

Thank You to the 2022 KEC Board of Directors

The Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC) board of directors determines the policy and direction of the cooperative. The seven-member board is elected by the KEC membership and spends approximately 60 days a year on cooperative-related activities. Thank you to the board for their dedication and years of service:

- Dave Bobbitt, Audit Committee Chair, 9 years
- Todd Hoffman, 9 years
- Tim Meyer, Vice Chair, 7 years
- Crystal Musselman, 5 years
- Jim Robbins, 11 years
- Bill Swick, Chair, 14 years
- Roger Tinkey, Secretary, 13 years



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.

Annual Meeting & Election Update

For 85 years, we've been owned and governed by those we serve. KEC's Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 20, 2023, is a great way to stay informed about what's happening at your cooperative. We're doing something a little different this year—serving breakfast and moving to the Kootenai County Fairgrounds in Coeur d'Alene! Registration begins at 8 a.m. with breakfast, coffee, educational booths and entertainment. Each member household attending the Annual Meeting will have a chance to win many prizes, including a \$300 KEC bill credit (must be present to win). Members will have the option to stay for the business meeting beginning at approximately 10 a.m.

2023 Board Election

Watch your email and mailbox in early April for details about our board election. This is your chance to elect those who will represent you and your interests on our board of directors. In 2023, members will elect directors for districts 3 and 4. **Please note: The 2023 director election will be conducted by mail and online only.** In-person voting will not be available at the Annual Meeting. This helps ensure the timeliness and integrity of the voting process without unnecessarily extending the Annual Meeting.

If you have any questions about the meeting or election, please contact us at 208.765.1200 or kec@kec.com.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures.

Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: energy.gov



Employee Spotlight: Nathan Smither



Nathan Smither is a Journeyman Service Lineman and has worked for KEC for six years.

What made you interested in working for KEC?

Prior to working for KEC, I worked for Avista Utilities and Southern California Edison. I wanted to work for KEC because

I'd heard the crews were the best in the area and that's the truth! KEC is a company that cares about its members and employees. It's also nice to work for a utility whose membership is happy with their service. You don't always see that with the big investor-owned utilities.

What does a day look like for you as a Journeyman Service Lineman?

My typical day consists of meeting with electricians to disconnect a member's electric service so they can make equipment upgrades, connecting new or temporary services and investigating service concern calls, including outages.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

We're seeing more and more home generators when we're out responding to outages or downed lines. The concern for us is how some members are using these generators. An improperly connected generator can cause significant harm to the public and create a potentially fatal backfeed risk to lineworkers who are trying to restore service or make system repairs.

Tell us about generator safety.

Standby generators can come in handy during long-term power outages. Contact a qualified vendor or electrician to help you determine what generator is best suited to your needs. Before using, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Check out the do's and don'ts for portable generators on the next page.

If you are installing a generator, it must have a transfer switch installed. The transfer switch prevents energy from leaving your generator and going back onto the electrical utility equipment, which is known as "backfeed" and is dangerous to lineman or others near downed power lines. A qualified electrician should install your generator and transfer switch. You or your electrician can also request that KEC disconnect power so the transfer switch can be installed properly—just contact us at 208.765.1200.

What is the best part of your job?

KEC's line crews really go above and beyond for the members. I enjoy working with great people and restoring power to our members after a storm. Each outage creates a different challenge, and we make it a competition amongst ourselves.

Generator and On-Site Generation Reminders

With proper use and maintenance, generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous.

Install a Transfer Switch

KEC requires that all backup generator installations have a transfer switch installed to prevent hazardous backfeed onto the utility grid in accordance with the requirements of the National Electric Code and must be approved by a state electrical inspector. For the safety of KEC employees and the public, we track where backup generators are installed on our system and require members who have installed (or plan to install) generators to contact us (this requirement includes any on-site generation, like portable generators, whole house generators, wind turbines, solar panels, etc.).



Traditional generator transfer switches are wired into the member's electrical panel to allow power to the panel to be delivered by either the utility grid or generator, and it prevents the generator from being connected to the utility grid. An alternative is GenerLink™, a transfer switch installed behind your meter. When you connect a portable cord-connected generator to GenerLink™ and start it up, GenerLink™ automatically disconnects from the electric utility grid, preventing the possibility of backfeed. This device is approved by KEC and installed by a licensed electrical contractor. Unlike some traditional transfer switches that require you to pre-select which circuits the generator will service, with GenerLink™ you have access to every circuit in your panel. You can run 120 or 240 volt appliances up to your generator and transfer switch capacity.

Do's and don'ts when using portable generators:

- **DO:** Install backup carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.
- **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
- **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
- **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
- **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
- **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
- **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
- **DON'T:** Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
- **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
- **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility lineworkers making repairs.

For more information about existing or new backup generators and transfer switches please contact us at 208.765.1200.

Seeking Operation Round Up®/ Kootenai Electric Trust Board Members

Two Kootenai Electric Trust Board positions will be open this year due to term limits. The Trust Board is made up of KEC members who serve on a voluntary basis. They receive and evaluate all grant requests and scholarship applications and determine how funds will be distributed. If you're interested in serving, please contact eneff@kec.com or 208.292.3270.

About Operation Round Up®

Operation Round Up® is supported by KEC members who voluntarily "round up" their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar to help our community. The extra pennies go into the Kootenai Electric Trust fund which distributes grants to worthy causes in our community. Through this program, more than \$1.3 million has been invested in our community. We need your help! Currently, less than 40% of members participate in the program. Members may "opt-out" or "opt-in" to the



Current Trust Board members (front row, left to right): Randy Foiles, Cheri Zao and Jessica Bacon Wourms. (Back row, left to right): Jay Baker, Joe Piedmont, Dan Green and Tom Craig Zajicek.

program in one of the following ways:

- On your billing statement.
- By logging in to SmartHub.
- By contacting KEC by phone, letter or email.

For applications and deadlines visit www.kec.com.

NEWS BRIEFS

AVOID THE BIG GREEN BOX

Please stay away from pad-mounted equipment (the big green boxes you see below). While safe, they are not meant for touching, climbing or playing. Pad-mounted equipment carries high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities. If you notice anything amiss, such as damage or a missing lock, please contact us at 208.765.1200 immediately.

Never touch, climb or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformer clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from the transformer doors and 3 feet away from the sides.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always dial 8-1-1 before you dig.

