NWPPA Announces Excellence in Communication Awards, Clearwater Wins Big

(September 24, 2020) The Excellence in Communication contest, which recognizes the top communication efforts from Northwest Public Power Association (Vancouver, Wash.) member utilities and associations, turned 27 years old this year and celebrated at the Northwest Communications & Energy Innovations Conference (NIC) Coffee Chat Awards Ceremony on Tuesday morning, September 22.

With social distancing measures in place, this year’s contest looked much different than past years. NWPPA cut back on the categories to make it more manageable, asked for only digital entries, bumped out the due date, and found six communication experts across the country to score the entries—all electronically.

“The NWPPA staff and the planning committee did not know how it would go this year, but we knew we had to continue the awards tradition because now more than ever we want to acknowledge the communication pieces being produced by our members,” said NWPPA’s Brenda Dunn. “We were ecstatic that we received 200 entries from 35 members because our goal had been only 150.”

Categories are broken up into four groups: Group A utilities having the smallest number of customers and Group D having the largest. A complete list of the first-, second-, and third-place winners can be found at the end of this release.

In addition to the Excellence in Communication awards, NWPPA presented the 2020 Tom Hougan Award for the best overall communication effort to Clearwater Power of Lewiston, Idaho. With two first-place awards (one with a perfect score) and three second-place awards, Clearwater placed first or second in every category it entered. The NIC Planning Committee was able to surprise Clearwater Power Co. Communications Specialist Jeff Marshall, who also served as the 2020 NIC chair, with the award that he accepted on behalf of his utility. Clearwater Power Co. is only the third utility to win the Tom Hougan Award multiple times; they first won it in 2016.

“Understanding the role we play, knowing how to carry ourselves during a time of uncertainty, unrest, and genuine fear is hard. But this is our time. Communications has never been more important,” said Marshall. “That’s why we attend events like the NIC, so we can all share and network and learn how to fulfill our roles in the unfolding of a new era.”

Winners of the People’s Choice Awards in photography were also announced at the morning ceremony. Prior to the event, all registered attendees had the opportunity to view the 43
photography submissions and vote on their favorite photo in each of three categories. The winning photos below are from (L-R): Silicon Valley Power (Calif.) for Best Photo of an Employee, Okanogan PUD (Wash.) for Best Photo of Youth, and Grays Harbor PUD (Wash.) for Best Photo of Miscellaneous.

![Winning Photos]

The annual Excellence in Communication awards will next be presented in September 2021.

**About NWPPA:** NWPPA is an international association representing and serving more than 155 customer-owned, locally controlled utilities in the Western U.S. and Canada. The Association also serves over 300 associate members across the U.S. and Canada who are allied with the electric utility industry. For more information, visit [www.nwppa.org](http://www.nwppa.org) or follow @NWPPAssoc on our social channels.

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2020 Excellence in Communication Award Winners

Annual Report

**Group A**
1st place: Clatskanie PUD *(2018 AR)*
2nd place: Clearwater Power Co. *(2018 AR)*
3rd place: Vigilante Electric Cooperative *(2019 AR)*

**Group B**
1st place: Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative *(2018 AR)*
2nd place: Homer Electric Association *(2018 AR)*
3rd place: Columbia River PUD *(2018 AR)*

**Group C**
1st place: Idaho Falls Power *(2018 AR)*
2nd place: Grant County PUD *(2018 AR)*
3rd place: Mason County PUD No. 3 *(2018 AR)*

**Group D**
1st place: Turlock Irrigation District *(2018 AR)*
2nd place: Bonneville Power Administration *(2019 AR)*
3rd place: Snohomish County PUD *(2018 AR)*

Newsletter

**Group A**
1st place: Clatskanie PUD *(Ruralite pages)*
2nd place: Mason County PUD No. 1 *(The Connector)*
3rd place: Vigilante Electric Cooperative *(Rural Montana pages)*

**Group B**
1st place: Columbia River PUD *(Powerlines)*
2nd place: Emerald People’s Utility District *(Powerlines)*
3rd place: Salem Electric *(The Info Bulletin)*

**Group C**
1st place: Peninsula Light Co. *(Lights)*
2nd place: Mason County PUD No. 3 *(PUD 3 News)*
3rd place: Central Lincoln PUD *(CoastLines)*

**Group D**
1st place: Snohomish County PUD *(Current)*
2nd place: Silicon Valley Power *(Outlet)*
3rd place: Clark Public Utilities *(Currents)*

Advertising Campaign

**Group A**
*1st* place: Clearwater Power Co. *(Safety Day campaign)*
2nd place: Beartooth Electric Cooperative *(New website advertising campaign)*
3rd place: Mason County PUD No. 1 *(Customer Appreciation Event campaign)*

**Group B**
*1st* place: Emerald People’s Utility District *(Energy efficiency campaign)*
2nd place: Northern Lights, Inc. *(“Rest easy, NLI has your back” ad)*
3rd place: Missoula Electric Cooperative *(Rebranding campaign)*

**Group C**
*1st* place: Grant County PUD *(Fiber expansion campaign)*
*2nd* place: Grays Harbor PUD *(Christmas radio message)*
3rd place: Central Lincoln PUD *(Community solar campaign)*

**Group D**
1st place: Silicon Valley Power *(Scholarship campaign)*
2nd place: Snohomish County PUD *(Community solar campaign)*
3rd place: Turlock Irrigation District *(EV campaign)*
Special Publication

**Group A**
1st place: Clearwater Power Co. (*Bill inserts*)
2nd place: Beartooth Electric Cooperative (*Tree trimming door hanger*)
3rd place: Columbia REA (*Board profiles*)

**Group B**
1st place: Columbia River PUD (*2020 calendar*)
2nd place: Emerald People’s Utility District (*2020 calendar*)
3rd place: Ravalli Electric Cooperative (*New Member booklet*)

**Group C**
1st place: Grant County PUD (*Life at Grant cereal box*)
2nd place: Mason County PUD No. 3 (*New logo brand guidelines*)
3rd place: Chelan County PUD (*Strategic Plan Owners Guide*)

**Group D**
1st place: Columbia River PUD (*2020 bilingual calendar*)
2nd place: Bonneville Power Administration (*Hydropower rack card*)
3rd place: Turlock Irrigation District (*Wildfire Mitigation Plan*)

**Photography**

**Group A**
1st place: Vigilante Electric Cooperative (*By the Light of the Moon*)
2nd place: Clearwater Power Co. (*Co-op Classroom*)
3rd place: Clatskanie PUD (*Kids Day*)

**Group B**
1st place: Missoula Electric Cooperative (*Linemen in the rain*)
2nd place: Columbia River PUD (*Hotsticks*)
3rd place: Northern Lights, Inc. (*Mavrick filling Grandpa’s lineman belt*)

**Group C**
1st place: Kootenai Electric Cooperative (*Journeyman Lineman Cody Bissell*)
2nd place: Grays Harbor PUD (*Cutting Through the Snow*)
3rd place: Peninsula Light Co. (*For the Glove of Snow*)

**Group D**
1st place: Silicon Valley Power (*Mitsubishi generator inspection*)
2nd place: Energy Northwest (*Cooling tower*)
3rd place: Clark Public Utilities (*Apprentice Lineman Tracy Gillis*)

**Wild Card**

**Group A**
1st place: Mason County PUD No. 1 (*DAM PROUD To Be Your PUD tshirts*)
2nd place: Clearwater Power Co. (*Lego line crew*)
3rd place: Columbia REA (*Sparky the EV*)

**Group B**
1st place: Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (*Virtual reality video*)
2nd place: Missoula Electric Cooperative (*30-second jingle*)
3rd place: Columbia River PUD (*Social media pages*)

**Group C**
1st place: Chelan County PUD (*Explanatory video for strategic planning*)
2nd place: Idaho Falls Power (*Electric Crews Eye View Facebook game*)
3rd place: Benton PUD (*2019 wrap-up video*)

**Group D**
1st place: Snohomish County PUD (*Line apprentice hiring process*)
2nd place: Clark Public Utilities (*Scam alert graphics*)
3rd place: Bonneville Power Administration (*Hydropower Flows Here activity book*)

**2020 Tom Hougan Award for Overall Excellence in Communication:** Clearwater Power Co. (Idaho)