

Power Outage Q&A with KEC's VP of Operations

Labor Day Power Outage Recap

On September 7, 2020, a strong windstorm swept through our area knocking down trees and power lines and causing power outages for more than 11,000 of our members. Many of these outages began with damages to transmission lines owned by our transmission service provider. While these outages can require considerable time to restore, power was restored to most members within 24 hours. During the outages, 11 KEC and contract crews managed nearly 30 separate outage locations across our service territory. After service was restored to our members, our focus shifted to helping others. Two of our crews were dispatched to help Inland Power & Light restore power to the cities of Malden and Creston. The damage those cities face is nothing short of catastrophic and we were glad to help.

The following are frequently asked questions we heard from members during the storm:

Why was the power out for so long?

As part of our wildfire mitigation plan, KEC monitors elevated fire danger or red flag warnings issued by the National Weather Service. During times of elevated fire danger, we modify the operations of our electric system. This aids in fire protection but can increase the duration of power outages (KEC's plan does not include scheduled power shutdowns). When outages occur during these conditions, crews must patrol all lines in areas experiencing outages before energizing power lines. We realize this makes the outage restoration process longer, but it is a necessary step to prevent fires.

Why can't you tell us when power will be restored?

Generally, KEC includes estimated times of restoration (ETR) on our outage map (www.kec.com/outage-map) when they are available. During severe storms such as this one, it is very difficult to make accurate estimates

and often we are unable to give ETRs until crews are able to get into the area and assess the damage. For this storm in particular, it was also difficult to provide ETRs because of the transmission line outages, which required correction by other utilities before power could be restored. This was further complicated by the fire mitigation steps mentioned earlier.



Julie Turbin

What is KEC doing to keep trees from falling on lines?

To minimize the risk of trees contacting our overhead lines, KEC has an aggressive vegetation management plan. We trim rights-of-way to provide for the minimum clearance distance of 30 feet, or 15 feet either side of the power line. We also ask members to call and report any trees they see close to our primary lines or dead trees that may fall on our lines. KEC will remove trees threatening our lines at no cost to landowners. KEC does not trim service lines (the line from KEC's transformer to your house). That is the homeowner's responsibility. We will come out at no charge and drop the service line so the member can trim service line trees safely.

Storms usually have members asking why doesn't KEC put all the power lines underground?

Currently more than half of our power lines have been built underground. Almost all new construction is also built underground. Underground lines can be three times the cost of overhead lines. After the wind and snowstorms of 2015 KEC was awarded more than \$10 million in special grant funding from FEMA to convert approximately 50 miles of our most problematic overhead lines to underground.

Continued on back page.

NEWS BRIEFS

LIGHT BULB SALES

This fall KEC will phase out LED bulb sales as they are now widely available at prices comparable to ours. KEC will continue selling LEDs at the prices outlined below until they are sold out. Please contact our office at 208.765.1200 to check our inventory before stopping by the office.

- A-Lamp (Regular): \$1.68
- Globe (Vanity): \$3.35
- Flood: \$4.72

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS CANDIDATES

The KEC Nominating Committee is looking for members interested in serving on our 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. Directors should also have strong business acumen and a broad understanding of regional and national energy issues. There will be three positions up for election in 2021 (see a map of director districts at www.kec.com):

- **District 2:** That part of the system South of the Rathdrum Highway (Highway 53), North of the Spokane River to the West of Lake Coeur d'Alene and North of I-90 to the East of Lake Coeur d'Alene.
- **District 5:** That part of the system East of Lake Coeur d'Alene and South of I-90.
- **District At-Large:** Encompassing the entire service area of Kootenai Electric Cooperative, Inc.

If you would like to be considered, review our bylaws and complete the application available at www.kec.com. The deadline for applications and petition nominations is November 30, 2020.

OFFICE HOURS & NOVEMBER 2020 HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

KEC's office hours are Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays. The KEC office will be closed November 11 for Veteran's Day and November 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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

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

1816946	1833488	1839168	1815853	1454471
1273685	1258515	1686151	1840427	1312632



Kootenai Electric Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity–Affirmative Action Employer.

Trust Board Awards Recent Operation Round Up® Grants

The Kootenai Electric Trust Board recently awarded the third quarter 2020 Operation Round Up® grants to the following organizations:

- \$2,500 to the Kootenai Environmental Alliance to purchase supplies and equipment for their Gathering Garden, which provides fresh, organic produce to local, low income families.
- \$2,500 to Treaty Rock Elementary to purchase headphones for students in kindergarten through second grades for state testing.
- \$2,365 to Timberlake Fire Protection District to purchase a dump tank and wildland fire packs.
- \$2,000 to Heart Reach, a food bank, to purchase Thanksgiving dinners for local families in need.



The next quarterly grant applications are due October 23, 2020. Applications are available at www.kec.com.

District 4 Trust Board Position Open

The Trust Board has an opening in the District 4 position (see a map of director districts at www.kec.com). If you're interested in serving please contact Erika at 208.292.3270 or eneff@kec.com. The Trust Board will interview candidates in November 2020.

Get Involved with Your Co-op

Are you interested in learning more about KEC or becoming active in the cooperative? The following are a few ways to be involved through service. Please contact Erika Neff at eneff@kec.com or 208.292.3270 if you're interested in serving in any of these capacities.

Credentials & Elections Committee

Time Commitment: The group meets once prior to the Annual Meeting and again the day of the Annual Meeting.

Nominating Committee

Time Commitment: The group meets at least twice a year to interview and nominate director candidates prior to the Annual Meeting. The meetings are generally held in the evening and last 2-3 hours.

Kootenai Electric Trust Board

Time Commitment: The Trust Board meets each quarter for approximately three hours in the evening. They may have 1-3 additional meetings annually. Learn more about an opening in District 4 above.



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

Board of Directors

Time Commitment: Approximately 60 days per year on board-related activities including governance, strategic planning and rate-setting. Directors also periodically attend conferences and other training. Directors are members of the cooperative that are democratically elected by other members during our annual meeting. Review the News Briefs on page 2 for details about the positions up for election next year.

Power outage Q&A continued from front page.

KEC is currently working to apply for additional FEMA funding to convert more lines to underground.

Should I help your crews by cutting trees that have fallen on power lines?

If a tree has fallen into power lines on your property,

please stay away and contact us as soon as possible. Downed power lines are dangerous. Never touch them. For safety's sake, always assume that a fallen power line is live, and follow these guidelines:

- Avoid touching the downed line with your hand or an object, such as a stick, broom or pole.

Monitoring the Line for Reliability

Electric cooperatives use a variety of monitoring and automation technologies that improve power reliability, shorten outage times and reduce labor time for crews. Here are four technologies we use to improve reliability.

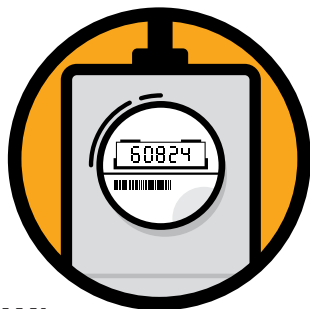


Drones

Drones may be used to inspect the power lines KEC maintains. Drones can provide another perspective to crews performing equipment inspections and the ability to locate trees and other vegetation in difficult to access areas so that proactive measures can be taken to minimize possible outages and reduce wildfire risks.

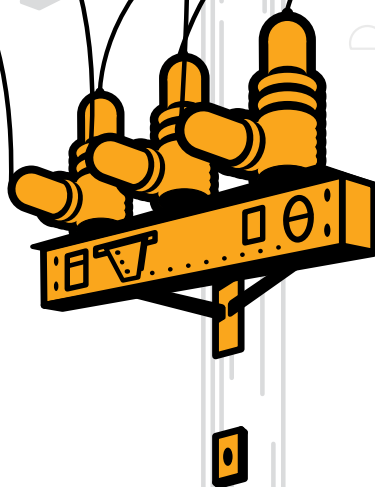
Fault Indicators

Fault Indicators typically clamp on or connect to the power line and provide visual indication of potential problems to KEC crews responding to outages. These devices are on some areas of the system to help reduce outage response time.



AMI

Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) provides real-time data to the cooperative. In addition to meter reading, this data helps us detect other potential problems on the electrical system. The AMI meters also communicate with KEC's outage management system to inform outage coordinators and crews of meters not providing power to our members during an outage.



Reclosers

A recloser acts like a circuit breaker or switch for controlling the flow of electricity on power lines. When a problem occurs, the recloser temporarily shuts off power. If the problem is temporary, the recloser restores power. (This is why you sometimes see the power blink.) If the problem persists, the recloser will shut off power until a crew can make repairs.

- Avoid touching anything, such as a car, object or equipment, or anyone who is in contact with a fallen power line.
- Avoid driving over a fallen power line.
- Trees and water conduct electricity. Do not spray water at a live power line. You can become electricity's path to the ground if you are touching water that touches electricity resulting in injury or death.

Where can I get updates during outages?

We encourage members to sign up for outage alerts by text or email using your SmartHub account. Remember to keep your contact information (phone and email) updated with us so we can notify you in the event of planned power outages. During large outages, updates are also available at: www.facebook.com/KootenaiElectric.

Julie Turbin is KEC's Vice President of Operations and Operational Services. She has worked for KEC for more than 25 years.