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### **Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Team Selected for National Solar Energy Innovation Project**

***Kit Carson Electric Co-op, Renewable Taos, and Guzman Energy to advance renewable energy reliability and affordability for Rural Electric Cooperatives nationwide***

**Taos, NM** – Renewable Taos, Inc. today announced a team based in Taos was selected by the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to participate in a national collaborative renewable energy research effort. The team’s research will explore new ways to improve the affordability, reliability and resiliency of electric grids managed by more than 900 electric cooperatives nationwide.

The project team is named “Resilient Renewable Energy Roadmap for Rural Electric Cooperatives,” and includes members of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, Inc. (KCEC) and Renewable Taos, Inc., both of Taos, NM, and Guzman Energy of Denver, CO. The project team will work in an “Options Analysis” cohort that includes the City of Orlando, FL, the City of San Diego, CA, the Montana Renewable Energy Association, and Utah Clean Energy.

The project team is one of nine selected for the program through a national call for applications in 2017. “We selected teams that are experimenting with promising ideas to use solar power to improve the future of grid security and reliability in their communities,” said Kristen Ardani, who leads the Solar Energy Innovation Network (SEIN) at NREL.

The project team’s participation in the Solar Energy Innovation Network will include financial, analytical, and facilitation support from several different organizations, including other national laboratories and organizations like Rocky Mountain Institute. The team will work to anticipate and address new challenges and opportunities stemming from solar energy and other distributed energy technologies in northern New Mexico. The solutions developed and demonstrated by the team will serve as a blueprint for other communities facing similar challenges and opportunities.

Specifically, this project will focus on the technical and institutional challenges to the buildup of solar power for the KCEC distribution grid. The work will serve as an example for other Rural Electric Cooperatives (RECs) throughout New Mexico and the nation.

Project objectives are to demonstrate electrical grid stability and resiliency during the deployment of multiple solar arrays. The project will also show how the team faces and treats institutional as well as other obstacles in bringing large amounts of renewable energy online. Whereas the outcomes of the project are yet unknown, the work has the potential to bring many advantages to our local communities.

“Managers and citizens of Renewable Electric Cooperatives (RECs) throughout our region are already closely watching KCEC’s progress on solar energy,” said Bill Brown of Renewable Taos. “All our team members are constantly being asked for information on how we are doing what we are doing here in northern New Mexico. KCEC and Guzman Energy continue to receive regional and national acclaim for their modern energy business model.”

“The Innovation Network expertise and analytical support will allow our team to refine, improve and speed up our advance toward a regional renewable energy economy,” according to Bob Bresnahan, board member of KCEC and Renewable Taos. “Our local governments unanimously support renewable energy for the energy demands of our citizens. We will use the project results to validate their expectations and hopes with firm technical and economic numbers.”

“The KCEC and Guzman Energy’s alliance and KCEC’s Solar Plan have been a real boon for our business,” said Daniel Weinman, CEO and President, PPC Solar in Taos, NM. “We have been able to engage in new partnerships with other local companies to build the larger solar arrays specified by the KCEC plan. We expect to learn a lot from the Innovation Network project in terms of deploying more solar arrays and energy storage systems throughout our local area. This is hugely important for local hiring and solar workforce development in northern New Mexico, and continuing PPC Solar’s mission of solar powering our community, our state and beyond.”

Renewable Taos will continue to focus on its policy and educational initiatives in support of KCEC and Guzman Energy. A key effort is the Renewable Energy for Rural Electric Cooperatives Outreach Project targeting RECs throughout New Mexico and Colorado. Another Renewable Taos initiative seeks formal solar industry education for local students through the University of New Mexico -Taos, and the Northern New Mexico College Española and El Rito campuses. The Innovation Network project evolution and results will become a part of the curriculum being developed by Renewable Taos and its academic partners.

“We are truly excited about the Innovation Network project and the opportunities it provides for our energy future,” says Bill Brown of Renewable Taos. “We are proud to be involved in this effort to demonstrate the national level of leadership coming from a relatively small community by way of our partnership with KCEC and Guzman Energy.”

NREL is operating the Solar Energy Innovation Network with funding from the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. NREL pursues fundamental research and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to transform the way we use energy. To learn more about NREL SEIN, visit <https://www.nrel.gov/solar/solar-energy-innovation-network.html>

**About Kit Carson Electric Cooperative**

Formed in 1944, Kit Carson is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative in northern New Mexico and is the second largest cooperative in the state. Kit Carson is one of 16 distribution electric cooperatives that serve rural New Mexico communities and their nearly 30,000 members in Taos, Colfax and Rio Arriba counties. To learn more about Kit Carson, visit [www.kitcarson.com](http://www.kitcarson.com) Contact Michael Santistevan, [pr@kitcarson.com](mailto:pr@kitcarson.com), 575.758.2258 ext. 154.

**About Guzman Energy**

Guzman Energy is a specialty energy company that provides energy solutions to customers across North America. The firm is headquartered in Coral Gables, FL, with an additional office in Denver, CO. To learn more about Guzman Energy, please visit [www.GuzmanEnergy.com](http://www.GuzmanEnergy.com)

**About Renewable Taos**

Renewable Taos, Inc. and our partners and associates are agents of major change to energy systems and policy in our local area, our state, and our region. We investigate existing systems for all energy demands (electricity, heating, cooling, transportation), and seek economical ways to meet these demands using renewable energy. To learn more about Renewable Taos, visit [www.renewabletaos.org](http://www.renewabletaos.org)

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