



Don't Fall Victim to Utility Scams

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily. Just last month, several KEC members were targeted through a phone scam where the scammers demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, KEC will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.



We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, KEC will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle. Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to

our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility. KEC will only send you important updates via text if you've signed up for SmartHub or outage alerts.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- **Take your time.** Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.
- **Be suspicious.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.
- **Confirm before you act.** If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent KEC or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 208.765.1200 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to KEC so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.

THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTION

The 2022 annual meeting is scheduled for the evening of Monday, May 16, at Lake City Church in Coeur d'Alene. KEC board of director districts 1 and at-large are up for election this year. The election process is governed by the KEC bylaws. To review a copy please visit www.kec.com or call 208.765.1200.

Watch your mailbox and email in early April for your election packet and annual meeting details. The packet will include board candidate bios and your ballot.

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.

**1654395, 1854151, 1849279, 1851465, 1850558,
1824898, 1840223, 1375177, 1337795, 1270455**

KEC BOARD MEETINGS

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

Employee Spotlight: Preston Jerome

Preston Jerome is an Electro Technician and has worked for KEC for 16 years.

What made you interested in working for KEC? How did you train for work in this field?

I started out in the telecommunications industry, installing overhead and underground telephone lines. I learned the trade on the job. It was a natural progression to move into the electric utility industry. I was hired at KEC as a temporary groundman and was able to move into a permanent apprentice position. From there I became a journeyman lineman and worked in that role for about 13 years. More recently I was hired as an electro technician.

What does a day look like for you as an electro technician at KEC?

You might be wondering: what is an electro technician? KEC's electro technicians are responsible for the maintenance, repair, testing and installation and removal of equipment such as meters, reclosers, regulators, relays and more. We are also responsible for substation and equipment inspections, power quality investigations and the fabrication, wiring and installation of other specialty equipment.

KEC has three electro technicians, and we work in the engineering department. We are all also journeyman linemen, but have additional training to work as electro technicians. I'm proud to be a part of this team and that our work directly improves member reliability.

Tell us about our current facility's electro technician area. What are you looking forward to about the new headquarters?

We've simply outgrown our current area. Right now, when testing or maintaining equipment, it must be moved to several locations, including outdoors, due to lack of space. This slows down the maintenance of equipment and makes it a real challenge to keep up with the high volume of work associated with the growth in North Idaho. With our new headquarters we will have a larger shop space with an overhead crane to work on different types of equipment simultaneously. This will allow us to safely handle equipment and gain efficiencies.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Staying abreast of new and emerging technologies is a big challenge as we upgrade equipment to provide



more reliable service to our members. We have a remarkable team and I enjoy the focus we have on maintenance and installing new specialty equipment to provide dependable power and to meet the needs of future growth.

The cool thing about my job is I also work as an on-call lineman. This allows me to respond to power outages, which is something I enjoy. One day I might be boating across the lake to make repairs and thinking about how the fisherman must be enjoying the day. A few months later I may be chopping through the ice to boat to the same location. There is always something new to troubleshoot and overcome. That's why I love this job and thank God for these opportunities, awesome coworkers and the ability to support my family.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is it changes day to day, and I enjoy the variety it allows. I enjoy working with members to troubleshoot and repair power quality issues. It's satisfying when issues are resolved. I'm also thankful for the tools and equipment KEC provides the crews to improve outage response times. I remember hiking up Mica Peak numerous times with snowshoes while packing heavy tools, grounds, ropes, wire and climbing gear. Now we have a snow machine to haul equipment and workers in half the time or less.

Since day one at KEC, I have always been proud of how we put the members first. The cooperative upgrades equipment to better serve the members and supports safe work practices. It's great to know that KEC is looking out for the members and employees.

New HQ Update: Electro Technician Shop & Engineering Lab

For the next few months, we plan to provide updates on the new headquarters facility. The KEC team is currently working with our consultants to put the finishing touches on the architectural layout and engineering design. Our goal is to break ground this spring. This month we'd like to feature the electro technician shop and engineering lab.

KEC's current electro technician space isn't large enough to maintain some of the larger equipment we are installing on our system due to increased growth and capacity in our area. The new space is being designed with efficiency and safety in mind, allowing room for an overhead crane to lift large and heavy equipment, such as regulators, switchgear, pad mount transformers and reclosers. This equipment can be removed from its location in the field with a boom truck and moved into the shop with a forklift. From there the trolley crane can move the equipment vertically and horizontally so the electro technicians can safely perform internal inspections, repairs, or get equipment configuration and testing complete for a new project.

In addition, the new electro technician shop space will support KEC's System Inspection and Maintenance program more efficiently as significantly more time is spent focused on inspecting specialty equipment and conducting condition assessments. This program helps ensure our cooperative's infrastructure continues to be well-maintained and service reliability continues to be enhanced.

A new hybrid space, called the engineering lab, will be included in the new headquarters. The lab will be adjacent to the electro technician offices and shop and will be used by the electro technicians and the electrical engineers. In this space, staff will conduct meter testing, configure and test reclosers and regulator controls. New and emerging technologies and KEC's focus on integrating our new supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system means we must have the ability to properly configure and test new devices before they are installed on our system.

The new headquarters will also provide more storage areas for meters, instrument transformers, and specialty equipment parts. Currently, these are stored in several places across KEC's campus, including outdoor temporary storage containers. Equipment will be better organized with more space, providing a more efficient way to handle material, do testing and get it configured and ready for installation.



KEC Board Authorizes Capital Credit Retirement

In December 2021, after reviewing the financial health of the cooperative, the board of directors authorized the general retirement of \$900,000 in capital credits related to electric purchases in a portion of 1992, 1993 and a portion of 1994. These capital credits will be returned (paid back) to members based on their electric use during that period. Checks will be mailed to eligible members in March 2022.

Here's how capital credits work:

1 Money comes in from members when they pay their electric bills. Electric bills can be thought of as each member's fair share of the funds needed for KEC to operate.

2 Money goes out to pay co-op expenses. Members' dollars are pooled together and used as operating capital so that KEC can provide reliable service and pay co-op expenses.

3 Cash left over after paying co-op expenses is used to fund infrastructure projects and is allocated to the members as capital credits.

4 Any funds leftover are returned to members at a later date. Capital credits are allocated to members based on their energy purchases. When the financial condition of KEC allows, capital credits are then retired or refunded to each member in the form of a check or a bill credit.

5 Rather than waiting, eligible members may choose to participate in KEC's Early Discounted Capital Credit program. By participating in this program, active members receive the discounted amount of their capital credits as a bill credit on their November billing statements. Inactive members receive a check in the mail in November. Watch for details about this program in the summer of 2022.

More about capital credits:

As an electric cooperative, KEC returns excess revenue to members over time. All revenue exceeding the cost to provide electric service is allocated back to you in the form of capital credits. The amount of capital credits you are allocated each year is based on how much electricity you used during the previous year. Once allocated, your capital credits are held by KEC as a resource to replace aging infrastructure, increase capacity, maintain reliability and to operate your cooperative.

For more information or to watch our video on this topic please visit www.kec.com or call 208.765.1200.