

POWERLINES

NOVEMBER 2017 | KEC MEMBER NEWSLETTER



SOLAR UNITS NOW AVAILABLE

Units in the KEC Community Solar Project are now available to members. Construction on the project started in September near KEC's substation on Setters Road in Worley (on property already owned by KEC) and is scheduled for completion later this year. Members may purchase individual units, which represent a portion of the energy produced by the solar array. There are 288 units available and each unit is expected to generate approximately 234 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. Each unit will cost \$475. Members can purchase up to five units on a first come, first served basis. Leading the KEC Community Solar Project is Member Services Assistant Manager Don Crawford, who answered some questions below.



How does community solar work? It's pretty simple. KEC takes care of the design, installation, maintenance and insurance. Members purchase units that represent ownership in a portion of the energy produced by the solar array for the 25 year life of the system. It makes it easy for members to participate in solar power. Each participating member will receive a monthly energy credit in the form of kilowatt-hours (the cost is valued at approximately \$.08 per kWh) based on the estimated production of the array. The energy production generated by the system each month will be divided into 288 units and members will receive a kWh credit on their bill according to the number of units they own.

Why did KEC initiate this program? The KEC Board and management team recognize that this project will provide our members with a simple, cost effective alternative to putting solar panels on their roofs while still promoting clean, renewable energy. [1833444]

How was the cost of a unit determined? We based it on the actual direct costs of the project such as engineering, construction, insurance and the expected operation and maintenance costs for the life of the system. It is being offered to participating members at cost.

What are the benefits of participating? It doesn't require home ownership, eliminates proper siting requirements that may be tough to obtain at a member's home and minimizes investment. The units are transferable if you move within KEC's service territory and the program allows members to invest in clean, renewable energy.

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS CANDIDATES



The KEC Nominating Committee is looking for members interested in serving on the Board of Directors. Candidates must meet the qualifications outlined in KEC'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. Directors should also have strong business acumen and a broad understanding of regional and national energy issues. Districts 2, 5 and At-Large will be up for election in 2018.

If you or someone you know would like to be considered, please contact Erika Neff at eneff@kec.com or 208.765.1200. Applications are also available online at www.kec.com. **Applications and petition nominations are due November 30, 2017.** Photo above (front to back, left to right): Roger Tinkey, Secretary; Dave Bobbitt, Audit Committee Chair; Terry LaLiberte, Vice Chair; Bill Swick, Chair; Todd Hoffman; Doug Elliott, General Manager; Jim Robbins; and Tim Meyer. [1266913]

ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR THE MODERN FAMILY AND ITS MANY DEVICES

The typical American family is well connected and owns a variety of electronic devices, most of which must be plugged in to charge. According to the PEW Research Institute, 95 percent of U.S. families have a cell phone and 77 percent of Americans own a smart phone. Nearly 80 percent of adults own a laptop or desktop computer, while approximately half own tablets. So how can we use all of these devices to save energy? In many cases, energy savings is a touchscreen away as more apps enable you to monitor energy use. [1787820]

From the convenience of your mobile device, smart technologies can maximize your ability to manage electric use across several platforms—controlling your thermostat, appliances, water heater, home electronics and other devices. One of the easiest ways to make an impact on energy efficiency is with a smart thermostat. Using your mobile device, you can view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor how much energy is used and make adjustments accordingly.

Purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances is another way you can save energy. Many new appliances include smart-technology features such as

refrigerators that can tell you when maintenance is required or when a door has been left open. New washers, dryers and dishwashers allow you to program when you want the load to start.

While modern life involves greater dependence on technology, KEC remains your best resource for saving energy and money. Regardless of your level of technical expertise with electronic devices, we can provide guidance on energy savings based on your account information, energy use, local weather patterns and additional factors unique to your community.



'ROUND UP' YOUR KEC BILL FOR A CHANCE TO WIN



Are you “rounding up” your KEC bill? If not, we need your help and are holding a contest to encourage more member participation in the Operation Round Up® program. If you aren’t familiar with the program, Operation Round Up® is just what its name implies. Each month, KEC “rounds up” the electric bills of participating members to the next highest dollar. The average monthly member contribution is 50 cents. Small change to most, but the collective result really adds up. The donations are placed in a trust (called the Kootenai Electric Trust) and a volunteer board of members determines how to allocate the funds. Grants are awarded to local non-profit organizations, including schools, food banks, senior centers and more. Grants are listed on our website at www.kec.com and in the newsletter quarterly. [1610719]



Here’s how the contest works: contact us at cec@cec.com or 208.765.1200 and tell us you’d like to round up your bill each month. **If you sign up by January 31, 2018, we’ll enter you into a drawing for a \$50 Visa gift card.** Already “rounding up” your bill? Thank you! We’ll also do a drawing for a \$50 Visa gift card for those members already participating in Operation Round Up®. For more information visit www.kec.com. Winners will be announced in the March 2018 newsletter.

KEC COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

What are the financial benefits of community solar?

Typically solar power has a long-term payback. Currently, investments in solar power are more about supporting renewable energy. We were able to leverage a \$50,000 grant from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation to help offset some of the cost of building the array. Members who purchase units in the community solar project will be purchasing energy at around \$.08 per kWh for the next 25 years.

Are there energy tax credits available for the panels?

Typically community solar projects do not qualify for state and federal tax credits due to the passive nature of the ownership structure. That said, there have been cases where individuals were granted the 30% federal tax credit through a Private Letter Ruling from the IRS. We suggest participants consult their tax advisors about any potential tax incentives.

How can I monitor the output of my unit(s)? Members may view the solar array’s energy production online at www.kec.com.

Why is the program designated for 25 years? Because that is the expected life of the solar panels.

What if I move? Can I take my units with me? You may keep your unit(s) as long as you stay within KEC’s service territory. Participating members will receive an energy credit on their bill and therefore must have an active account with KEC. If you move outside of the service territory, you may transfer the unit(s) to another active KEC member or KEC will buy back the unit(s) at a pro-rated price. [1790250]

For more information or to purchase a unit, contact us at 208.765.1200 or cec@cec.com.

EARLY DISCOUNTED CAPITAL CREDIT PROGRAM BILL CREDIT



If you participated in the Early Discounted Capital Credit Program this year you should see a credit on your enclosed billing statement. Thank you for your participation. Capital credits are one of the many benefits of your membership in Kootenai Electric Cooperative. If you didn't participate this year, there will be another chance next year when KEC mails eligible members a capital credit statement in the summer of 2018. For more information contact us at 208.765.1200. [1631292]



WHAT TO DO: IF YOUR CAR CRASHES INTO A UTILITY POLE

Accidents happen. Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!

IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS **NO** FIRE:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.

40 ft.

IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE **IS** A FIRE:

Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire.

To exit safely:

- Jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.

NON-FEDERAL POWER SURVEY

While KEC buys most of its power from BPA, we are required to purchase additional power from other suppliers (called non-federal power). We've created a survey to gather member feedback on the source of non-federal power we purchase. Visit www.kec.com to take the survey by Dec. 15, 2017 and be entered into a drawing for a \$50 energy credit.

WIN AN 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!

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The KEC office will close at 3 p.m. on Dec. 15 and will be closed on Dec. 25 for the Christmas holiday and Jan. 1, 2018 for New Year's.

KEC BOARD MEETINGS

Members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings. Meeting dates vary—for details call 208.292.3211 or visit www.kec.com.



A Tripartite Energy Cooperative