

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

### Rathdrum Headquarters Construction Update

The construction of our new headquarters in Rathdrum is nearly complete. Kootenai Electric Cooperative's (KEC) contractor broke ground in late March 2022 and construction crews are on schedule (the photo below shows progress as of August 2023). In October 2023, we expect to move our operations from our

long-time Hayden location to the new facility. Watch our website for details soon. You might remember that Kootenai County purchased the Hayden facility and will occupy it after we move.

Our new headquarters is located on a 44-acre site in Rathdrum on Lancaster Road between Highway 41 and Greensferry Road (see the map to the left). The property is nearly three times the size of the property we currently occupy, which has allowed us to build a facility with approximately 180,000 feet of space under roof, mostly for vehicles, equipment and materials storage. It will serve our needs for the next 40 years.

Visit [www.kec.com/rathdrum-headquarters-update](http://www.kec.com/rathdrum-headquarters-update) to learn more about the new facility, including common questions and answers and more. You may also contact us at 208.765.1200 or [cec@cec.com](mailto:cec@cec.com).



## Employee Spotlight: Kayla Wanous

**Kayla Wanous is KEC's Lead Field Engineering Coordinator. She has worked for KEC for nine years.**

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

I was looking for a career at a company that offered the opportunity to grow in my professional development. While my education is in medical administration, my previous work experience prepared me to work well with a variety of people and also juggle multiple responsibilities. In addition, my husband is a lineman, which has helped give me a good understanding of the electric cooperative from the initial phone call with member service through the installation and energization of a new service.

### **What does a day look like for you as the Lead Field Engineering Coordinator?**

A typical day for me consists of assisting members with new service requests, including members who need help bringing power to a vacant piece of land or modifying their electric service (such as building a shop or adding an EV car charger). I also work closely with KEC's project engineering technicians who are responsible for electric distribution line design and more.

As the lead, I am responsible for training and mentoring fellow field engineering coordinators in our department. I've also taken the lead on responding to member inquiries about installing solar panels, which have increased in number recently.

### **What advice would you give a member interested in clean energy?**

Although 96.6% of the power KEC sells is carbon-free, we understand some members would like the option to be 100% carbon-free in their energy purchases. For those interested in renewable energy without the up front investment, I would recommend looking into KEC's community solar project or carbon-free energy options. These programs help support clean energy without the initial investment or maintenance costs that are involved with member-owned generation systems.



Learn more about these programs at [www.kec.com/carbon-free-energy-options](http://www.kec.com/carbon-free-energy-options).

For those members interested in installing solar panels or other renewable energy resources—we are here to help! Check out the article on the next page to learn more about the factors to consider before making an investment.

### **How should a member who is interested in solar or wind generation get started?**

Visit [www.kec.com/member-owned-generation](http://www.kec.com/member-owned-generation) where you will find helpful common questions and answers along with our application packet and instructions on how to submit the application. We can also walk you through the process if you call our office at 208.765.1200.

### **What is the biggest challenge in your job?**

The biggest challenge in my job right now is ensuring new members understand the new construction process. From the initial application to our crews energizing a service, there are many steps in the process and it can take several months to complete.

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

In my role, I get to work closely with KEC's members on a variety of projects and I truly enjoy the interaction I have with each one of our members.

# Eight Questions to Consider Before Installing Rooftop Solar

“Free energy from the sun and lower electric bills... Where do I sign up?” The benefits of installing rooftop solar panels may seem like a no-brainer but the reality is not every home (and homeowner’s situation) is always right for solar. There are several factors to consider before pulling the trigger on a rooftop solar system, like determining if your home will receive enough sun to achieve your goals, finding the right contractor, negotiating contracts and more. Investing in solar for your home is a major decision. If you’re considering rooftop solar, KEC can help. Here are eight questions to consider before installing rooftop solar panels.

**1. What are my goals?** If your main goal is to use renewable energy and help the environment, consider signing up for our community solar program. You can help power renewable energy, without having to invest and maintain a home system. KEC’s Community Solar Project is located in Worley, and members may purchase individual units for \$380 each. Each unit is expected to generate about 234 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. Participating members receive bill credits for the energy created by their unit(s). Learn more at [www.kec.com/kec-community-solar-project](http://www.kec.com/kec-community-solar-project).



KEC’s Hayden headquarters includes a solar walkway similar in size to what a residential member would install. The 4.3 kW system has 12 panels and generates about 393 kWh per month.

- 2. Is my roof suitable for solar?** Your roof should be in good condition before installing solar panels. If your roof is old and in poor shape, it may need to be replaced before panels can be mounted. Additionally, your roof should receive a lot of sun to make the most of a rooftop system. Consider how much sun (and shade) the roof receives and if any trees will need to be removed. Solar panels perform best when facing south, so keep this in mind as you think about where the panels will be mounted. Visit <https://pvwatts.nrel.gov/> for a free online calculator provided by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory that can help homeowners develop estimates of the performance of potential solar installations.
- 3. How long will I own the home?** If you’re considering rooftop solar, you’re likely planning to stay in the home for several years. But if you plan to sell the home at some point down the road, consider that not all potential buyers will want to maintain a rooftop solar system. If you enter a contract to lease the system, carefully review the terms and what those mean if you decide to sell the property.
- 4. Lease or purchase?** Purchasing a rooftop solar system outright is expensive, which is why many homeowners opt to lease their solar panels. However, federal tax credits can help cover some of the costs for a new system, up to 30%. Regardless of how you decide to finance the solar system, make sure you get several quotes from qualified contractors. Speaking of contractors, there are several factors you’ll want to discuss with them up front.
- 5. Can the contractor provide up-to-date documentation?** It may seem obvious but be sure to request proof and documentation of the contractor’s licensing, permitting and other credentials. Comb through company reviews, check the contractor’s status with the Better Business Bureau, etc.—do your homework on the front end before signing a contract.
- 6. Does the contract seem reasonable and fair?** If you decide to hire a contractor to install rooftop solar, carefully read the fine print of the contract.

Continued on the next page.

## EARLY DISCOUNTED CAPITAL CREDITS

In September, members will be mailed information about KEC's Early Discounted Capital Credit program, which allows qualified members the choice to receive the current value of their 2022 capital credits this year or receive a normal retirement in the future (generally in 25-30 years). Members who participate in the program will receive a credit on their billing statement mailed in November 2023. Currently, about 50% of eligible members participate in the program.

An election to participate or not in this program is made by the KEC member account holder on a voluntary basis. Members may change their selection at any time; however, the deadline to participate this year is October 20, 2023. To change your selection, contact us at 208.765.1200 or [capitalcredits@kec.com](mailto:capitalcredits@kec.com). For program details, terms and conditions visit [www.kec.com](http://www.kec.com).

## KEC BOARD MEETINGS

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

## TAKE OUR MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Your feedback on how well we are meeting your needs is crucial. You can help us with this by taking our annual member satisfaction survey.



If you think we are doing a good job, please tell us so. Your opinion matters! Scan the QR code above or use the link below to take the online survey by October 31, 2023, for a chance to win a \$300 KEC bill credit. You may have also received an email about the survey with a link included. Please take only one survey per membership. The bill credit winner will be announced in the December 2023 newsletter.

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/powerlines2023](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/powerlines2023)

## 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.

**1280886, 1838451, 1808013, 1403485, 1850639,  
1858427, 1465385, 1838521, 1417443, 1244202**

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE INSTALLING ROOFTOP SOLAR CONTINUED

Do the system performance calculations seem realistic? Does the project timeframe sound reasonable? Negotiate the contract terms to fit your goals and needs.

- 7. Who will maintain the solar panels?** Determining who is responsible for maintaining the solar panels will depend on who owns the system. If you lease the system from a solar installer, it may be their responsibility. Periodically, solar panels need to be cleaned as dirt and debris can impact panel productivity. Also, when a solar panel is covered with snow, it cannot produce electricity. Parts may also need to be replaced, so it's important to know who will take on these responsibilities.
- 8. How will I work with KEC?** Finally, but equally important, you must contact KEC if you decide to install solar panels. Since the system must be connected to the electric grid, you'll need to submit an application, pay a \$250 non-refundable application

fee, provide drawings and technical details of the array, sign an interconnection agreement and have an inspection completed by KEC prior to connection. When you contact us, we can walk you through these steps. At that time, we can also review how KEC billing works once installation is complete, including the required monthly service availability charge and how our kWh credits work for excess energy your system may generate. Visit [www.kec.com/member-owned-generation](http://www.kec.com/member-owned-generation) for a general overview of how you can work with us on connecting your new rooftop solar system.

For many homeowners, solar panels are a great way to help the environment and save on electric bills—but there are many factors to consider before diving in and installing a system. As with any major home project, do plenty of research up front, and contact KEC at 208.765.1200 or [kec@kec.com](mailto:kec@kec.com) if you have questions or decide to move forward with installation.