

CO-OPS POWER COMMUNITIES WITH PURPOSE

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL



Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC) is deeply committed to our members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community. This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a cooperative, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

All cooperatives, including KEC, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose. One of these principles is Concern for Community—all cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve.

KEC's commitment to this principle is reflected in the administration of the Operation Round Up® program, which is supported by KEC members who voluntarily "round up" their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar to help our neighbors in need. All Operation Round Up® donations are placed in a trust and administered by an independent board called the Kootenai Electric Trust. The Trust, composed of KEC members, receives and evaluates all requests for funds and determines their distribution. Through this program, more than \$1.5 million have been invested in our community.

Recent Operation Round Up® Community Grants

In August 2024, the Trust Board awarded Operation Round Up® grants to the following organizations:

- \$2,500 to Turkeys & More to help provide Thanksgiving meals for approximately 2,000 low-income local families. See the photo to the right.
- \$2,500 to the Hayden Senior Center to help fund their senior meals program.
- \$2,500 to the Music Conservatory of Coeur d'Alene to help expand access to music education and establish scholarships.
- \$2,500 to Northwest Sacred Music Chorale for concert instrumentalists.

- \$2,000 to the First Judicial District CASA Program to purchase ergonomic chairs and stand-up desks.

Visit www.kec.com for grant applications and deadlines. Members may "opt-out" or "opt-in" to Operation Round Up® in one of the following ways: On your billing statement, by logging in to SmartHub or by contacting KEC by phone, letter or email.

KEC Golf Classic Raises Funds for Scholarships

KEC's Golf Classic had another successful year, raising more than \$22,000 for the Kootenai Electric Trust's scholarship program. The event took place on June 21, 2024, at Twin Lakes Village Golf Club. Thank you to long-time Signature Sponsor, Idaho Forest Group, and other major sponsors, including All Wall Contracting, Amaril Uniform Company, Border States, CoBank, Creekside Inn, Designer Decal, General Pacific, Grizzly Glass, Jaco Power Services, Northwest Specialty Hospital, Thorco, Valley Transformer and Zwinger Excavating.



Electric Cooperative Governance



Bill Swick

This month we're taking a short break from the subject of power supply and exploring the topic of governance. Have you ever wondered who oversees your cooperative? Who ensures that your interests (and invested money) are protected? Who manages the manager? These responsibilities fall to your board of directors.

The board of directors is comprised of seven members of the cooperative who are elected by the membership (see photo of current directors below). Director positions are nonpartisan. The board of directors has several responsibilities as specified in the cooperative's bylaws and state statutes. For example, the board hires the general manager and annually evaluates his or her performance. They also delegate authority to the general manager to manage the cooperative's affairs. The board of directors makes policy, approves the budget, sets power rates, periodically participates in strategic planning to set the future direction of the cooperative, and conducts oversight of the cooperative's operations. To directly serve and protect your interests, directors have legal responsibilities to do no harm to the cooperative, to protect its assets, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to act in the best interests of the cooperative.

The board of directors meets at least monthly to carry out these responsibilities. Meetings are conducted using Robert's Rules of Order and include discussions with the general manager and management team, the cooperative attorney, and an executive session to handle any sensitive topics requiring confidentiality. Meetings can be lively as directors and the management team discuss and debate important issues. The meetings (except for executive sessions) are open to all cooperative members.

Who can serve on the board of directors? The cooperative is divided into five geographic districts, with one director serving from each district. In addition, there are two at-large directors who can reside in any part of our service territory. See the district map on the next page. Directors are elected for 3-year terms and can, if re-elected, serve a total of seven terms. Each year, two or three director positions are up for election. To run for election, candidates either complete an application and pass an interview with the Nominating Committee (composed of KEC members) or submit a completed petition having the required number of supporting signatures from cooperative members. This year the deadline for applications and petition nominations is December 2.

All applicants to the board of directors, even incumbents seeking reelection, are subject to a background check and a drug test. This information is reviewed by the Nominating Committee as part of the applicant screening process. Applicants who pass the screening process provide biographical information
Continued on the next page.



Photo above (front row, left to right): Todd Hoffman, Dave Bobbitt, Roger Tinkey and Jim Robbins. (Back row, left to right): Crystal Musselman, Tim Meyer, Doug Elliott, KEC General Manager; and Bill Swick.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS BOARD CANDIDATES

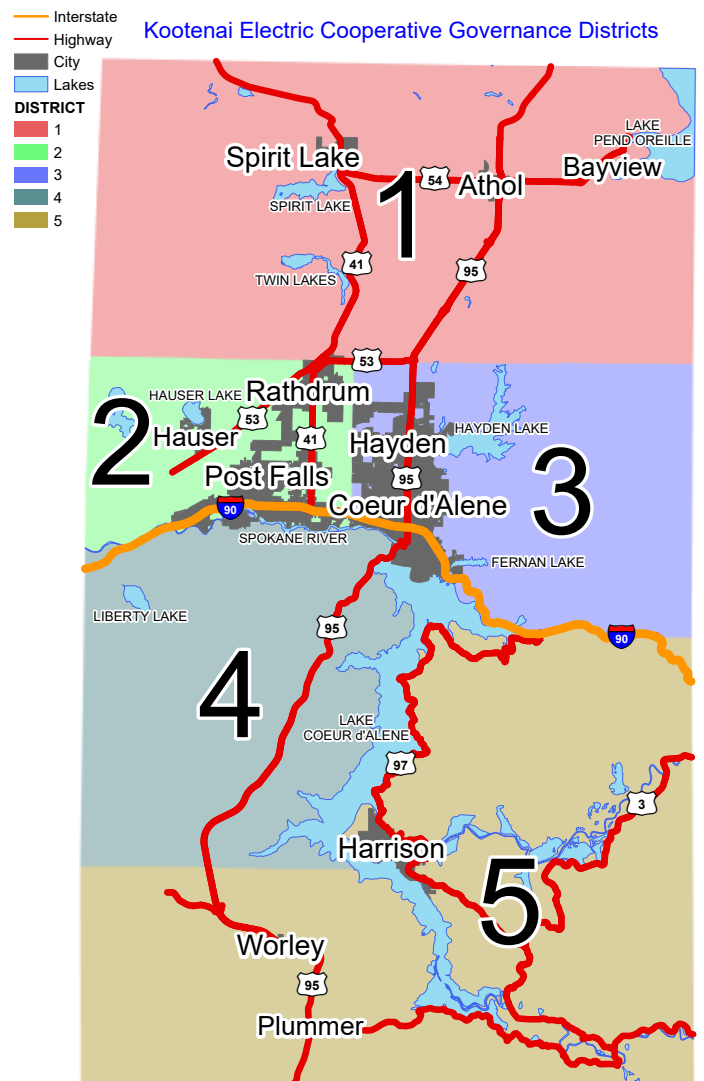
The KEC Nominating Committee is looking for members interested in serving on the KEC board of directors. Candidates must meet the qualifications outlined in the cooperative's bylaws, be able to invest a minimum of 60 days per year on board-related activities and be able to periodically attend conferences and director training. Candidates should also have strong business acumen and a broad understanding of regional and national energy issues.

There will be two positions up for election in 2025:

- **District 1:** Currently served by Tim Meyer.
- **District At-Large:** Currently served by Roger Tinkey.

Check out the map of the director district locations to the right. There is also a detailed district map available at www.kec.com/director-district-map.

If you would like to be considered, review our bylaws and complete the application at www.kec.com. The deadline for applications and petition nominations is December 2, 2024. The election and petition process is governed by KEC's bylaws.



Electric Cooperative Governance Continued.

and a recorded video for the membership to review.

Director elections occur in advance of the KEC annual meeting. To ensure a fair and independent election, it is overseen by a committee of KEC members (the Credentials and Elections Committee) and administered by a private contractor with experience conducting cooperative elections. The membership can vote either online or by mail. To help maintain the timeliness and integrity of the voting process, no voting occurs at the annual meeting. The independent contractor receives and counts all ballots, and the results are reported during the annual meeting.

All members may vote in the election, regardless of the district they live in. For example, if there are two candidates seeking a director position in district five, all members, including those living in other KEC districts, can vote for the district five candidate they prefer.

Your current board of directors is a diverse group of professionals, including three engineers, a banker, two business managers, and an investigator/analyst. The directors spend on average about 60 days a year working on cooperative business, although the time commitments can vary widely throughout the year. Directors receive a monthly stipend for their work and approved travel expenses are reimbursed.

If you are interested in making a difference in your community and getting involved with a terrific group of people, consider applying for a director position at KEC. Competencies important to the position include good analytical skills, the ability to collaborate well with others, strong communication skills, and a commitment to continuous learning about the electric utility industry. The work can be challenging but the position is very rewarding.

If you have any questions about the board of directors, you may contact me by email at bswick@kec.com.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Let's work together to build a safer digital world. Whether at home, work or school, we can increase our online safety with the following tips.

- 🔒 Recognize and report phishing attempts.
- 🔒 Use strong, unique passwords.
- 🔒 Enable multi-factor authentication.
- 🔒 Update software regularly.

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

KEC is committed to ensuring our system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks. But you can help, too. When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The KEC office will be closed November 11 for Veterans Day and November 28 and 29 for the Thanksgiving holiday. As a reminder, KEC's office hours are Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays.

WIN A \$50 ENERGY CREDIT

Below are 10 KEC account numbers. If you find yours contact us at 208.765.1200 to receive a \$50 bill credit.

**1839009, 1849521, 1394261,
1844133, 1864399, 1812096,
1861808, 1252980, 1332072,
1524230**

KEC BOARD MEETINGS

Members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings. Meeting dates vary—please call Constance Felten at 208.292.3211 for details.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety:

- Learn how to spot and report phishing attempts. Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt.
- Create strong, unique passwords. When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.
- Enable multi-factor authentication when available. Multi-factor authentication (two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.
- Update software regularly. Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber-smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit www.staysafeonline.org to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.