

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



Doug Elliott

Crews, Equipment and Our New Headquarters

Over the past several months, this newsletter has been spotlighting each of the foremen that lead our crews. This month, I'd like to tell you a little more about the crews they lead, the equipment they use to do their jobs and how our new headquarters is being designed to support their operations.

Heavy Line Crew Composition



KEC has two types of line crews. The first of these is a "heavy crew" that is made up of a foreman, three journeyman linemen and an equipment operator. Each of these crews has a digger/derrick, a large bucket truck, a small bucket truck and a backhoe with a trailer. These crews are capable of tackling nearly any project the cooperative can throw at them. They are also very flexible. When working on large jobs, multiple crews can be assigned to a project.

Make-Permanent Crew Composition



When working on smaller jobs, a heavy crew can be split into smaller crews.

The second type of crew KEC operates is called a "make permanent" crew. These crews focus on converting temporary services used during home construction to the permanent service after construction is completed. Each of these crews is comprised of a lead lineman, a journeyman lineman and an equipment operator. They are equipped with a small bucket truck, a flatbed truck, a mini excavator and an equipment trailer.

Learn more about their work on the back page in the Employee Spotlight article about Lead Lineman Chad Hall.

In addition to these crews, KEC also employs a few other journeyman linemen who are assigned to specialized work, such as system inspections, equipment repair and substation service. During outages or other emergency work, these linemen are integrated with our other crews to provide additional flexibility of operations.

KEC currently employs six heavy crews and one make permanent crew. However, more crews are needed to keep up with our workload so KEC has hired five additional heavy crews from contractors. Of them, only one or two are used seasonally. The rest are contracted throughout the year.

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Full-Sized Bucket Truck



Digger/Derrick Truck



Small Bucket Truck



Backhoe



Mini Excavator

GENERAL MANAGER MESSAGE CONTINUED

Relying on a contract crew is more expensive than employing and equipping a KEC crew when needed year around. So, KEC will be hiring three additional heavy crews over the next three years. Why not hire those crews now? Consider this: the vehicles used for linework are very expensive. The equipment used by each heavy crew costs over \$1 million. That equipment must also be ready for use at all times. If parked outdoors, crews must spend valuable time clearing snow off their vehicles during the winter months. During the summer months, the additional UV exposure increases the maintenance required on vehicles reducing their operational availability. For these reasons, digger/derricks and line trucks need to be stored indoors while backhoes and excavators, along with their trailers, need to be stored under awnings. Our current headquarters has 18 bays for indoor vehicle storage, and we have 29 vehicles that should be parked there! The three additional crews we will hire over the next three years will expand this to 40 vehicles. Until the new headquarters is built, several very important and expensive vehicles must be parked outdoors.

The photo below shows what that future indoor parking will look like. It's a huge space. Once those three additional crews are hired, only two spaces will remain unfilled. The good news is additional bays can be added to this space in the future. This allows us to build what is needed in the next few years without risking overbuilding.

To learn more about the new headquarters construction visit www.kec.com. If you have any questions, contact us at 208.765.1200 or kec@kec.com.



NEWS BRIEFS

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 two positions up for election in 2022:

- **District 1:** This generally includes areas north of Highway 53, including Twin Lakes, Garwood, Athol, Bayview and Spirit Lake.
- **District At-Large:** Includes KEC's entire service area.

If you would like to be considered, review our bylaws and complete the application available at www.kec.com. There is also a map of the director districts on the website. The deadline for applications and petition nominations is November 30, 2021. The election and petition process is governed by KEC's bylaws.

OFFICE HOURS & HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

The KEC office will be closed November 11 for Veteran's Day and November 25 for the Thanksgiving holiday. As a reminder, KEC's office hours are Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on 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.

**1846354, 1851846, 1848435, 1824343, 1759035,
1478124, 1847293, 1371635, 1851002, 1842052**

Operation Round Up® Updates

Long-time Trust Board Member Fred Muhs Completes Term

In August 2021, Trust Board member Fred Muhs (photo at right) completed his term and was recognized for many years of service and dedication to the Operation Round Up program. Thank you, Fred—we will miss you! Trust Board members distribute Operation Round Up grants and scholarships to our community.



Golf Classic Raises More than \$20,000 for Scholarships

KEC's Golf Classic had another successful year, raising more than \$20,000 for the Kootenai Electric Trust's Operation Round Up scholarship program. The event took place on June 25, 2021, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course. Thank you to all the players for making the event a success! A special thank you to our Signature Sponsor, Idaho Forest Group and other major sponsors, including Advanced Benefits, Associated Arborists, Border Sheet Metal, Cascadia McLaren, Centennial Distributing, Cline's Heating & Air Conditioning, CoBank, Cooperative Building Solutions, EES Consulting, Efficiency Services Group, General Pacific, Grizzly Glass Centers, International Line Builders, Mountain West Bank, Peak One Administration, Potelco, Valley Empire Collection and Valley Transformer.

Trust Board Awards Operation Round Up Grants

Operation Round Up is supported by KEC members who voluntarily round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar to help our neighbors in need. The extra pennies go into the Kootenai Electric Trust fund, which distributes grants to worthy causes in KEC's service territory. Through this program, more than \$1.2 million has been invested in our community.

May 2021 Grants

- \$2,500 to Gizmo-CDA to purchase STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) kits to inspire year-long learning for low-income students.
- \$2,500 to North Idaho CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for their Project Permanency program. CASA provides basic needs and supplies and critically needed items that help develop a healthy and stable home environment.
- \$2,500 to the Post Falls Food Bank to purchase food for their Children's Nutrition Backpack program.
- \$2,051 to Ramsey Magnet School to purchase ukuleles and storage racks for ukuleles and guitars.
- \$2,000 to Camp Cross on Lake Coeur d'Alene to replace outdoor lighting with LEDs.

August 2021 Grants

- \$2,000 to Dalton Elementary to install a new playground game that involves 39 children, with the goal to increase happiness levels for all students and decrease playground office referrals.
- \$2,000 to Heart Reach's Turkeys & More program, which provides turkeys and holiday food to serve 1,800 families in need for Thanksgiving.

Members who choose not to contribute to Operation Round Up®, or who would like to begin contributing, may simply "opt-out" or "opt-in" on their bill/in SmartHub or contact KEC by phone, letter or email.

Learn more at www.kec.com.

Employee Spotlight: Chad Hall

Chad Hall is a Lead Lineman and has worked for KEC for 19 years.

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

My dad worked as a hard rock miner and had a co-worker who changed careers and became a lineman. He told me about line work. Although I started out doing an electrician apprenticeship, I changed course after one year and went to Avista's line school. From there I worked for several line construction contractors until getting hired on at KEC as a hot apprentice and moved into a journeyman lineman role within two months.

What does a day look like for you as a lead lineman?

After working many years as a Journeyman Lineman, I was promoted to lead lineman about two years ago. In this role, I lead a three-man or make permanent crew, which includes a journeyman lineman and operator. You will see in the General Manager's Message that Doug outlines the difference between a three-man crew and a heavy crew.

Most of the work my crew does is make temporary electric services permanent. We also do "line drops" when needed. Usually, line drops are needed when a member or tree contractor is trimming trees and needs power turned off so they can complete their work safely. My crew's smaller size also allows us to be more mobile than a heavy crew, so we are often the first to be sent out on outages. A heavy crew may be setting a pole or working near a road with traffic flaggers, making it challenging for them to leave a job.

Tell us about the make permanent process.

New construction projects begin with a temporary electric service. You may have seen this when a new house is being built, it includes a temporary pole and meter. Once the house construction is nearly complete, the builder or contractor contacts KEC to request permanent service. That's when my crew gets involved. We go to the site and install conduit from the transformer to the meter on the house. With all the



building and growth in our area my crew stays very busy with this work—even in the winter.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

It is a challenge to stay ahead of all the make permanent service work with so much new construction happening right now. Maintaining good working relationships with builders and contractors is essential as I coordinate with them to ensure our work gets done on time and there is room for my crew to do our work. Work sites are often congested with traffic, subcontractors and materials. Coordinating this can be a time-consuming part of my job and we don't want to slow down any construction projects.

We are always looking for ways to be more efficient and improve our processes. Recently, on some projects, we have changed our process to dig and install the conduit underground immediately after the foundation of a house is poured. Then we concrete anchor the meter to the foundation, so we don't have to dig a trench and install conduit later, which involves digging around the houses, eaves and contractors.

What is the best part of your job?

KEC and my co-workers are the best part of the job. KEC takes care of its employees. We have the tools we need and a group that cares about their work. I look forward to my job every morning and that's a pretty nice feeling.