

**2025-2027**



**STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
PLAN**



**Central Electric Cooperative**



# Vision, Mission, and Values

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## Vision Statement

As the cooperative looks toward the future, we will focus on improvement in all areas with emphasis on the following: SAFETY – Promote and support safety throughout the organization and the community, RELIABILITY – High reliability with continued utilization of technology, COSTS – Provide value at a competitive price with a focus on efficient operations, SERVICE – Professional and personal with continued utilization of technology, CULTURE – Safety and service oriented, with a belief in and advocacy of the Cooperative business model.

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## Mission Statement

Central Electric Cooperative safely provides reliable and competitively priced electricity to our consumer-members and was established by and is committed to the communities we serve.

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## Values

Reliability	Safety	Affordable
Enhance quality of life	Fulfill needs	Create value
Committed to community	Improvement	Honesty and Integrity
Commitment and initiative	Accountability and dedication	Professionalism



# Executive Summary

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The 2025–2027 Strategic Communication Plan for Central Electric Cooperative (CEC) is designed to strengthen the cooperative’s connection with its members, employees, and community through clear, consistent, and meaningful communication. Grounded in the cooperative’s mission to provide safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity, this plan aligns with CEC’s broader strategic goals and responds directly to member feedback, digital sentiment analysis, and industry trends.

This plan outlines five key communication goals:

1. Improve digital media practices to better engage younger members.
2. Enhance outage communication through increased transparency and frequency.
3. Foster a positive public perception by educating members on the cooperative difference.
4. Strengthen internal communication to build a culture of trust and collaboration.
5. Increase member education on curtailment to reduce anxiety and improve understanding during energy events.

Each goal is supported by strategic objectives, actionable tactics, and measurable outcomes. The plan emphasizes a multi-channel approach, leveraging digital tools, member insights, and internal engagement to ensure communication is timely, accessible, and impactful.

By executing this plan, CEC aims to build stronger relationships, improve operational transparency, reinforce the cooperative’s role as a trusted, community-focused energy provider, align with CEC’s strategic goals, and adapt to the evolving needs of its membership.

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# Situational Analysis

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**This Strategic Communication Plan is informed by several key drivers that ensure alignment with CEC’s overarching strategic goals and the evolving needs of its members:**

- Integration with CEC’s 2025–2027 Strategic Plan
- Insights from the 2024 Member Survey
- Feedback from the Member Aware Advisory Committee
- Results of a comprehensive communication asset audit
- Sentiment analysis of member feedback across digital platforms
- Proactive consideration of emerging industry trends

The following sections provide a detailed overview of the rationale and findings behind each of these drivers. Guided by this analysis, the Communications team will implement targeted strategies to engage key audiences more effectively. This includes expanding the use of digital tools—such as social media and email—to enhance member engagement and ensure communication is timely, relevant, and accessible.

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## CEC Strategic Plan Alignment

In alignment with the goals outlined in CEC’s 2025–2027 Strategic Plan, the Communications team will identify the most effective methods for engaging target audiences. This strategy outlines initiatives to enhance member engagement through expanded use of communication tools, including social media.

## 2024 Member Survey Results Analysis

The 2024 Member Survey indicates that members are shifting how they consume information. To remain effective and relevant, CEC must adapt its communication strategies to meet these evolving preferences. The following key insights from the survey have directly informed the strategies and actions outlined in this plan.



# Situational Analysis

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Print media ads

71.50% have not seen them

Radio ads

74.75% have not heard them

Digital Communications

- 20.69% see information on EYT Clarion
- 17.85% see information on EYT Venango
- Comments focus on preference towards email and internet

How did you hear about survey?

Comments highlight strong indications to newsletter, website, email, electronic bill

Satisfaction Scores

- 4.3 when asked about outages
- 4.5 when asked about communications

*\*lower end of the scale. Lowest score was 4.1 (blinks); highest 4.8 (employees and payment options)*

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## Member Committee Feedback

Feedback from the 2022–2023 Member Aware Advisory Committee revealed that, following the transition to paperless communication, many members felt disconnected from CEC updates. They expressed a strong preference for short-form content with easy access to additional details. Email and SMS were identified as the most effective channels—particularly when messages include one-click access to more information. Additionally, members noted they are most engaged when information is included with their bill.

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## Communication Asset Audit

An audit of recent member communications revealed that email has been a particularly effective channel. This success is supported by performance metrics and positive feedback from the Member Aware Advisory Committee.



# Situational Analysis

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- 2024 Member Survey Reminder
- Election Announcement

Resulted in 600 survey submissions

Supported in getting 8 potential candidates interested & 5 candidates running

- 2025 Member Appreciation Event Reminder
- Committee Feedback

Resulted in 45.5% of online RSVPs (online form submission)

Committee praised updates made to Bill Available email and SMS; it allows for one-click for additional information

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## Digital Sentiment Analysis

A review of Google Reviews and an unofficial Facebook page indicates that improving the cooperative's online reputation presents a significant opportunity. Strengthening digital sentiment will be a key focus moving forward.

- Google Reviews
- Unofficial Facebook Page

Rating is 1.8 out of 5 total of 74 reviews

Expresses distaste on outages and contains unfavorable posts/comments/images

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## Industry Led

Insights from industry research and the experiences of other cooperatives highlight the value of proactively launching a curtailment education strategy.



# Strategic Goals

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Goal 1

Improve digital media practices to reach and engage younger members

Goal 2

Enhance outage communication through greater transparency and timely updates

Goal 3

Foster a positive public perception through education of the cooperative difference

Goal 4

Strengthen internal communication to foster a culture of trust and collaboration

Goal 5

Educate members on curtailment to reduce anxiety and build understanding



# Action Plan

## □ Goal 1

Improve digital media practices to reach and engage younger members  
\*See Content Strategy

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➔ Increase digital member outreach options

🕒 Q4 2025

#### TACTICS

- Create a CEC Facebook page to provide more frequent and timely content
- Develop a digital newsletter delivered via email
- Develop a Google Ads Display program to meet young members online and on pages they already visit

\*See Brand Guidelines

🎯 **METRICS** Gain 300 Facebook followers 3 month after page publication  
Gain website clicks under \$.85 through Google Ads  
Attain a subscriber list of 250 members to send digital newsletter

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➔ Increase the use of targeted email updates

🕒 Q4 2025

#### TACTICS

- Create email templates for all departments and accompanying UTM code outlines
- Identify the ideal time of day and day of week to send emails to the audience segments
- Implement Marketing from NISC
- Run A/B Tests on subject lines for maximum opens and compose based on data

\*See Brand Guidelines

🎯 **METRICS** Increase email opens by 5%  
increase landing page views by 3% through UTM code tracking



# Action Plan

## Goal 1 Continued

Improve digital media practices to reach and engage younger members

### Strategic Objective 3

### Time period

 Increase young member engagement in governance and event participation

 Q1 & 2 2026

### TACTICS

-  Use Facebook's event promotion function to reach young members and increase participation
-  Use targeted email campaigns with one-click landing pages to simplify engagement and track call-to-action performance
-  Use Google Ads to create awareness around expressing interest in board positions, elections, and member events

\*See Brand Guidelines

-  **METRICS** Track event RSVP form page views through UTM codes and increase by 15%  
Increase event online RSVP's by 10%  
Increase electronic ballot submissions by 4%  
Increase the number of non-retired members interested in running for the board year after year



# Action Plan

## □ Goal 2

Enhance outage communication through greater transparency and timely updates

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➡ Implement a multi-channel communication strategy

🕒 Q4 2025

#### TACTICS

- Post outage updates on social media and respond to comments and messages
- Utilize mobile app alerts
- Update website news posts every two hours
- Create scrolling website alerts with the number of outages and update every 2 hours

🎯 **METRICS** Positive sentiment on social media during outages  
Reduce member calls by 5% during outages

### Strategic Objective 2

### Time period

➡ Establish real-time outage tracking and reporting tools

🕒 Q2 2026

#### TACTICS

- Utilize OMS tracking tools to communicate real-time updates to members
- Implement internal updates of crew completions and dispatch location to better communicate progress to members
- Enhance outage map to show outage cause and ETRs

🎯 **METRICS** Increased employee engagement during outages  
Increased time-on-page for the outage map  
Reduce member calls during outages



# Action Plan

Goal 2

Enhance outage communication through greater transparency and timely updates

## Strategic Objective 3

## Time period

 Develop a proactive member engagement plan

 Q2 2026

### TACTICS

- Create a longform educational piece that details outages, ETR's, causes of outages, processes, safety, etc.
- Use content from longform piece in-between restoration updates to help members' understanding of outages and what they entail
- Use multi-channel strategy to deploy regular updates and education on before, during, and after outages, including storm warnings, progress, and post-restoration summaries

 **METRICS** Increase member survey rankings on outages, restoration times, and communication to mid-range of 4.5-4.7



# Action Plan

## □ Goal 3

Foster a positive public perception through education of the cooperative difference

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➔ Develop and implement a cooperative education campaign

🕒 Q4 2025

#### TACTICS

- Use multi-platform digital approach to inform members of cooperative principles, member ownership, and community impact
- Engage with local newspaper (online and print) to write community impact stories
- Host “Breakfast and Learn” sessions at the cooperative to give members an opportunity to visit the facility, engage with staff, and learn more about the cooperative’s mission, operations, and community impact

🎯 **METRICS** Increase ASCI score by one point  
Improve digital sentiment reports  
Improve Google Reviews from 1.8 to 3.0

### Strategic Objective 2

### Time period

➔ Engage youth and schools in cooperative learning

🕒 Q2 2026

#### TACTICS

- Develop Youth Tour marketing packet for schools to encourage students to apply
- Attend high school career events to promote Youth Tour and Good Neighbor Scholarship
- Use social media to promote Youth Safety Programs - safety city and other presentations
- Engage local newspaper to write student success stories that participated in CEC youth programs

🎯 **METRICS** Drive traffic to Safety City, Youth Tour, and Good Neighbor Scholarship pages and track traffic sources through UTM codes. Visits should exceed 500 per month during application seasons



# Action Plan

- METRICS** Send three students on Youth Tour year after year
- CON'T** Increase safety presentations by 3%

## Goal 3 Continued

Foster a positive public perception through education of the cooperative difference

### Strategic Objective 3

### Time period

 Empower employees and board members to act as cooperative ambassadors

 Q1-Q3 2026

### TACTICS

-  Plan and execute annual cooperative identity workshops. Interactive sessions to re-energize employees on the co-ops mission and strategic goals and share samples of the cooperatives community impact. Workshops would include story telling exercises and role playing to ensure messages are communicated consistently
-  Create a cooperative ambassador toolkit that includes talking points, FAQs, and member success stories
-  Launch internal recognition program celebrating positive member and community action

- METRICS** 80% download of toolkit
- 80% participation in workshops



# Action Plan

## □ Goal 4

Strengthen internal communication to foster a culture of trust and collaboration

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➔ Establish consistent and transparent communication channels

🕒 Q1 2026

#### TACTICS

- Develop a standardized communication protocol that outlines which types of messages should be delivered through specific channels (e.g., major company updates via email, employee recognition via the intranet)
- Create a rollout plan for implementing protocol and implement
- Monitor intranet logins and provide training to employees not using the channel
- Develop and launch an executive monthly update including updates, goals, recognition

🎯 **METRICS** Increased logins to Intranet by 10%  
Increase page views on Intranet updates by 5%  
Increased communication score on employee surveys

### Strategic Objective 2

### Time period

➔ Encourage two-way communication and feedback loops

🕒 Q3-Q4 2026

#### TACTICS

- Develop and implement quarterly employee pulse surveys - short anonymous feedback opportunities to address hurdles in a timely manner
- Develop "Ask Me Anything" program. Informal Q&A sessions with rotating leadership to foster trust among new and old faces and cross departments
- Create a digital suggestion box on the Intranet with public responses
- Implement feedback program through department meetings → MS team meetings → Senior Management meetings and back down on a schedule

🎯 **METRICS** Improved communication and trust scores on employee surveys



# Action Plan

Goal 4 continued

Strengthen internal communication to foster a culture of trust and collaboration

## Strategic Objective 3

## Time period

 Promote cross-departmental collaboration and recognition

 Q1 2027

### TACTICS

- Create a digital peer-to-peer recognition option. Employees can comment and interact with each other digitally after a recognition
- Create a co-op collaborator initiative to address submissions to the digital suggestion box as a team, brings suggestions to management, and is responsible for providing timely, transparent responses via the intranet
- Implement an annual peer-to-peer culture and collaboration awards program. Employees vote on recognizing and rewarding individuals and teams that show cooperation, innovation, etc.

 **METRICS** Increased trust score on employee surveys



# Action Plan

## □ Goal 5

Educate members on curtailment to reduce anxiety and build understanding

### Strategic Objective 1

### Time period

➡ Gather understanding of members' educational level of curtailment and anxiety levels around it

🕒 Q3-Q4 2026

### TACTICS

- Develop a survey directed at members to see what they know about curtailment
- Conduct a survey analysis and social media sentiment analysis
- Use interactive social media posts to get a "pulse" on member knowledge and sentiment of curtailment
- Create content calendar for curtailment educational materials needed based on findings

🎯 **METRICS** Survey submissions of 500  
 Social media post engagements to exceed 2.5% engagement rate

### Strategic Objective 2

### Time period

➡ Develop accessible curtailment educational materials based on objective one's findings

🕒 Q4 2026 - Q2 2027

### TACTICS

- Create a suite of curtailment educational materials
- Develop and implement a multi-channel, proactive curtailment awareness campaign using education materials
- Create a page on the website for members to access the new suite of materials

🎯 **METRICS** Page visits exceed secondary page average visits per month  
 Positive media pick up



# Action Plan

Goal 5 Continued

Educate members on curtailment to reduce anxiety and build understanding

## Strategic Objective 3

## Time period

➔ Understand member's knowledge and anxiety levels around curtailment after awareness campaign ⌚ Q3 2027

### TACTICS

- Develop and launch survey and compare results of first survey
- Develop and administer distribution plan of newly created materials
- Create additional educational materials based on survey analysis

🎯 **METRICS** Survey results show increased education levels  
Survey results show decreased anxiety levels

## Strategic Objective 4

## Time period

➔ Strengthen member's knowledge of the Cooperative's support during curtailment events ⌚ Q4 2027 on

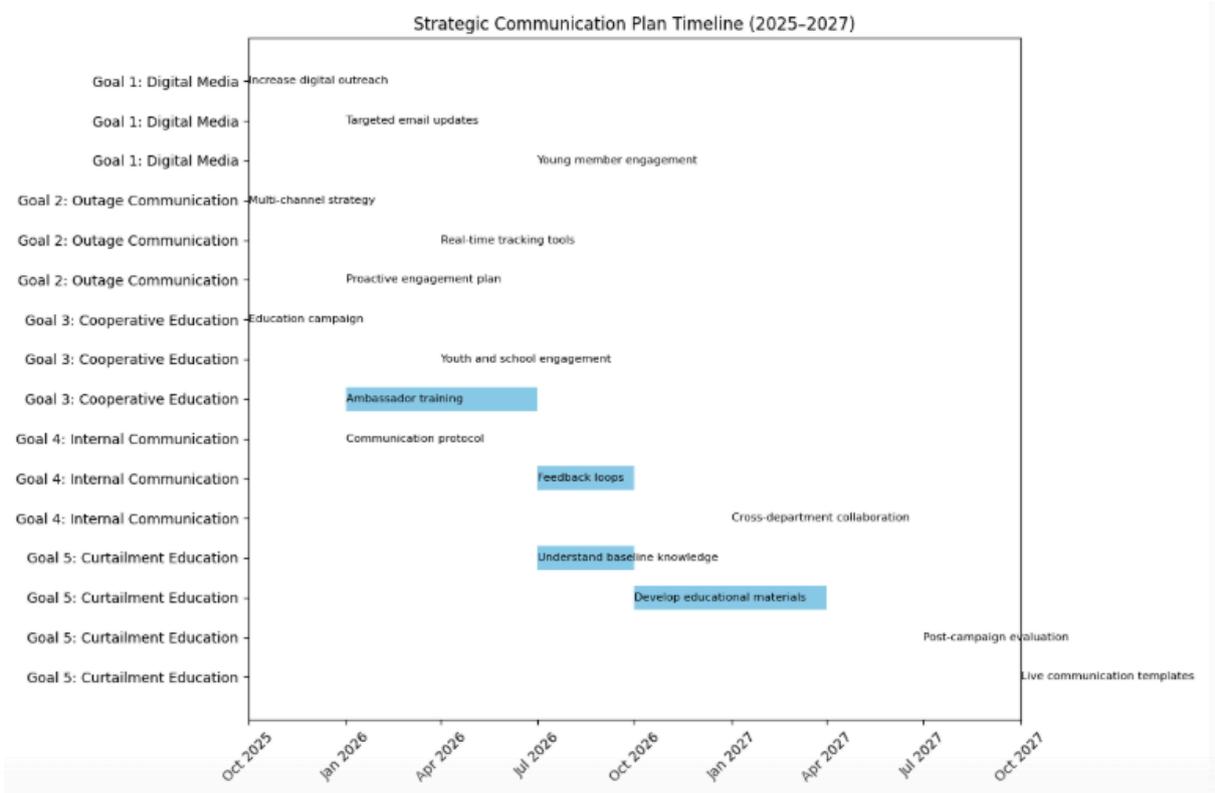
### TACTICS

- Develop templates for live communication channels to provide members with real-time updates, safety tips, and event-specific information.
- Develop the strategy for releasing curtailment event member communications.
- Develop an awareness campaign to help member's know how, where, and when to get information during events

🎯 **METRICS** Member engagement with live communication if launched  
Member response during event, should it happen



# Timeline and Key Staff



## Goal 1

Communications, Senior Management, Member Services

## Goal 2

Communications, Senior Management, Member Services, IT, Engineering

## Goal 3

Communications, Senior Management, Member Services

## Goal 4

Communications, Senior Management, Member Services, IT, HR

## Goal 5

Communications, Senior Management, Member Services, Engineering



# Additional Resources

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- CEC Content Strategy

Attached and Digitally Located at G:\CPR\Nikki

- CEC Brand Guidelines

Attached and Digitally Located at G:\CPR\Nikki

- NRECA Green Bally Symbol Brand Guidelines

Digitally Located at cooperative.com

- Touchstone Energy Brand Style Guide

Digitally Located at touchstoneenergy.com