

# 2026 O&E Conference | Hotel Polaris | April 6-8, 2026

## Monday, April 6

### 1:00 – 4:00 PM Optional Activities

#### **Clay Shoot**

Sponsored by Western United Electric

*Lunch will be provided. Guns are available for rent. Participants should bring their own shells or purchase them at the club.*

#### **Location:**

Pikes Peak Gun Club  
450 S. Franceville Coal Mine Rd.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80929

#### **Top Golf**

Sponsored in part by Border States

*Appetizers and one drink are included.*

#### **Location:**

Top Golf  
165 Spectrum Loop  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

---

### 4:00 – 6:00 PM

#### **Early Registration (Optional)**

Lower Level, Hotel Polaris

---

### 6:00 – 8:00 PM

#### **Welcome Reception**

Location: The Aviator Bar, Hotel Polaris Top Floor

*Join fellow attendees for appetizers and networking to kick off the conference. One drink ticket will be provided, with a cash bar available afterward.*

## Tuesday, April 7

**7:00 – 8:45 AM**

**Registration & Breakfast**

Room: Generations A

---

**8:45 – 9:00 AM**

**Welcome**

**Scott Simmons**

*VP of Technical Services, Mountain View Electric Association*

Room: Generations A

---

**9:00 – 10:00 AM**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Karl Mecklenburg**

*Former Denver Broncos Linebacker*

*Karl Mecklenburg rose from a college football walk-on and twelfth-round draft choice to become one of the top players in Denver Broncos history. During his twelve-year career with the Broncos, Mecklenburg played in three Super Bowls, played in six Pro Bowls, and was selected as a team captain.*

*Karl is widely known as one of the most versatile players in NFL history, having played all seven defensive front positions, sometimes during a single game. In 1987 he was named AFC Linebacker of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year.*

*Since retiring from the NFL, Mecklenburg has been inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame and the Denver Broncos Ring of Fame and has been named a semifinalist for the Pro Football Hall of Fame for ten consecutive years.*

Room: Generations A

---

# 2026 O&E Conference | Hotel Polaris | April 6-8, 2026

**10:00 – 10:30 AM**

Break

---

**10:30 – 11:30 AM**

## Breakout Sessions

### OPERATIONS

#### Intelligence on Laterals: The Next Frontier in Distribution Automation

Presenter:

**Balaji Santhanam**

**Director, Utility Automation BU**

*This session explores how utilities can enhance distribution lateral circuits through advanced technologies including sensing, remote communications, energy harvesting, and analytics. These tools can improve reliability, safety, and system performance while helping utilities address new challenges such as DER integration and wildfire risk.*

**Room: Homestead**

---

### ENGINEERING

#### Integrating Large-Scale Member Solar

Presenters:

**Garet Bohuslavsky, Energy Services Engineer, MVEA**

**Ezra Diffrient, OT Systems Specialist, MVEA**

*This session will review the process for interconnecting large commercial member-owned solar projects. Topics include the interconnection study process, navigating the BP-115 process with Tri-State, metering considerations, protection schemes, and SCADA implementation.*

**Room: Santa Fe**

---

**11:30 – 11:45 AM**

Break

---

# 2026 O&E Conference | Hotel Polaris | April 6-8, 2026

**11:45 AM – 1:30 PM**

Lunch

Room: Generations A

---

**1:30 – 2:30 PM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**OPERATIONS**

**The Benefits of FRP Products in Utility Applications**

Presenter:

**Isaac Bussan**

**Technical Sales Representative, GeoTek**

*This session highlights the advantages of fiber-reinforced polymer (FRP) products in utility applications, with a focus on crossarm solutions as well as light poles and distribution poles. Discussion will include durability, weather resistance, installation efficiency, and how FRP products support grid hardening and fire mitigation strategies.*

Room: Homestead

---

**ENGINEERING**

**DOE 2029 and the Impact on Distribution Transformers**

Presenter:

**Travis Baldwin**

**Strategic Accounts Manager, ERMCO Distribution Transformers**

*This session will explore the upcoming DOE2029 efficiency standard and how it will impact the distribution transformers commonly used on electric systems, including design changes and the benefits of new technologies.*

Room: Santa Fe

---

**2:30 PM**

**Sweet Snack Break**

Sponsored by Bell Lumber & Pole Company

# 2026 O&E Conference | Hotel Polaris | April 6-8, 2026

---

**2:30 – 5:30 PM**

**Vendor Show**

**Room: Generations B & C and outdoor exhibits**

*Visit with industry partners showcasing products, technologies, and services that support electric utility operations.*

---

**6:00 – 9:00 PM**

**Conference Banquet**

**Room: Generations A**

*Enjoy dinner, networking, and live entertainment from the **Kevin Mastin Band**.*

*The evening will conclude with a raffle drawing.*

---

## Wednesday, April 8

**7:00 – 8:00 AM**

**Breakfast**

**Room: Generations A**

---

**8:00 – 9:00 AM**

**Main Session**

**Catastrophic Wildfire: Lived Experience and Lessons Learned**

Presenter:

***Chris Reidinger***

***White River Electric Association***

*White River Electric will share their experience working to maintain power as the fifth largest wildfire in Colorado history moved across their system, resulting in significant damage and threatening the majority of their system load.*

---

**9:00 – 9:15 AM**

Break

---

**9:15 – 10:00 AM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**OPERATIONS**

**Predictive Monitoring and Proactive Maintenance**

Presenter:

***Mike Adams***

***IND Technologies***

*This presentation discusses the benefits of identifying potential issues before they lead to outages. Using real-time monitoring and data analytics, utilities can detect problems early and address them before they impact reliability, safety, or wildfire risk.*

**Room: Homestead**

# 2026 O&E Conference | Hotel Polaris | April 6-8, 2026

---

## ENGINEERING

### Evolution of Distribution Grid Standards and the Role of TDEC

Presenter:

**David M. Farmer**

**Senior Principal, Distribution Grid, NRECA**

*This presentation will provide an overview of key distribution grid standards relevant to electric cooperatives, including those from NESC and IEEE. The session will also discuss the role of the Transmission & Distribution Engineering Committee (TDEC) and opportunities for cooperative participation.*

**Room: Santa Fe**

---

## 10:15 AM – 12:00 PM

### Industry Updates

*Presenters from Western United Electric, CREA, Federated, Tri-State, and RUS will provide updates on topics relevant to electric cooperatives and the utility industry.*

**Room: Generations A**

---

## 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Lunch

**Room: Generations A**

---

## 1:00 – 1:30 PM

Business Meeting

**Room: Generations A**

---

## 1:30 PM

Conference Adjourns