



## KEC AND PARTNERS DONATE \$20,000 TO LOCAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE

KEC, its lender CoBank and the Kootenai Electric Trust donated a combined \$20,000 to the Community Action Partnership/Project Share program last month. These funds are available to KEC members who qualify for help paying their electric bills. **Photo above (from left):** Kootenai Electric Trust Board Members Cheri Zao, Tom Craig and Kathleen Barrett; Mary Herrick, Community Action Partnership Service Coordinator; Lori Dahlke, Community Action Partnership Community Engagement Specialist and Gery Hirsch, KEC's Manager of Member Services.

## 2019 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

\$2,000 scholarships will be awarded by the Kootenai Electric Trust to KEC members or their children who are either seniors in high school or currently enrolled in an accredited college, trade or training institution for fall 2019 or spring 2020. [1727073]

Continued on third page.

## Latest Operation Round Up® Grants Awarded

The Kootenai Electric Trust Board recently awarded quarterly Operation Round Up® grants. The Trust Board received 13 grant requests and awarded more than \$15,000 to the following applicants:

- \$2,500 to Chorale Coeur d'Alene to help purchase replacement risers for performances.
- \$2,500 to Dalton Elementary School to help purchase an online math fluency practice program.
- \$2,500 to the Hayden Senior Center to purchase well-balanced and healthy meals for their guests.
- \$1,500 to the Hayden Lake Rotary Club to help purchase safety equipment for the crosswalk at Hayden Meadows Elementary for students.
- \$1,500 to the Kootenai Environmental Alliance to provide summer day camps for families and youth. The day camps give participants an opportunity to spend time in the natural areas of North Idaho.
- \$1,500 to K2 Equestrian Center, which provides equine therapy for children and families, to purchase equipment for sensory integration.
- \$1,350 to Holy Family Catholic School to purchase convertible Chromebooks.
- \$1,000 to Lake City High School to purchase reading materials for their French language program.
- \$1,000 to Lake City High School and Lakeland High School Family and Career and Community Leaders of America student program to purchase supplies for a community service project. [1420895]

Want to support Operation Round Up®? Simply check the box on your bill stub or log in to your account on SmartHub at [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com) and select the Billing and Payments tab. Visit [www.kec.com/apply-grant](http://www.kec.com/apply-grant) for grant applications. The next grant application deadline is January 25, 2019.

Continued on third page.



## Tree Trimming and Power Lines

Snow and winter weather often cause power outages when trees fall on our lines. KEC goes to great lengths to avoid this. For instance, half of our

power lines have been built underground and almost all newly constructed lines are put underground. To minimize the risk of trees contacting our overhead lines, KEC trims the trees and mows the underbrush that grow within our power line easements. On average, KEC spends approximately \$900,000 annually on our vegetation management program.

Even with all these efforts, trees remain the largest cause of power outages. Here's why: most of the trees that cause outages are not within our power line easements. The photo below was taken during a storm this winter. The tree on the line caused an outage and was outside our easement. While KEC has the authority to cut trees that grow within these easements, we do not have the authority to cut those growing outside of them. For context, our typical easement is 30 feet wide with the power line running down the middle of it. Before removing a tree growing outside our easement which threatens our power lines, landowner permission is needed. KEC makes this easy for landowners. All they need to do is say "yes" and the trees will be removed at no cost to them. But what if they say "no?"

Landowners who are unwilling to allow KEC to remove trees on their property which threaten our power lines will be notified in writing of their liability for damage those trees may cause. In the event damage occurs, KEC will pursue financial restitution. Alternatively, KEC will be happy to remove the trees in question without cost to the landowner.

There are a small number of trees that KEC has permitted to grow within our easements. In lieu of removing them outright, we have trimmed the limbs around the power lines. When an accommodation is made, the tree will be cut so that its normal growth

occurring before the next maintenance cycle, plus two years, will not encroach the safe operating distance of our power lines. [1817928]

All of KEC's efforts to clear trees around our power lines are rooted in safety and fire prevention. We encourage our members to be mindful of it as well. If you have a tree on your property that needs to be removed and could fall into a power line, please don't cut it down yourself. Contact KEC. If it's a threat to our power lines, we will be happy to remove it at no cost. If it's not, we can help you identify a qualified arborist who can help you remove it.

You can contact us about problem trees using our website reporting form at [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com). You may also call Kurt Lyon, KEC Right-of-Way Specialist, at 208.292.3216.



# Watch Out for Scams

It's unfortunate that in today's world, scams are inevitable. Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language to create a sense of urgency in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. If someone calls demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from the caller, hang up and contact KEC. [1814578]

A KEC employee or our automated phone system may call you to inform you of an unpaid balance and pending disconnection. Legitimate calls from KEC will only direct you to make payment in one of the following ways:

- **Web:** [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com)
- **Pay by Phone (automated):** 1.877.999.3371
- **KEC's Office Phone:** 208.765.1200
- **In Person at KEC's Office:** 2451 West Dakota Ave. in Hayden

KEC will never demand you purchase a pre-paid credit, debit or gift card or use money transfer services, such as Western Union or Money Gram, to make a payment. KEC employees who come to your home for any reason usually drive company vehicles and always carry company identification badges which they are happy to show you. You may also contact our office at 208.765.1200 to verify that an individual is a KEC employee. If you feel unsafe or threatened, please call local authorities.

KEC wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. If you have any questions about your account call us at 208.765.1200 or visit [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com).



## SCHOLARSHIPS CONTINUED

Applications are available at [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com), the KEC office or call 208.292.3270. Applications are due February 15, 2019, and winners will be selected by members of the Kootenai Electric Trust Board. The Trust Board disburses Operation Round Up® funds contributed by KEC members.

## OPERATION ROUND UP® CONTINUED

Members who choose not to contribute to Operation Round Up®, or who would like to begin contributing, may simply “opt-out” or “opt-in” on their bill or contact KEC by phone, letter or email.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Winter is here! Is your home's heating system ready? Remember to replace furnace filters once a month or as recommended. If you heat your home with warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to increase efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## NEWS BRIEFS

### OFFICE CLOSURE

The KEC office will be closed on Monday, February 18, 2019 for an employee training.

### ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE

The 2019 Annual Meeting is scheduled for the evening of Monday, May 13 at Lake City Church in Coeur d'Alene. Look for more details about the meeting in future newsletters. [1816723]

### CREDIT & COLLECTION REMINDERS

As a reminder, KEC does not mail any final notice of disconnect for past due accounts. Past due accounts will have the amount reflected on the bill with a notation in the account message block stating the account is past due and subject to service disconnection if not paid by the noted date. Payment in full plus reconnection fees and deposits may apply if disconnected. We will make payment arrangements with those unable to pay in full; however, the number of times those arrangements can be made is limited and must be made prior to any disconnection. Visit [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com) to learn about agencies in the community that can help with utility payments. Please contact our office at 208.765.1200 if you encounter problems paying your bill.

### KEC BOARD MEETINGS

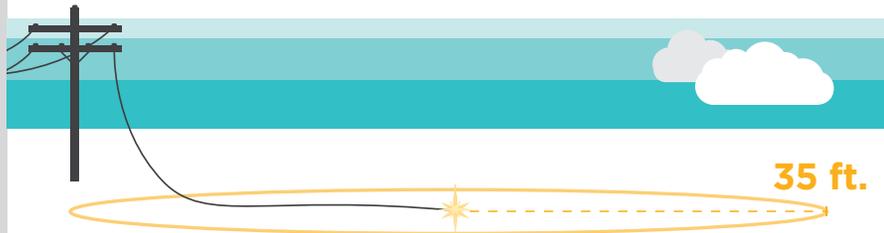
Members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings. Meeting dates vary— call Constance Felten at 208.292.3211 for details.

### WIN A \$50 ENERGY CREDIT

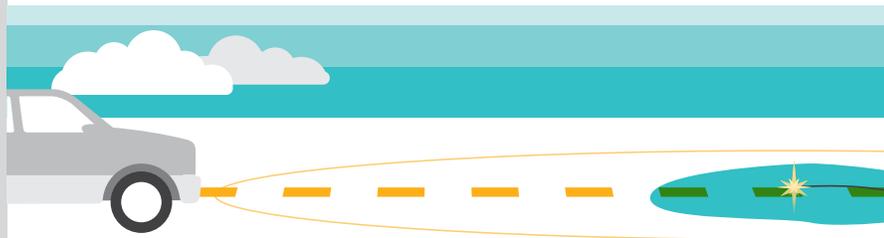
Six KEC account numbers are hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number contact us at 208.765.1200 and receive a \$50 credit on your bill.

# Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 ft.** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

[1276468]

Source: ESFI.org

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 