

NWPPA Honors 2021 Annual Award Winners

On September 9, at our 81st Annual Conference in Kennewick, Washington, NWPPA presented the following awards to seven individuals and one member utility within the public power community.

Life Member Awards

Presented to policymakers and managers who are retiring from NWPPA member utilities and have made notable contributions to the Association and public power.

Having joined the Eugene Water & Electric Board in March 1978, **Dick Helgeson** devoted nearly 40 years to the public power industry. During his tenure, he held leadership roles including manager of rates, Water & Steam Division director, and Power Resources Division director. Helgeson retired from EWEB in July 2009, but his contributions didn't end there; he returned to public service in September 2012 as an EWEB commissioner until his retirement in December 2020. During that time, he also served on the NWPPA Board of Trustees.

For over 55 years, **Paul Rogers** proudly defended public power and the rights of the consumer. In 1995, he retired from his position as energy services director of the City of Ellensburg (Wash.), which was the utility he served for 34 years. Then in retirement, he served on the Kittitas PUD Board of Commissioners for nearly 25 years, as well as the NWPPA Board of Trustees. After nearly 60 years of public service, Rogers ended his public power service at the end of 2020.

Following a career spanning 38 years, **Dave Ward** retired from Grays Harbor PUD in Aberdeen, Washington, in the spring of 2021. Ward joined the PUD as general manager in June 2013, and his arrival was a homecoming because he had graduated from Aberdeen's JM Weatherwax High School in 1979. At the PUD, his development of the Core Values Team allowed staff to build the brand by which the utility operates today, one that is rooted in a dedication to working together for the public power mission.

Paul J. Raver Community Service Awards

The award is presented to an electric system or an individual for leadership in enhancing the role of the electric systems in achieving community betterment of an individual city, county, or other local area; a state; or the region as a whole.

Mason PUD 3 in Shelton, Washington, has made great strides to help solve the digital divide in its service territory. The PUD worked with the local schools and community partners to make sure every student in Mason County has a safe place where they can use a free high-speed Wi-Fi hotspot to access classwork, download assignments, and communicate with their teachers.

Dave Schneider was hired at Midstate Electric in 1995 as the accounting supervisor and was named the general manager on April 1, 2013. During his tenure at Midstate, he implemented prepay as a means to alleviate the challenges their members were facing after the 2008 recession. Schneider became a well-known voice for prepay programs, speaking at various regional

meetings and conferences on Midstate's success with prepay. With over 1,500 participants and growing, Midstate has one of the highest per capita uses of prepay in the utility sector.

William "Bill" McCrorie Distinguished Service Awards

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to honor individuals who have served the interest of public power and NWPPA in an outstanding manner.

In 1985, **Casey Hashimoto** began his career at Turlock Irrigation District as an engineering technician and worked his way up the ranks to ultimately become general manager in 2011. Playing a critical role in keeping TID electric rates among one of the lowest in California during his tenure as general manager, Hashimoto worked as a leader in overseeing the improvement of system reliability. In addition to his involvement with NWPPA, he supported the efforts of the California Municipal Utilities Association, the Northwest Power Pool, the Association of California Water Agencies, and the American Public Power Association. After an illustrious 35-year career, he retired at the end of 2019.

From serving as president and CEO of Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, president of the NWPPA Board of Trustees, officer roles on the Alaska Power Association Board of Directors, and Alaska director on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Board, **Meera Kohler** has answered the call to serve and the call to lead time and time again without hesitation during her four decades in public power. She has been appointed to advisory committees by multiple Alaska governors, and is known as a tireless advocate for all Alaskans to have access to safe, reliable, and affordable power.

John M. George Public Service Award

This award recognizes policymaking officers of member systems that have demonstrated remarkable service to public power.

As a former member of the Washington Legislature, former member of the Washington State Senate, former congressman from Washington's 4th District, and former state secretary of transportation, **Sid Morrison** has been serving the interests of public power in Washington for nearly 60 years. In July 2001, Morrison was unanimously appointed to the 11-member Energy Northwest Executive Board by the Energy Northwest Board of Directors. On the executive board, Morrison served as chair from 2006 until his retirement in 2021.

About NWPPA: NWPPA is an international association representing and serving more than 155 customer-owned, locally controlled utilities in the Western U.S. and Canada. The Association also serves over 300 associate members across the U.S. and Canada who are allied with the electric utility industry. For more information, visit www.nwppa.org or follow @NWPPAssoc on our social channels.

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