

# News Release

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## Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas

### **Smedley recognized by HRO Today at national award event**

**Little Rock, Ark.** — May 14, 2018 — Maria Smedley, vice president of human resources and strategy for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC) and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), was recently awarded the 2018 CHRO (chief human resources officers) Leader of Distinction Award at the North American HRO Today Forum.

Smedley was one of 17 finalist who were recognized for their achievements in the human resources field during the past year.

According to her nomination form, she obtained the award for her efforts to drive a major push to improve labor and leadership by embracing a “quality work, competitively priced” strategy. Additionally, she and her division improved the employee selection and screening process while enhancing the competitiveness of compensation and benefit offerings. As the cooperatives’ human resources leader, she strongly advocated for the adoption of additional safety resources and equipment resulting in significant improvements in safety metrics and profitability.

Prior to joining AECC/AECI, Smedley was employed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) as the director of employee relations and benefits. She has more than 20 years of human resources experience in a variety of sectors. Smedley is a graduate of George Mason University, School of Law, holds a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and earned a bachelor’s of science degree in business administration from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Smedley currently serves on the boards of directors of the Arkansas Foodbank, the National Industry Liaison Group (NILG) and the Arkansas Chapter of the American Association of Blacks in Energy. She also serves on the School of Business Advisory Board of Philander Smith College. Smedley is currently the vice president of the Chi Eta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 500,000 homes, farms and businesses in Arkansas and surrounding states.

**For additional information, contact:**

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