

# NEWS



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **TEXAS ELECTRIC CO-OP EXEC WINS INDUSTRY AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNICATION**

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Indian Wells, Calif., January 15, 2008 – Ray Beavers, chief executive officer of United Cooperative Services, Cleburne, Texas, won the 2008 J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award conferred by the electric co-op industry’s Spotlight on Excellence Awards program.

Beavers was presented the award here today during the CEO Close-Up, an annual conference for chief executives and general managers held by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The award honors a CEO who advances communication in the electric cooperative industry. Beavers was cited specifically for “demonstrating a clear understanding of and commitment to the strategic role of communications in employee, member and community relations.”

The competition’s judges noted Beavers’ strong support of the cooperative’s ongoing information and education campaign about the cooperative business model targeted toward members, news media and the general public. Beavers created a vice president of communication position, added other communication professionals and devoted significant financial resources to increase communication outreach. In addition, all employees who frequently contact members are continually trained to communicate the cooperative difference while performing their professional duties.

Beavers’ nomination portfolio credits his leadership for conducting quarterly member satisfaction surveys to evaluate member awareness and understanding of and satisfaction with the cooperative’s service and to measure the cooperative’s effectiveness in communicating the cooperative difference. The judges noted Beavers’ directive that the communication function be included in each department’s strategic objectives and that the cooperative’s staff should assess communication activity, recommend improvements and provide members and the public a “real world” view of industry-related

issues, including potential shortfalls in generation capacity and communicating the merits of energy conservation.

Judges' comments included – "Beavers' leadership in identifying United Cooperative Services as an electric cooperative and his emphasis on using every opportunity to communicate the advantages of co-op membership are management best practices. ...United's employee newsletter contains educational articles about the foundational principles set forth by the Seven Cooperative Principles. ...The cooperative's willingness to fund communication and advertising initiatives and the CEO's readiness to talk with the news media are hallmarks of proactive communication. ...The cooperative's overall member satisfaction ranking is high. Survey results correlate members' interest in energy efficiency and the cooperative's communication about that topic with higher member satisfaction scores."

The J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award is a major component of the Spotlight on Excellence Awards, which recognize electric cooperative excellence in communication and marketing. The Spotlight program is sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators, a volunteer group of communication professionals working with NRECA and other national co-op organizations to advance the recognition, education and professionalism of electric cooperative communicators. The Council also sponsors a National Orientation for New Communicators, and the Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) credential, a certification program administered by a separate board of certified communicators through NRECA.

The award memorializes J.C. Brown, a true champion of cooperative business. Brown served as editor and publisher of both *RE Magazine* and *Rural Electric News Letter*, the predecessor of *Electric Co-op Today*, and retired from NRECA in 1993 as publications director. Earlier he was chief executive of North Carolina's association of electric cooperatives and edited the statewide magazine *Carolina Country*. He died in 1999, leaving a legacy of unwavering dedication to communication as a vital link connecting electric cooperatives with each other and with their consumer-owners.

The panel of judges consisted of communication and management experts in academia, business and industry, including cooperative electric utilities. Presenting the award to Beavers were Keith Stapleton, Chief Communication Officer, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, Livingston, Texas, and Allegra Brigham, Chief Executive Officer, 4-County Electric Power Association, Columbus, Mississippi. Also participating in the ceremony was NRECA CEO Glenn English.

NRECA is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to more than 40 million people in 47 states. NRECA coordinates the activities of the Council and the CCC Program Board.

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