



Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.
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SSVEC Receives National Electric Cooperative Purpose Award

Willcox, AZ — Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) has been recognized with the 2026 Electric Cooperative Purpose Award by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), honoring the cooperative’s commitment to its members and communities during a period of unprecedented energy cost volatility.

The Electric Cooperative Purpose Award recognizes cooperatives that work with their membership to make visible, lasting improvements to quality of life in the communities they serve. SSVEC earned the recognition for actions taken during the 2022 surge in global fuel prices that placed significant pressure on energy costs for rural families and businesses.

During that period, SSVEC’s board and leadership team implemented a member-focused strategy designed to deliver immediate relief while maintaining long-term financial stability for the cooperative. The cooperative directed 100 percent of its annual operating margin to buy down more than \$8 million in member fuel bank debt, reducing the wholesale power and fuel cost adjuster and lowering the cost burden on the cooperative’s member-owners.

“This recognition reflects what cooperatives are built to do,” said Jason Bowling, Chief Executive Officer of SSVEC. “When our members were facing rising energy costs, our board, employees, and cooperative partners worked together to find a solution that delivered immediate relief while protecting the long-term strength of the cooperative.”

The effort required collaboration across the cooperative network. SSVEC worked closely with its power supply partner, the Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPSCO), along with financial partners, regulators, and cooperative peers to implement a strategy that balanced affordability with long-term resilience.

Employees across the organization played a key role in evaluating options, coordinating with partners, communicating with members, and implementing the financial and operational changes needed to execute the plan.

Bowling noted that while the award recognizes past action, cost pressures in the electric industry continue to affect utilities and their members nationwide.

“Electric cooperatives across the country are facing rising costs for power supply, infrastructure, and reliability,” Bowling said. “Our members have seen that pressure recently, and we understand the concern that comes with it. What this recognition represents is our commitment to confront those challenges directly. In every creative way we can muster, we will work to shield our members from volatility while maintaining the safe and reliable service they depend on.”

Because of the steps taken in recent years, SSVEC has strengthened its financial position and improved its ability to manage future energy market volatility while continuing to serve more than 50,000 members across Cochise, Graham, and Pima counties.

“The cooperative model works because decisions stay close to the people they affect,” Bowling said. “This award recognizes the trust our members place in us and the dedication of employees who work every day to protect affordability and reliability for the communities we serve.”

SSVEC was recognized for the award during NRECA’s PowerXchange national meeting, where electric cooperative leaders from across the country gather to share best practices and celebrate achievements within the cooperative network.

Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative is a member-owned electric cooperative headquartered in Willcox, Arizona, providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to communities across southeastern Arizona.

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CAPTION

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