

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

The past five years have been transformational ones. They have been transformational for our members, for our cooperative, and for the electric utility industry in which we operate. Looking back over this time, I'm sure each of you can recount myriad changes you have personally experienced and navigated. This is certainly the case for Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC): COVID, record growth, constraints in the supply chains on which our operations are reliant, rising interest rates, and inflationary pressures are chief among these.

During these past five years, the cooperative's membership has also changed considerably. We have extended service to approximately 6,000 new homes and businesses. We have also had many members move out of the service territory and new ones move in. In fact, 40 percent of all our members have become a member in the past five years!

Regardless of whether you are a new member to the cooperative or have been a member for a couple decades, there are changes occurring within the utility industry which I'd like for you to be informed about. Our industry is a complicated one. Understanding where our power comes from, how it gets to your home or business, and what influences the price you pay for it is important to you, and to us. Having a better understanding of these issues provides context for the policies and the actions that utilities in general, and KEC in specific, sometimes make.

Over the course of the next year, I plan to use this space to share information with you that I feel is fundamental to understanding our industry and how we as a member-owned cooperative operate within it. If you're a long tenured member, some of this information will

be a refresher. For others, it will be new and will provide a foundational understanding of the value hydro power plays within the Pacific Northwest, how our operations as a member-owned utility provide access to some of the lowest cost carbon free power produced in the nation, and why, despite this, our power supply costs face considerable cost pressures. In these articles, I'll also share how KEC is preparing for and confronting these challenges.

We also recognize that many of our members prefer to get information like this through the social media channels they are connected to, or from occasional podcasts. Select content from each of these articles will also be broadcast over those channels soon after they are published here. If you haven't subscribed to our social media channels yet and would like to receive this information that way, please look us up on your favorite venues.

Finally, I'd like to invite your engagement and questions. Should you have a question or concern about the topics being discussed here, or a suggestion for another topic I could address, please email me at [kec@kec.com](mailto:kec@kec.com). I'll do my very best to answer or reply to messages I receive. Thank you, and I hope you learn something valuable and insightful from these future articles.



**Doug Elliott**  
**KEC General Manager/CEO**



## Employee Spotlight: Diane Griswold

**Diane Griswold is the Vice President of Human Resources and has worked for KEC for 13 years.**

### **What made you interested in working for KEC?**

KEC's stellar reputation initially drew me in and speaking with KEC employees at that time heightened my interest.

### **How did you train for work in this field?**

In addition to holding a bachelor's degree from the University of Idaho, I have obtained Human Resources (HR) certifications through the HR Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management. Beyond formal education, life experiences have been a good teacher.

### **What does a day look like for you as the VP of Human Resources?**

Each day at KEC is a fresh adventure. My responsibilities cover labor and employee relations, recruitment, retention, leadership development, performance management, safety, compensation and benefits. Ensuring compliance with legal requirements and internal policies, I collaborate with other management team members to foster a culture aligned with KEC's mission of providing exceptional service and dependable power at competitive rates. Along with the HR Administrator and Safety Director, we act as resources to all employees.

### **How is the current labor market affecting KEC's operations?**

The current labor market presents challenges, such as fewer applicants for each open position. Finding the right candidate with the necessary skills and fit can take more time, influenced by supply and demand factors.

### **How has the growth in the area affected KEC employees?**

Rapid growth in the area and supply chain issues have caused KEC employees to be creative and proactive in securing materials for new construction, system



improvement and maintenance. Workloads have been impacted as our employee body has grown and required time to train and adapt.

### **What does KEC look for in potential employees?**

Beyond the technical qualifications required for each position, some competencies we prioritize include safety, teamwork/collaboration, communication, integrity and accountability. These qualities contribute to our goal of maintaining a qualified, productive and satisfied workforce.

### **Could you highlight one initiative within the HR department this year?**

In 2024, we will be updating the leadership development program aimed at fostering the skills and competencies needed to usher KEC into the future.

### **What is the best part of your job?**

Collaborating with a dedicated team focused on meeting our members' needs is among the best parts of my job. Being part of the exciting moments in employees' lives, from hires to promotions, is truly a privilege. I enjoy helping others and seeing plans come to fruition.

### **What is your favorite thing about our community?**

Among other things, I love the beauty, the seasons and the abundant recreational opportunities available, with a special appreciation for the many hiking trails and great skiing opportunities our area offers.

# Thank You to the 2023 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, 10 years
- Todd Hoffman, 10 years
- Tim Meyer, Vice Chair, 8 years
- Crystal Musselman, 6 years
- Jim Robbins, 12 years
- Bill Swick, Chair, 15 years
- Roger Tinkey, Secretary, 14 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/CEO; and Bill Swick.**



## Annual Meeting & Election Update

For 86 years, we've been owned and governed by those we serve. KEC's Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 30, 2024, is a great way to stay informed about what's happening at your cooperative. It's also an opportunity to tour our new headquarters facility in Rathdrum! More details to come.

### 2024 Board Election

Watch your email and mailbox in mid-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 2024, members will elect directors for districts 2, 5 and at-large. **Please note: The 2024 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](mailto:kec@kec.com).**

## NEWS BRIEFS

### TEXT TO REPORT POWER OUTAGES

**Here's how:** Text OUT to 1-855-938-3508 to report your outage. Prior to using this service you must meet the following requirements: Be a registered SmartHub user using a cell phone number associated with the SmartHub account that has selected to receive text messages. Message and data rates may apply.

### Sign Up for Outage Text Alerts

To ensure you are receiving the latest updates about outages affecting your service, consider signing up for outage text alerts. Text messages may include when the outage has been restored and, if available, the reason for the outage and estimated restoration time. To get started log in to your SmartHub account and visit the "Manage Notifications" page. You may also visit [www.kec.com/manage-your-account](http://www.kec.com/manage-your-account) to view detailed instructions on how to verify your contact information and sign up for notifications.

### 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.

## KEC OFFERS A VARIETY OF REBATES

We want to help you manage your electric consumption which is why we offer a variety of rebates and incentives to help you live in an energy efficient home. KEC currently offers residential rebates on these products:

- New ENERGY STAR® Qualified Manufactured Home
- Insulation
- Windows & Exterior Doors
- Washers & Dryers
- Thermostats
- Heat Pump Water Heaters
- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Ground Source Heat Pumps
- Ductless Heat Pumps
- Level 2 EV Chargers

**For details please visit [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com). Terms and conditions apply. Must be a KEC member to qualify.**

### KEC BOARD MEETINGS

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

### WIN A \$50 ENERGY CREDIT

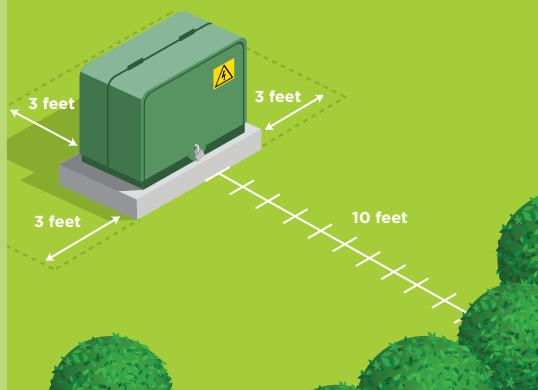
Below are 10 KEC account numbers. If you find yours contact us at 208.765.1200 to receive a \$50 bill credit.

**1828383, 1256542, 1693625, 1459538, 1853362,  
1840218, 1822964, 1850105, 1573304, 1822205**

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.

