it serves gets to experience all four seasons. This also brings challenges – outages due to extreme winds and rain during the summer monsoon season, and then potential outages because of large amounts of freezing rain and heavy, wet snow in treacherous terrain in the winter months. This also means that within the communities that NEC serves, emergency preparedness is huge.

Last winter NEC experienced one major outage during a fairly intense winter storm during the Thanksgiving holiday. NEC crews had to trek through several feet of snow, hauling cable by hand, and re-stringing manually because the terrain was too dangerous/rough to access with the typical bucket trucks. Crews were working

around the clock and were able to restore service to all of the members affected within 72 hours.

In preparation for this upcoming winter, and in hopes to minimize any winter weather-related outages, NEC crews have been busy these last few months performing additional preventative maintenance to some of our lines located in the difficult terrain, upgrading our substations, and balancing our power loads across our network. During the last couple of months, many of



our members experienced short-term outages to ensure the safety of our crews while they performed this necessary preventative maintenance. NEC crews routinely perform maintenance on the lines as well as patrol the lines to make sure that everything is in the best shape possible and that the lines are clear of debris and vegetation to also minimize the fire danger. NEC



has over 3,500 miles of line within our network. A large portion of it is in very rugged areas that are difficult to reach, even in perfect weather, much less in rain, snow and wind. Even though crews are continuing to patrol and perform maintenance, unfortunately when the weather strikes, poles come down whether because of winds or heavy snow; it happens.

Unfortunately, we cannot predict what the wintry weather will bring, so in order to better help our members during these lengthy outages, NEC is in constant communication with Navajo County, Apache County, Catron County (New Mexico) and all of the emergency preparedness organizations who are equipped to provide various kinds of support during the outage. Frequently, NEC will coordinate with the Red Cross and county agencies in identifying areas with the greatest need and getting members assistance where they can.



NEC is proactive during the times leading up to high weather activity (summer and winter) and routinely encourages members to make sure that they have their emergency preparedness kits for both their home and vehicles ready now – before the weather hits. NEC also provides information and links to organizations to help members get prepared such as:

www.redcross.org

www.navajocountyaz.gov/Departments/Emergency-Management-and-Preparedness

www.apachecountyaz.gov/Emergency-Management

www.catroncounty.us/departments/emergency_manager/

When the inevitable occurs, NEC understands that with our varying demographics we need to use different modes of communication to keep all of our members up to date with the status of the outage. NEC does this through our Facebook page, our SmartHub App, local radio stations, local newspapers, and through our website at www.navopache.org.

Finally, from all of us here at NEC, we wish you a safe and wonderful winter whether you are here in our beautiful White Mountains or somewhere else in our beautiful state. We invite you to come visit us some time!!!



Arizona Co-op Lineworker Wins 'Hometown Hero' Award for Helping Food Bank



Trico Electric Cooperative's Jaime Esparza (l) is a "hometown hero" for helping an Arizona food bank. Also shown is Master Sgt. Omar Fernandez. (Photo Courtesy: Trico EC)

When Trico Electric Cooperative's Jaime Esparza made a service call at a regional food bank in Arizona, the nonprofit was expecting a tip or two on saving energy for its new cold-storage freezer.

Instead, the big-hearted journeyman lineman at the Marana, Arizona, co-op gave the nonprofit much more, earning him a "hometown hero" award from a national utility manufacturer. A referral to the co-op's COVID-19 pandemic assistance program and Esparza's gift of time helped the Sahuarita Food Bank save thousands of dollars amid higher demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The award has motivated me to go on and do more," said Esparza, a veteran of the U.S. Army, Marines and Air Force. "We all have to strive and help out each other."

The food bank acquired a larger cold storage freezer this summer to handle extra donations as a result of the pandemic. When Esparza told the food bank the appliance possibly needed a transformer to operate, the nonprofit faced the prospect of dipping into its own budget to pay for materials and labor.



Trico Electric Cooperative's Jaime Esparza and Master Sgt. Omar Fernandez (l) install a transformer at the Sahuarita Food Bank. (Photo Courtesy: Trico EC)

Esparza met with Carlos Valles, the food bank's executive director. "His main goal was to set a new 40-foot freezer into place, but he didn't know the voltage system at the Sahuarita facility," which turned out to be lower than the new appliance's specifications.

Esparza took the case to co-workers, engineers who understood the scope of the problem, and then suggested that Valles apply for a co-op COVID assistance grant, a new program to help local groups. The co-op's board of directors approved a \$5,000 grant to cover the cost of the transformer. As for the labor, Esparza took care of the installation himself, returning to the food bank during his free time to install the unit.

"I never expected anything beyond some advice on various ways we could get our new cooler connected to the power grid," said Valles. "All we expected was a little feedback to save a little money, and it evolved into something totally unexpected. He sent us up the chain of command at Trico to see what it could do for the food bank."

Esparza's involvement continued when he met with inspectors to make sure the job was done right.

A friend of Esparza's nominated him for the national "hometown hero" award program at Koppers Utility & Industrial Products, which recognizes co-op employees who've helped others in their communities during the pandemic. The award comes with a \$500 contribution to the charity of the recipient's choice. Esparza didn't have to think twice. He chose the food bank.

"This was a team project and could not have been completed without all those involved. I hope this inspires others to help people in need."

Oracle Junction Bypass Project Takes Coordination, Teamwork

There's never anything simple about transmission engineering, transmission line, substation, or metering work, and when you've got several entities involved and a Member co-op's load to worry about, things get a little complicated.

In spite of all those factors, Arizona G&T Cooperatives engineers, line crew, and substation and metering personnel all made it look easy.

It all started when the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) decided it needed to work on a transformer on its side of the Oracle Junction substation, located on the west side of State Highway 79, four miles north of where it intersects State Highway 77 north of Oro Valley and Tucson.

Looking at the substation from Highway 79, it looks like one very large substation complex, but the southeast side of the complex belongs to WAPA, and it's physically separate from the northwest side of the complex, which belongs to the San Carlos Irrigation Project (SCIP).

Inside the SCIP facility is an AzGT transformer, which, as timing would have it, also needed maintenance.



This image shows the "shoe-fly," an industry term or slang for a temporary structure used to bypass a substation. This "shoe-fly" consists of three poles on each side of the substation complex and the conduit that was installed for a project in 2014.



This aerial (drone) image shows Tony Ferraro (foreground) and Brandon Guinane in the buckets as they work to install bypass conduit at the Oracle Junction substation.

However, in order for work to be done on the transformers, it would be necessary to "bypass" the substation so both transformers and related equipment could be de-energized.

Since the AzGT transformer serves load for Trico, the bypass had to be done in a way to make sure power would continue to serve that Member as well as other entities that rely on power from the substations.

Robert Bivens said both WAPA and SCIP asked AzGT to do the work.

"They asked if we could do it and we said yes, we would do the bypass, so we agreed to send our crews up there to handle it," Bivens said.

In the transmission industry, the term "shoe-fly" refers to alternate poles, lines and other equipment constructed to temporarily bypass a substation or something else like a construction area.

In this case, the "shoe-fly," three poles and the conductors attached to them, were already in place, built by SCIP for a project in 2014. Because of this, when Barry Jackson, AzGT transmission line working foreman, and the rest of the line crew arrived early the morning of October 19, they were able to start attaching the bypass conductor (line) as soon as the conductor they were attaching to and the transformers were de-energized, which was carried out by AzGT dispatcher on duty Mike Babb, power system controller.

Their work has been made more difficult since the start of the pandemic because of the need to wear masks when working close to each other or to maintain social distancing of at least six feet. That's especially difficult to do in a bucket at the end of the boom, Jackson said.

"A lot more difficult, because we don't want to get two guys very close together. We want to stay six feet apart – and when you've got a bucket it's got four feet, so when it takes two guys to do one job it's difficult; they've got to mask up, and that's why we're using two buckets today," Jackson said.

In spite of the challenges, Jackson pointed out there was a silver lining in the fact that two apprentice linemen have been hired – one with was with them on this project – and the line crew is back to being fully staffed.

"We've got a new apprentice who's been with us for a week, and we hired another apprentice today (Oct. 19), so we've got a full crew, a six-man crew, and we're all going to be working together to get these two new guys up to speed," Jackson said.

"It has been more difficult, not having a full crew; for example we've had a lot of trucks we've needed to get out on jobs and we haven't had enough drivers," Jackson said.

As the bypass project was wrapping up, Jackson reflected on the training that goes into being a lineman.

"It can take two or three years to get someone trained for everything we do; it just depends on what jobs you're doing. Some jobs we don't do every day.

"If it's something we're doing every day, it takes a couple of months," Jackson said.

Jackson, who's been a lineman since 1980, said he's "still learning new things.

"It's good to learn new things. I like to learn new things at least once a day; you never really know it all," Jackson said.

Above all, Jackson said, there's one thing that is learned and re-learned every day.

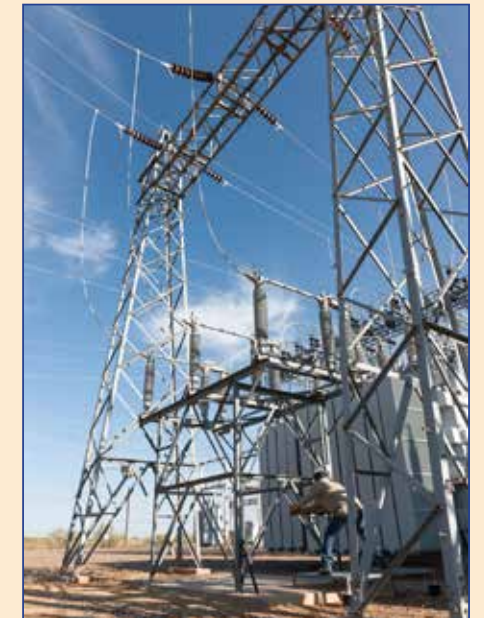
"Safety's got to be number one. Let these guys go home to their family," Jackson said.

The AzGT line crew onsite: Barry Jackson, transmission line working foreman, Jason Searle and Tony Ferraro, hotstick linemen, Brandon Guinane and Jordan Tracey, apprentice hotstick linemen, Ryan Mullings, meter/relay technician. Offsite: Ralph Rodriguez, apprentice hotstick lineman

AzGT dispatcher on duty (to de-energize): Mike Babb, power system controller; Steve Sileven and Cody Wilkerson, substation apparatus technicians (testing the transformer after maintenance)



This image shows the view from below as Tony Ferraro and Brandon Guinane maneuver the booms to get access to the bypass conduit on the "shoe-fly."



Jason Searle prepares to open a series of breakers on the structure above him as the crew prepares to do the bypass.

NEC Employee Wellness Program Gets a Makeover!

Navopache Electric Cooperative has had an Employee Health and Wellness program in place for quite a while now, but they are really stepping things up in 2020! In the past, employees could participate by completing 'Health Bingo Cards,' and by participating in the biometric check-ups. NEC would also reimburse a certain amount towards a gym membership or health app. All of this is positive and encourages employees to work towards better health, but NEC knew that they could be doing better in encouraging and helping their employees towards healthier habits. NEC management recognized that better employee health leads to lower health insurance bills as well as less sick time being used. So, what to do?

NEC's Human Resources department in collaboration with various employees throughout the organization found creative ways to not only encourage health and wellness, but to have fun and bolster employee morale in the process. The year started off with an "Easy Healthy Recipe" challenge where employees could submit their favorite healthy recipes with five or fewer ingredients. A committee selected three winners and then HR put together an online Easy Healthy Recipe Cookbook for the employees. This first challenge started the creative juices flowing and everyone was able to see new recipes that might fit into their busy schedule.

From there HR partnered with FitBit to provide a base FitBit model to employees at no cost to them (or a higher model at a significantly reduced price) provided that the employees completed the First FitBit Challenge of walking five miles in the first two weeks. This initial challenge served to not only generate excitement about the new initiative, but to get employees familiar with their FitBit, the Yes.Fit app, and get them thinking about how much they are moving!

The FitBit Challenge was well received by employees and when one challenge ended, they were excited and asking about what their next challenge would be. Next came the Route 66 Challenge where employees had a month to walk/run/cycle 66 miles. They also upped the ante by providing an additional challenge of daily stretching workouts that were provided and tracked within the Yes.Fit app. Each employee who completed each of the challenges received \$60 per challenge! So, \$120.00 for stretching and moving? Yes, please! Employees were all in with this challenge, and even though NEC wasn't tracking 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place – participant's progress was tracked within the app so there was quite a bit of friendly competition going on with the employees!

The current challenge is to complete the "Arches National Park" challenge which is a walking/running race where employees completed a total of 43.9 miles over a 3 week period in November. Along this race Yes.Fit virtually takes employees through some of southern Utah's most beautiful landscapes. Employees who completed the challenge, earned a reward of \$45. NEC is followed up this challenge with World's Largest Turkey Trot 2020 during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. The Turkey Trot is a 10K (6.2 miles) that takes employees through Plymouth, Massachusetts, best known for its native history, the Pilgrim story, and one of the country's most iconic landmarks: Plymouth Rock. This is a fun reminder to employees



Ashlee Claridge, HR administrative assistant; Holly McNeil, meter data specialist; Kristi Davis, business applications system administrator; Lisa Pilkin, HR specialist; Elizabeth Neal, administrative assistant to the CEO; Chuck Moore, CEO

to keep active while enjoying some R&R with their families over the Thanksgiving holiday. Employees who completed in the Turkey Trot will receive a gift card worth \$25 of their choice. It's a win-win for employees and NEC as a whole.

Another aspect that had to be taken into consideration for these challenges is that NEC has a fairly unique challenge within the Arizona cooperatives and that is due to their winters. NEC HR is mindful of the challenges that are faced when they receive bitterly cold and snowy weather in the winter, so they are focusing on the outdoor challenges while they can, and trying to come up with creative ways to still keep everyone active and using their FitBits even during the inclement weather.

Overall, NEC is excited to see where this new health and wellness program will take them in the future. They know they are on the right track as employee participation is topping 70% and counting. Employees are enjoying the friendly competition that is also providing them with a fun means of working towards better overall physical and mental wellness.

An Opportunity to Step Up

A co-op group wrote the industry's go-to guidance for complying with the ACE rule

By Cathy Cash/NRECA (also for RE Magazine)

Michelle Freeark knew from the beginning that providing a roadmap for complying with the new Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule would be well received.

What she didn't know was that the group of co-op leaders she chaired would be writing the go-to guide on ACE implementation for the entire power sector and state regulators.

"We met with all utilities in Arizona, and we shared it with them," Freeark says. "We shared it with our state [regulator]. We know this is not intended to be the only tool, but states are saying this is a tool in their toolbox and very informative."



Freeark is executive director of regulatory affairs and corporate services at Arizona G&T Cooperatives in Benson and chairs the ACE Implementation Subgroup of NRECA's Environmental Policy Council.

The subgroup began its work in January 2019, six months before the Environmental Protection Agency finalized the ACE rule. They released their influential Guidance on Implementing the Affordable Clean Energy Rule: Engineering, Operations and Compliance Considerations in February this year, the first report of its kind from any industry group.

"We decided early on we would develop guidance and principles on what we faced within our own states," Freeark. "People were waiting on the edge of their seat for this. Everyone said we need guidance, but no one stepped up to do it but NRECA through its subgroups."

The ACE rule effectively replaces the 2015 Clean Power Plan (CPP), a mandate on fossil fuel generation that was ultimately stayed by the Supreme Court before its full implementation. NRECA opposed the CPP arguing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should have given equal consideration to all generation sources, such as coal, natural gas, renewables, and nuclear, when it determined "a best system of emission reduction" for carbon dioxide emissions.

The ACE rule stays within the bounds of the Clean Air Act, gives utilities more time to comply with emissions standards, recognizes available technologies, and provides state regulators with significant flexibility for devising and enforcing standards of performance, utility industry leaders say.

However, since finalizing the ACE rule in mid-2019, the EPA has given little direction on implementation, a circumstance that drove interest in the NRECA report.

"There was not a lot of meat on the bones on how things would play out in engineering and operations and compliance issues that have to be satisfied," Freeark says. "A lot of states contacted the G&Ts saying, 'We don't know what to do with this rule. You have to help us.' We saw an opportunity."

Since its release, the NRECA subgroup's document has been used by several industry organizations, including the American Public Power Association and the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies. Both groups sent the report to their memberships and invited NRECA experts to present it.

NRECA provided the report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and shared it with members of the Environmental Council of the States, the association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders.

"This document can bring [utilities and regulators] up to speed in a couple hours, and it's free," says Jerry Purvis, vice president for environmental affairs at G&T East Kentucky Power Cooperative and a member of the ACE subgroup. "They can read the document and navigate a path to work with management and the states."

The report provides detailed engineering specifications for using heat rate improvements (HRI) to limit emissions. It also identifies proven HRI technologies to be analyzed under the rule and their likely impact on carbon dioxide emission rates over a range of scenarios.

In addition, it has guidance on standards-of-performance components for state compliance. The report also recommends that EPA and state regulators give generators longer averaging periods for compliance due to seasonality, equipment failures, outages, and other events.

Dan Chartier, NRECA's regulatory director for environmental policy, credits the subgroup's "member-led, member-driven, member-supported" approach for the success of the guidance.

"We didn't put this out there as, 'Here is the one and only way to do this,' but as factors to consider," he says. "So far, we've received no negative feedback. Regulators who have seen it like it and have said good things about it."

Freeark says she began getting inquiries at the end of 2019 about the group's forthcoming ACE guidance. The subgroup met multiple times per week during that period and worked through Christmas to get the document finished.


"We wanted something people could use, not just put on the shelf and forget," she says. "This was an opportunity for the co-op world to step up and show what we can do and give to the greater cause."

Other co-ops represented on the ACE Implementation Subgroup include Associated Electric Cooperative; Basin Electric Power Cooperative; Buckeye Power; Dairyland Power Cooperative; East Texas Electric Cooperative; Great River Energy; Minnkota Power Cooperative; Oglethorpe Power Corp; PowerSouth Energy Cooperative; South Texas Electric Cooperative, and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. The subgroup partnered with Black & Veatch, a global engineering and construction firm, in writing the guidance.

Visit cooperative.com to download the ACE report.



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Trico Electric Cooperative donates \$120,000 to local schools

As schools in southern Arizona have started to return to in-person classes for two days a week, the remainder of a student's school week is still spent at home in front of a computer.

Teachers continue to explore new learning models due to COVID-19 and the need for devices like Chromebooks and a reliable internet connection has become even more important.

This is especially true in some of the more rural areas where Trico serves. Connectivity and acquiring a laptop can be a challenge.

The Trico Board decided to step in and help student families who cannot afford tech devices or a reliable internet connection.

The Trico Foundation recently approved \$120,000 in grants to school districts in Trico's service areas including Sahuarita, Marana, Vail, Tucson, Altar Valley, San Fernando and Continental.

The grants helped purchase laptops, internet service and where there was no service, hotspots were provided. Personal protective equipment was also purchased for school staff to stay safe and healthy.

Trico also donated 200 digital thermometers to the Marana Unified School District for families who do not have a thermometer at home. This allows the parent to assess their child's daily temperature prior to sending them to school.