

## Umatilla Electric's Robert Echenrode Receives Esteemed Milton Hunt McGuire Award

(April 16) On Thursday, April 11, Umatilla Electric Cooperative General Manager Robert Echenrode received Northwest Public Power Association's 2024 Excellence in Engineering or Operations Award, in honor of Milton Hunt McGuire, at the association's 2024 Engineering & Operations Conference in Tacoma, Washington.

With a remarkable career spanning 36 years across four electric cooperatives, Echenrode has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovative thinking, and an unwavering commitment to advancing the engineering and operations sector of the industry.

"Robert's influence on the engineering and operations industry extends beyond UEC and the other cooperatives where he has worked," said Louis Toth, director emeritus at Toth & Associates. "His visionary approach, success in managing growth, and forward-thinking mindset in agricultural and industrial development have positioned him as a luminary in the Northwest and beyond."

During his time at UEC, the Oregon co-op rapidly expanded from 1.8 billion kWhs to 7.1 billion kWh of energy sold, adding 20 substations and switchyards and surpassing \$598 million in annual revenue.

Echenrode has also leveraged emerging technologies, positioning UEC as an early adopter of electric vehicle technologies and deploying mobile substations. Under his stewardship, UEC has emerged as a leading force in serving large industrial accounts, setting the standards for efficiency, reliability, and innovation. Echenrode and UEC actively mentor, advise, and guide other utilities seeking to emulate their success. He also mentored numerous colleagues within the engineering and operations field nationwide.

**About NWPPA:** NWPPA is a regional association representing and serving more than 150 customer-owned, locally controlled utilities in the Western U.S. and Canada. The association also serves over 350 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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*Robert Echenrode (center) receives the Excellence in Engineering or Operations Award from 2024 E&O Vice Chair Jimmy Scarborough of Jefferson County PUD (left) and 2024 E&O Chair Rob Ferrara of SMUD (right).*