

POWERLINES

JANUARY 2017 | KEC MEMBER NEWSLETTER



GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE: SOLAR POWER AT KEC

Our industry is changing rapidly. Historically, the grid has been used to transport power produced from large power plants to our homes and businesses. This power is transmitted over long distances and is consumed practically the moment it is produced. Advancements in technology are now making it increasingly feasible for these same homes and businesses to produce some or all of their power locally and to store it for future use. One way this is occurring is through roof-top solar and community-owned solar projects.

Solar is more cost effective in some parts of the country than others. The reason for this is intuitive: solar requires sunlight and the more of it, the better the economics. Another factor is less intuitive. Installing solar involves making an upfront investment in hardware that will produce “free” power over its life. Because of this, its value is dependent on the upfront cost of that hardware and the market cost of power.

While the cost of solar has fallen considerably in the past decade, it is still more expensive than the hydro power produced in the Pacific Northwest. Almost all of the power KEC sells to its members comes from this resource. Hydro power is inexpensive, renewable and carbon free. Even so, there are reasons why some might consider solar power. To explore this, KEC recently conducted a survey of members regarding their interest in solar power. A majority of those who participated expressed an interest in learning more about solar power, using it to help reduce their energy costs, producing power locally and “locking-in” the cost of power at a known cost.

For these reasons, we plan to offer solar power to interested members

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COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE INSTALLS SOLAR PROJECT

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe recently completed the installation of a 14.25 kW solar demonstration project on its Natural Resources Department building in Plummer. The Tribe collaborated with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), the Solar 4R Schools program and Kootenai Electric on the project.

The solar system includes 50 285-watt solar panels with an estimated annual energy production of 15,033 kWh. Energy produced from the solar panels will offset approximately 15% of the building's annual energy use.

“The Tribe pursued this solar project primarily for educational purposes,” said Heather Keen, spokesperson for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. “We're excited the system is installed and that it's up and running and already producing energy.”

The purpose of the Solar 4R Schools program is to teach school children

Story continued on last page.

OPERATION ROUND UP® GRANTS



KEC AND PARTNERS DONATE \$20,000 TO LOCAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE

KEC, its lender CoBank and the Kootenai Electric Trust donated a combined \$20,000 to the Community Action Partnership/Project Share program last month. The funds are available to KEC members who qualify for help paying their electric bills. **Photo above (from left):** Connie McGee, Kootenai Electric Trust Board member; Jen Cox, KEC Member Services Representative; Kim Spencer, Community Action Partnership Community Services Manager; and Lori Dahlke, Community Action Partnership Community Engagement Specialist.

TRUST BOARD OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

Up to ten \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded by the Kootenai Electric Trust to KEC members or their children who are either seniors in high school or currently enrolled in college or an accredited training institution for fall 2017 or spring 2018. Applications are due March 3, 2017 and winners will be selected by members of the Kootenai Electric Trust Board. The Trust Board disburses Operation Round Up® funds contributed by KEC members. Applications are available at www.kec.com, the KEC office or call 208.292.3270. [1248204]

The Kootenai Electric Trust Board granted their fourth quarter disbursement of 2016 Operation Round Up® funds. The Trust Board received 22 grant requests and awarded more than \$22,000 to 12 applicants. The following received funding:

- \$7,500 for KEC's Project Share program to provide energy assistance to members in need.
- \$2,500 to Special Needs Adoption and Permanency Services to help expand their specialized adoption recruitment services.
- \$2,000 to the WITH Foundation for their veteran's program. [1819712]
- \$1,500 to Lakeland School District to purchase a 3-D laser cutter for their gifted and talented program.
- \$1,500 to North Idaho STEM Charter Academy to purchase a 3-D printer and printer materials.
- \$1,500 to the Northwest Sacred Music Chorale for their spring concert in North Idaho.
- \$1,500 to the Post Falls Food Bank for their food bank market program.
- \$1,250 to the Anna Schindler Foundation for meal cards for families fighting childhood cancer.
- \$1,250 to Boy Scout Troop 911 to purchase tents.
- \$1,200 to the Kootenai Health Senior Care program to help participants who are unable to pay.
- \$700 to the Inland Northwest SIDS Foundation to purchase infant sleep sacks for safe sleep education.
- \$250 to Kootenai High School Booster Club for the senior class safe and sober party.

The next grant applications are due January 27, 2017, at the KEC office. Applications are available at the KEC office or on www.kec.com.

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 or contact KEC by phone, letter or email.

ELECTRIC SAFETY & HAZARD REMINDERS



At KEC, we take safety very seriously. Many people are injured each year in electrical accidents and fires—often with fatal results. The vast majority of electrical accidents can be prevented if people understand the dangers and steps they can take to be safe around electricity. Please review these safety reminders:

- Stay away from power lines on the ground. Always assume downed lines are energized even if the lines are sagging or broken. Don't forget to follow the same guidelines with vehicles—never drive over or under downed lines. Please report these emergencies to KEC right away at 1.877.744.1055. [1762221]
- Respect and extend courtesy to KEC crews while

they are working. Please do not approach the work zone. If you need to speak with a crew member, stay safely away and let them approach you when it is safe to do so. Let the crews focus on restoring power safely. Remember, KEC crews are using protective equipment while members of the public are not.

- Treat KEC's work zones similar to other emergency situations. Drive slowly around trucks and employees and please do not stop to talk to them.

Thank you for your understanding and for following these tips. With member support, our crews can continue to work safely to restore your power. [1463734]

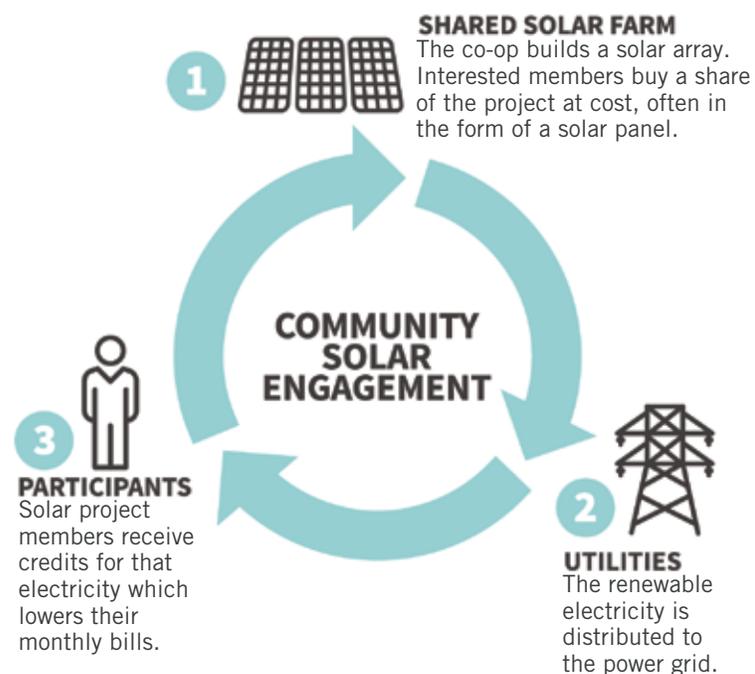
GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

on a voluntary basis and "at-cost." Two options are being developed. The first is a 4-kW roof-top solar kit that will be available for purchase through the Cooperative. The kits are installed, owned and maintained by the member and will be connected behind their meter. The energy produced by these systems will lower the amount of energy purchased from the Cooperative. In the future, we hope to also offer an option for battery storage to those who are interested. A demonstration roof-top solar unit will be installed at the KEC office for members to see and learn more about.

We also plan to offer a community solar project. It would work like this: KEC will build, own and operate a solar array. The solar array will be divided into several shares to be offered to interested members on a subscription basis. Each member who subscribes will pay an upfront cost covering their portion of the array and receive a monthly energy credit on their bill equal to the amount of energy produced by that share. This option might be most attractive to those who do not wish to operate and maintain a solar array on their own property. KEC takes care of installation, maintenance and insurance fees, making it easy for members to participate.

These programs are still in development, so watch for more details in the coming months. We want to be your trusted energy partner and solar power is another way we can serve our members. If you have any questions, please call 208.765.1200.

HOW COMMUNITY SOLAR WORKS



ABOUT THE 2017 KEC ELECTION



The 2017 election is quickly approaching. KEC members will have the option to vote by mail, electronically or in person at the Annual Meeting on May 17, 2017.

Your ballot package will be mailed this spring so you can review candidate and bylaw revision information. Then you decide if you'd like to vote electronically, by mail with the postage-paid return envelope or at the Annual Meeting. The votes will be tabulated at the Annual Meeting by the Credentials and Elections Committee and the results will be announced both there and in our newsletter. [1381993]

The election process is governed by the KEC Bylaws. To receive a copy visit our website at www.kec.com or call 208.765.1200.

COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE SOLAR CONTINUED

about energy, including renewable energy, and tying it to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) principles in school curricula to prepare students for jobs of the future. BEF and the Tribe will provide training for middle school teachers about energy principles and solar and wind power. They also plan to install a kiosk at the Tribal Wellness Center to show how much electricity is generated in real time by the solar panels.

BEF is a non-profit organization working in the areas of energy, carbon and water. Through its award winning Solar 4R Schools program, BEF provides technical, educational and financial assistance to bring turnkey, customized renewable energy education to communities, like the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. NextGen Electric was the installing contractor for the project. The total cost of the project was approximately \$83,000. This includes the solar panels, solar kiosk, teacher training session and teacher kits. BEF contributed a grant of \$65,000, the Tribe provided \$15,000, and KEC provided a \$3,000 grant.

"Working with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe on this solar installation was part of a pilot project at KEC to promote the integration of solar energy in commercial buildings," said Don Crawford, KEC's Energy Services Program Administrator. "Renewable energy and net zero energy buildings are the future and this project is a meaningful step in that direction."

NEWS BRIEFS

ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 Annual Meeting is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, May 17. Look for more details about the meeting in future newsletters. [1816800]

CREDIT & COLLECTION REMINDERS

As a reminder, KEC does not mail any final notice of disconnect for past due accounts. Past due accounts will have the amount reflected on the bill with a notation in the account message block stating the account is past due and subject to service disconnection if not paid by the noted date. We will make payment arrangements with those unable to pay in full; however, the number of times those arrangements can be made is limited and must be made prior to any disconnection. Visit www.kec.com to learn about disconnect and reconnect fees as well as agencies in the community that can help with utility payments. Please contact our office at 208.765.1200 if you encounter problems paying your bill.

WIN A \$50 ENERGY CREDIT

Six KEC account numbers are hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number contact us at 208.765.1200 and receive a \$50 credit on your bill.

KEC BOARD MEETINGS

Members are welcome to attend monthly board meetings. Meeting dates vary each month. Call Constance Felten at 208.292.3211 for details.

KEC is an Equal Opportunity–Affirmative Action Employer