



MEDIA CONTACT:
Christmas Wharton
Communications Manager
D: (970) 623-8578
C: (970) 210-6212
cwharton@gvp.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Valley Power Earns National Recognition **GVP Awarded Edgar F. Chesnutt Best Total Communication Program**

GRAND JUNCTION, COLO. - (May 29, 2020) – Grand Valley Power recently received the highest honor bestowed in the national 2020 Spotlight on Excellence Awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Grand Valley Power received the 2020 Edgar F. Chesnutt Award for the Best Total Communication Program. This was a first-time entry into the category for the cooperative.

The co-op was recognized for its communications campaign for an enhanced meter equipment upgrade. Through effective communications, the cooperative was able to garner broad support for the upgrade, with a 99% acceptance level. The effort also significantly expanded the number of consumers using the cooperative’s SmartHub app, improving the consumer experience, and increasing company efficiency.

“Teamwork and collaboration were crucial to our success on this communications effort,” said Tom Walch, Chief Executive Officer for Grand Valley Power. “Every decision that was made as this project unfolded, took into account the communications impact and how it would impact our members. But it was really the hard work and talent of our communications manager, Christmas Wharton, that made it award-worthy.” In more than three decades since the Chesnutt Award was established, only once has it been given to a cooperative smaller than Grand Valley Power.

“Printed news publications, social media and videos are all more important than ever to keep members updated on issues affecting the electric cooperatives and their members,” added Scott Peterson, Senior Vice President Communications for NRECA.



MEDIA CONTACT:
Christmas Wharton
Communications Manager
D: (970) 623-8578
C: (970) 210-6212
cwharton@gvp.org

Winners are recognized during the CONNECT conference, a national conference for communications and marketing professionals, held in May, which was cancelled this year. Winning entries are displayed during the event. Award winners participate in learning labs and have a special reception in their honor. These events will take place on a virtual platform this year. The Spotlight on Excellence Awards competition recognizes the top-rated communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related organizations. The competition is in its 32nd year.

“We’re so honored to be named the Edgar F. Chesnutt award winner this year and are so grateful to be listed among so many of our talented peers that I have long admired and respected. Our success with communicating the equipment upgrade was truly a group effort and our employees were the drivers of this,” added Christmas Wharton, communications manager for Grand Valley Power.

Electric cooperative communicators and marketing professionals submitted nearly 670 entries in the Spotlight on Excellence program in 16 different categories. Faculty members from the University of Missouri – Columbia and University of South Carolina, as well as noted professionals in the fields of marketing, web design and digital communications, and newspapers judged the event, which uses a finite scoring system to determine the winners. Edgar F. Chesnutt, for whom the award is named, was manager of corporate communication with Arkansas Electric Cooperatives in Little Rock from 1961 until 1987.

The CREC was organized in 1982, and seeks to advance the recognition, education and professionalism of electric cooperative communicators and their affiliated organizations. This volunteer association works on behalf of more than 4,000 electric cooperative communicators across the United States.

###



MEDIA CONTACT:
Christmas Wharton
Communications Manager
D: (970) 623-8578
C: (970) 210-6212
cwharton@gvp.org

About National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

NRECA is a national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

About Grand Valley Power

Organized in 1936, Grand Valley Power is the first rural not-for-profit electric cooperative in Colorado. Serving over 18,000 customers within the Mesa County area, Grand Valley Power is dedicated to empowering lives with hometown service with safe, affordable, reliable electricity. For more information, visit gvp.org or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).