

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS BOARD CANDIDATES

The Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC) Nominating Committee is looking for members interested in serving on the KEC 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. Candidates should also have strong business acumen and a broad understanding of regional and national energy issues.

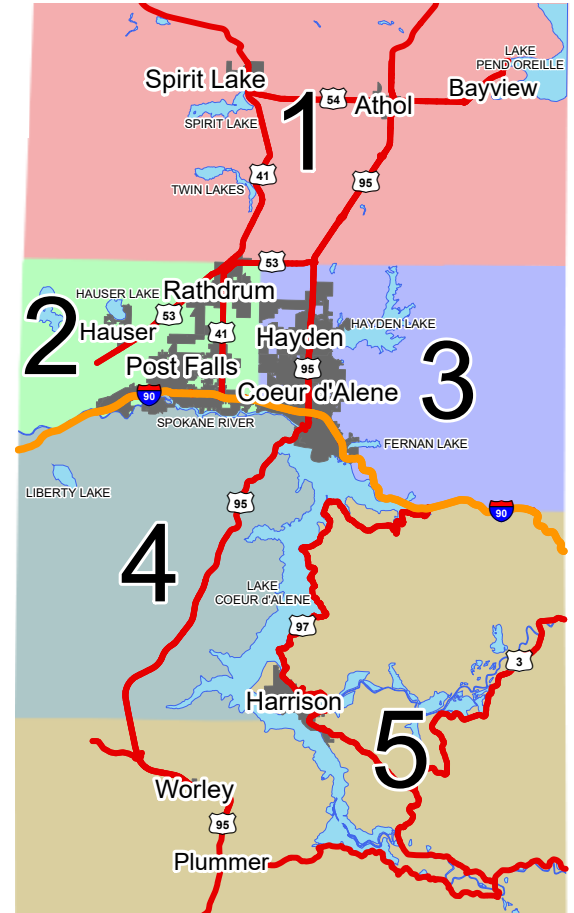
There will be two positions up for election in 2025:

- **District 1:** Currently served by Tim Meyer.
- **District At-Large:** Currently served by Roger Tinkey.

Check out the map of the director district locations to the right. There is also a detailed district map available at www.kec.com/director-district-map.

If you would like to be considered, review our bylaws and complete the application at www.kec.com. The deadline for applications and petition nominations is December 2, 2024.

The election and petition process is governed by KEC's bylaws.



CHECK YOUR BILL STATEMENT FOR EARLY DISCOUNTED CAPITAL CREDITS

If you were eligible and chose to participate in the Early Discounted Capital Credit Program this year you should see a credit on your November billing statement. Capital credits are one of the many benefits of your KEC membership. If you didn't participate this year, there will be another chance next year when KEC mails eligible members a notice in the summer of 2025. **For more information contact us at 208.765.1200 or capitalcredits@kec.com.**

SAFEGUARD YOUR ELECTRONICS WITH SURGE PROTECTION

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home.

Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere—unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick change in voltage and current due to multiple devices within the home or at the service location being powered up at the same time. There are two ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics and other devices in your home, or on the member's side of the electric meter.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many

devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

KEC's Electric Service Handbook provides members and contractors requirements for residential and commercial electric service installations. The handbook outlines member responsibility to provide protective equipment as required by the National Electric Code or other applicable code(s). Additionally, for three-phase motor installations, the member is responsible for installing protection equipment against loss of phase conditions. Visit www.kec.com to review the handbook.

Contact KEC at 208.765.1200 if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges.



Is a Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pump System Right for Your Home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house. This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, and their energy efficiency aspects are so popular. Let's unpack some mini-split basics and explore whether this type of system is a good choice for your home heating and cooling needs.

A mini-split system is a type of HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Similar to central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components—an outdoor compressor and an indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor unit(s) to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than the whole home.

Is a mini-split system right for you?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be furthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install requiring a small hole for the conduit connecting the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized because each includes a thermostat that



enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.

Cool solutions

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier, and because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

Additional considerations

However, according to the Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central

Continued on the next page.

NEWS BRIEFS

IMPORTANT POWER OUTAGE REMINDERS

Winter will be here before we know it and that means the potential for weather-related power outages. Power outages are usually infrequent and brief, but there are times, due to the weather and acts of nature, when your electricity may be interrupted. If an outage does occur, please report it one of the following ways:

- Use our SmartHub app or online account at www.kec.com.
- Call 1.877.744.1055. Please be ready to provide at least one of the following pieces of information when calling: phone number, account number or meter number associated with the outage location.
- Text "OUT" to 1.855.938.3508. Prior to using the text to report outages 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.

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 click on "Settings" and then click on "Manage Notifications." You may also view detailed instructions on how to verify your contact information and sign up for notifications at www.kec.com/manage-your-account.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES

- December 23, 2024 - closed 12-5:30 p.m.
- December 25, 2024 - closed in observance of Christmas.
- January 1, 2025 - closed in observance of New Year's Day.
- KEC's normal business hours are Monday-Thursday 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m., closed Fridays.

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.

**1828540, 1589215, 1728994, 1718414, 1859285, 1851785,
1863180, 1816000, 1799671, 1460293**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually.

Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles.

Ductless Heat Pumps Continued

systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, those in particularly colder climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

KEC offers members a \$900 rebate on ductless mini split heat pumps. Terms and conditions apply. Please contact us at 888.883.9879 or rebates@esgroupllc.com for more information regarding rebates or energy efficiency.