SITTING DOWN WITH BPA ADMINISTRATOR ELLIOT MAINZER

Four Steps to Successfully Implement Your Strategic Plan

Balancing Customer Service with Changing Regulations

Ravalli Electric Co-op Starts the New Year off Right in New Facility
On the cover: A lot has changed since we last talked with Elliot Mainzer in 2012, including his promotion to BPA administrator in 2014. NWPPA Executive Director Scott Corwin sat down with Mainzer last month to talk about wildfires, transmission issues, and even some jazz.
Where’s the Acorn?

As part of our 80th anniversary celebration, we will be hiding one acorn graphic (like this one 🍃) somewhere in each issue of the 2020 Bulletin. When you find it, please email the correct page and location to brenda@nwppa.org.

At the end of each month, we will randomly select someone with the correct answer to receive a gift card from NWPPA.

Check out our Facebook page and the subsequent magazine issue for where we hide it each month.

ANNUAL NOMINATIONS DUE THIS MONTH

If you have not yet submitted your nominations for the 2020-2021 NWPPA Board of Trustees, 2020 annual awards, and/or 2020 resolutions, you still have a few weeks to do so. As a reminder, here is what the Association needs:

Board seats

Nominations, which are due January 31, are being sought for three open utility seats on the NWPPA Board of Trustees in 2020. One vacant seat is for a representative from Nevada, one is for an undesignated utility seat, and the third will open due to a mid-term retirement, in which case the board will directly appoint an Oregon cooperative manager.

Nominations are also being accepted for one associate member advisor in the consultant category.

If you have any questions, please contact Executive Director Scott Corwin at scottc@nwppa.org.

Awards

Nominations for the Life Awards, Paul J. Raver Community Service Award, John M. George Public Service Award, William “Bill” McGirie Distinguished Service Award, and Homer T. Bone Award are due by January 31.

Visit www.nwppa.org/members/awards-nominations/ for nomination forms for all the above awards.

Resolutions

Submissions for any new draft 2020 resolutions or updates to the existing 2019 resolutions are due January 23. All resolutions can be found online at www.nwppa.org/government-relations/.

If you have questions about any of the above categories, please contact NWPPA at (360) 254-0109 or nwppa@nwppa.org.
WELCOME TO THREE NEW UTILITY MEMBERS

We are excited to start 2020 with three new utility members joining the association: United Electric Cooperative in Heyburn, Idaho; Kitsap County PUD in Poulsbo, Wash.; and Inland Power and Light Company in Spokane, Wash.

United Electric was incorporated on June 27, 1997, as a result of the consolidation of Unity Light & Power in Burley, Idaho, and Rural Electric Company in Rupert, Idaho. United Electric began functional operations as one utility on January 1, 1998. The directors from each cooperative's board were combined to form the new eight-member board. David Phillips currently serves as president of the United Electric Board.

United Electric provides service to both Minidoka and Cassia counties with approximately 582 miles of line and 4,597 customers with a projected growth rate of 1%. Residential usage is 35% of its power sales, general service is 21%, industrial service is 18%, and irrigation is 25%. Annual operating revenue is $18 million and annual KWH sales are 298 million.

Jo Elg manages the United Electric staff of 24 employees. More information can be found at uec.coop.

Kitsap County PUD was formed at the general election of 1940 by a vote of the county’s electorate to explore providing electrical service as a public special purpose District instead of a private company. Though electrical service never came to fruition, in 1959 the District initiated several actions to study regional water resources in Kitsap County. Kitsap PUD began providing utility service as a water system manager in the 1970s through the assumption of several small, privately owned water systems and municipal water districts. During the 1990s, Kitsap PUD conducted an aggressive water-related education program from grade school to adults. In 1995, the District was one of the prime movers in starting a very successful Annual Water Festival for grades 4 through 6. Kitsap PUD also manages a high-speed fiber-optic network for interested residential customers.

Bob Hunter manages the Kitsap PUD staff and Debra Lester currently serves as president of the three-person board of commissioners. More information can be found at www.kpud.org.

Inland Power was organized in 1937, and on April 27, 1938, 160 farms northeast of Spokane were the first Inland members to receive power from the cooperative. By 1965 Inland Power served more than 9,000 members with over 4,000 miles of line. During the 1970s, Inland Power experienced record levels of growth. In 1974, the cooperative had margins of $432,656 and as a result, 1975 was the first year Inland paid capital credits to its members. Today, Inland Power is the largest electric cooperative in Washington and provides electric service to 13 counties in eastern Washington and northern Idaho with approximately 40,000 members.

Chad Jensen manages the 84-person staff and Brian Slaybaugh currently serves as president of the nine-person board of trustees. More information can be found at inlandpower.com.

E&O Booths Still Available

Attention, associate members! We have less than 10 booth spots available for the 2020 E&O Conference & Trade Show, which is now only a few months away. If you would like to buy one of the last remaining 10’ X 10’ exhibit spaces for the 2020 show in Reno, Nev., April 7-9, act fast! We are down to single digits so you should not dilly dally. (All truck spaces have been sold.)

To purchase booth space for this year’s trade show, please contact Taryn Johnson as soon as possible at taryn@nwppa.org or (360) 816-1446. Booths are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.
When asked why Central Service Association and Professional Computer Systems united, the answer is simple:

**We are better together.**

While each of us have products and unique services that the other’s customers could well find helpful, one major trait is dominant: we are relationship people, **committed to exceptional service.**

CSA, a member-owned cooperative, is celebrating 80 years serving the needs of utilities primarily in the Mid-South, while PCS has 40 years of history and clients in 22 states plus Bermuda.

**Together** we are over 175 employees strong!  
**Together** we are over 160 utilities united!  
**Together** we have over 120 years of service to public utilities!  
**Together** we are over 50 products and services designed solely for utilities!

Combining our vision, resources, services and products gives us even more to offer our clients – like the ideal solution you have been seeking but not found yet. We invite you to come see for yourself.
NWPPA NEWS

CERTIFICATE CLASSES REFRESHED FOR 2020

NWPPA's high-quality classes, conferences, and events are well known throughout the region, but did you know that many of these events qualify for credit toward a program certificate?

NWPPA offers eight certificate programs designed to enhance and acknowledge your skills as a professional in the utility industry. Two of these programs are credit-based, three are course-based, and the remaining three partner with other organizations. All eight certificate programs were designed by expert instructors well-versed in the public power industry.

Our certificate programs have existed for many years, but last year we refreshed them with new content and a new format. We also developed the NWPPA Certificate Program Booklet. The booklet includes a tracking tool to easily log your progress as you move through a program. Once you complete a program's requirements, submit the tracking tool to the appropriate training manager. After NWPPA validates your attendance, you will receive a certificate of completion from NWPPA.

As of January 2019, when the program was refreshed, nearly 1,300 people have participated in one or more of the certificate program classes. Are you one of those employees? If you are unsure of your program status, or if you believe you’ve met the criteria for a certificate, please contact us at (360) 254-0109. Our goals are to ensure that employees receive high-quality foundational knowledge in their program area, and that they are recognized in their organization and among their peers for this achievement.

For those thinking about starting a certificate program, the new year is an excellent time. Managers and supervisors can also utilize the certificate program outline to help guide personal development planning for employees. Participation in these programs offers regular networking opportunities to engage with and learn from their counterparts for a richer educational experience.

Detailed information about all of the certificate programs and courses can be found in the Training and Education Catalog at www.nwppa.org/catalog.

We look forward to seeing you in 2020!

Credit-Based Programs
• Accounting and Finance Certificate
• Customer and Energy Service Certificate

Both the Accounting and Finance and the Customer and Energy Service certificate programs can be achieved by completing 60 continuing education hours (CEHs) within four years. Many of these CEHs are self-selected from a menu of course options that meet the goals of the program and allow individual flexibility based on interest and personal development goals. Both programs have two required elements: attendance at the program-specific annual conference, and attendance in a foundational industry course (either Electric Utility System Operations or Electric Utility Business Fundamentals). Knowledge of current topics and industry trends, as well as core understanding of utility business fundamentals, helps create a well-versed employee. For more information about the Accounting and Finance program, contact Jenny Keesey at (360) 816-1458 or jenny@nwppa.org; for more information about the Customer and Energy Service program, contact Taryn Johnson at (360) 816-1446 or taryn@nwppa.org.

Course-Based Programs
• Administrative Professionals Certificate
• Foreman Leadership Certificate
• Leadership Skills Certificate

Course-based programs include the Administrative Professionals, Foreman Leadership, and Leadership Skills certificate programs. Like the credit-based programs, these must also be completed within four years; however, there is defined content for these three. For each of these programs, courses may be taken in any order and are offered multiple times within the four-year period. These programs are geared to support employees to develop and strengthen their skills; to grow; and to further contribute in their organization. For more information about any of the three course-based programs, contact Jenny Keesey at (360) 816-1458 or jenny@nwppa.org.
Partner Programs

- Staking Technician Certification
- Credentialed Cooperative Director
- Board Leadership Certificate

We partner with Hi-Line Engineering to deliver the Staking Technician Certification program to utility staking technicians and engineers. This is a useful program for all skill levels, and courses can be used to train both the novice and refresh the skills of the experienced employee. For more information about this program, contact Dale Mayuiers at (360) 816-1447 or dale@nwppa.org.

We also partner with NRECA to deliver their Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership Certificate programs, which are relevant for cooperative directors, policy makers, and general managers (as well as those at PUDs and other member organizations). We often bring these courses to organizations as an in-house class or as a pre-conference class for an annual, statewide, or regional meetings. For more information about either program, contact Nicole Farabee at (360) 816-1454 or nicolef@nwppa.org.

As of January 2019, when the program was refreshed, nearly 1,300 people have participated in one or more of the certificate program classes. Are you one of those employees?

March 2019 Leadership Skills graduates: (L-R) Brendan Johnson, Columbia REA; Jason Radinovich, Harney Electric Cooperative; Shawntaye Keith, Midstate Electric Cooperative; Jean Hall, Jefferson County PUD; and Brenda Dunn, NWPPA.

January 2019 Foreman Leadership graduates: (L-R) Derek Madsen, Lane Electric; Kelly Butts, Lakeview Light and Power; Bo Lee, Jefferson PUD; and Bruce Damrow, instructor.

November 2016 Staking Technician graduates: (L-R) Matt Pamperin, instructor, Hi-Line; Robert Richmond, Franklin PUD; Amy Sawyer, Pend Oreille PUD; Julie Coppola, City of Ellensburg; and Michael Peña, Richland Energy Services.
Wildfires: What Utilities Need to Know

Engineering & Operations Conference and Trade Show
April 6–9, 2020 – Reno, Nev.

IT Conference
April 21-23, 2020 – Hood River, Ore.

NWPPA Annual Conference & Membership Meeting

Labor & Employee Relations Group Annual Meeting
June 8-10, 2020 – Powell Butte, Ore.

Accounting & Finance Conference

Administrative Professionals Conference
May 6-7, 2020 – Richland, Wash.

Northwest Communications & Energy Innovations Conference (NIC)
September 21-23, 2020 – Bend, Ore.

3 C’s Conference

Women in Public Power
October 2020 – Location TBD
JOIN US FOR OUR 80TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MAY 17-20, 2020 IN KENNEWICK, WASH.

80 YEARS STRONG AND REACHING TOWARD THE FUTURE
If you are either grappling with how to secure your utility from a technology disaster or looking for information on what’s in the technology pipeline (or both!), then you’ll want to join us in Hood River, Ore., April 21-23, for the NWPPA IT Conference: Technology Disaster Preparedness. This year’s conference will feature sessions on vector attacks, cyber mutual assistance, CIRST lessons learned, virtual reality, PCI DDS common challenges, a NERC CIP overview, 5G small cell updates, data center designs, Microsoft updates, and more.

We’re excited to announce that Dave Mitchell will wrap up this year’s conference with his keynote presentation, “The Power of Understanding People.” Mitchell, who is CEO of The Leadership Difference, will deliver a solid understanding of diverse communications through a combination of pertinent human dynamics, laugh-out-loud humor, and attendee interactions. He received the 2013 Meeting Professionals International’s Meeting Madness Best Speaker of the Year award and authored “Live and Learn or Die Stupid.” If his name sounds familiar, he was also the closing keynote speaker for last year’s Accounting and Finance Conference—and received rave reviews!

Come early to beautiful Hood River and attend the pre-conference class, Technology, Leadership, Planning, and Decision Making in a Changing Business Environment*. This session is instructed by Eric Cody, who previously served as vice president of three subsidiaries of the New England Electric System (now known as National Grid USA) for more than a decade of his 40-year utility career. One of his positions there was vice president of IT and one of his roles was managing a staff of more than 200. He now manages his own company, Cody Energy Group, and also teaches for NRECA, including delivering workshops on strategic technology planning at TechAdvantage. We recommend that you invite your manager to attend this thought-provoking class with you.

Stay late and enjoy all that Hood River offers. About 60 minutes from Portland along the scenic Columbia Gorge, Hood River provides panoramic views, hiking trails, mountain bike trails, craft breweries, wineries, farm-to-table bounty, and a historic shopping district. Take a drive along the Fruit Loop or watch kitesurfers glide along the Columbia River in what is known as the windsurfing capital of the world.

Register now for the IT Conference and Cody’s pre-conference class at www.nwppa.org. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Jenny Keesey at jenny@nwppa.org.

*Separate registration required.
A Look Back at Public Power

50 YEARS AGO – 1970
Clallam County PUD Board Commissioner Alvin E. Fletcher was named the 1970 president of the Washington State PUD Association ... The Alaska Power Administration announced that it will receive $1 million from the $4.7 billion public works appropriation signed by President Richard Nixon ... At Grant County PUD, the employees decided to donate the price of Christmas cards to a local children's organization (Wash.) ... The first stage of the 500,000-volt BPA Marion substation line, the first such line in Oregon, was energized ... Seattle City Light completed a $2 million light improvement project aimed at better safety conditions and a decrease in crime (Wash.).

25 YEARS AGO – 1995
An early arrival of snow and cold prompted Chelan County PUD to help hundreds of deer displaced from their normal winter range by the summer forest fires (Wash.) ... Northern Wasco PUD got the final approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to begin construction of the utility's hydro plant at McNary Dam (Ore.) ... Kootenai Electric Cooperative signed a power management agreement with Enova Energy Management, Inc. in order to secure the lowest-possible-cost power and minimize rate increases (Idaho) ... Clark Public Utilities' commissioners took action to reduce its power purchases from the Bonneville Power Administration by nearly 50% (Wash.).

5 YEARS AGO – 2015
The Northern California Power Agency selected Randy S. Howard as its next general manager (Calif.) ... Columbia REA welcomed Brendan Johnson as a data administrator (Wash.) ... The governing boards of Beartooth Electric Cooperative (Mont.) and Lower Valley Energy (Wyo.) signed a three-year contract for LVE to manage Beartooth ... OPALCO's board of directors announced that Island Network will be re-created as a new entity and wholly owned subsidiary of the co-op to provide internet service (Wash.) ... Matanuska Electric Association started the first of 10 engines at the new Eklutna Generation Station (Alaska).
FEBRUARY, MARCH, AND APRIL 2020

Please visit www.nwppa.org to view the full descriptions for these and other events.

ONLINE — ENGINEERING WEBINAR SERIES: UNDERSTANDING WIRE SLAP
Who Should Attend: Engineering personnel and others who would benefit from an understanding of current electric utility engineering principles and practices.
February 4, 2020–Online

STAKING TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION
Who Should Attend: Staking technicians and engineers.
February 10, 2020–Portland, Ore.

STAKING TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: JOINT-USE AND MAKE-READY SURVEYS
Who Should Attend: Staking technicians and engineers.
February 11, 2020–Portland, Ore.

FOREMAN LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM PART 2
Who Should Attend: Foremen and crew leaders.
February 11-13, 2020–Boise, Idaho

LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES: SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND WORK STYLES
Who Should Attend: Supervisors and managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future.

STAKING TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: OVERHEAD/POLE-LINE STRUCTURE DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Who Should Attend: Staking technicians and engineers.
February 12-14, 2020–Portland, Ore.

ONLINE — COMMUNICATION TUNE-UP WEBINAR SERIES: ALL THREE WEBINARS
Who Should Attend: Anyone who wants to increase his or her communication skills to be more effective working with both internal and external customers.
February 18-April 21, 2020–Online

ONLINE — COMMUNICATION TUNE-UP WEBINAR SERIES: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE
February 18, 2020

ONLINE — COMMUNICATION TUNE-UP WEBINAR SERIES: HOW TO HANDLE CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS
March 17, 2020

ONLINE — COMMUNICATION TUNE-UP WEBINAR SERIES: CROSS-GENERATIONAL & CULTURAL COMMUNICATION
April 21, 2020

ONLINE — CFO & SENIOR ACCOUNTANT WEBINAR SERIES: MANAGING THE FINANCES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION
Who Should Attend: CFOs, senior accountants, accounting staff, and finance staff wanting to better understand the cost of service and rate design components.
February 19, 2020–Online

ELECTRIC UTILITY BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS
Who Should Attend: Any new employee (we recommend at least six months at the utility before attending) or any experienced employees who want to expand their understanding of how utility business works.
February 25-26, 2020–Boise, Idaho

UNDERSTANDING THE WORK ORDER SYSTEM
Who Should Attend: Employees involved in any aspect of preparing and/or processing work orders for their electric utility, or employees outside the accounting area who want a better understanding of the work order process.

LABOR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP MEMBER MEETING
Who Should Attend: Members of the NWPPA Labor and Employee Relations Group: general managers, labor relations managers, operations managers, and human resource professionals.
February 27-28, 2020–Tillamook, Ore.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES: CHALLENGING COMMUNICATIONS
Who Should Attend: Supervisors and managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future.
March 3-4, 2020–Anchorage, Alaska

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL SERIES: EXPANDING YOUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE—ALL THREE DAYS
Who Should Attend: Administrative assistants, executive assistants, and employees in administrative or service-oriented roles.
March 4-6, 2020–Anchorage, Alaska

DAY ONE: USING DIPLOMACY, TACT, AND DISCRETION TO BUILD TRUST
March 4, 2020

DAY TWO: GETTING SUPPORT FOR YOUR IDEAS
March 5, 2020

DAY THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SMART GOALS AND SELF-APPRAISALS
March 5, 2020

ONLINE — ENGINEERING WEBINAR SERIES: SEPARABLE CONNECTORS IN UNDERGROUND SYSTEMS
Who Should Attend: Engineering personnel and others who would benefit from an understanding of current electric utility engineering principles and practices.
March 10, 2020–Online

ONBOARDING FOR SUCCESS
Who Should Attend: Managers, supervisors, and human resources personnel.
March 10, 2020–Vancouver, Wash.
LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: EQUIPOTENTIAL GROUNDING
Who Should Attend: Line crew supervisors and managers, crew foremen, linemen, and substation workers.
March 10, 2020—Spokane, Wash.

LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: LINEMAN RIGGING
Who Should Attend: Linemen and line crew foremen.
March 11, 2020—Spokane, Wash.

METERING FOR LINEMEN
Who Should Attend: Journeyman linemen and other electrical workers who want a better understanding of revenue metering and the hazards while working with revenue meters for both single-phase and three-phase meters.
March 12, 2020—Spokane, Wash.

ONLINE — CFO & SENIOR ACCOUNTANT WEBINAR SERIES: WORK PLAN OVERSIGHT
Who Should Attend: CFOs, senior accountants, accounting staff, and finance staff wanting to better understand the cost of service and rate design components.
March 18, 2020—Online

ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS
Who Should Attend: Engineers, line workers, substation workers, apprentices, and support staff that have direct responsibility for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the utility’s distribution system.
Prerequisite: It is highly recommended that students complete Electric Utility System Operations before attending this class. Those who do not must have substantial experience in the basics of electric systems and utility operations.
March 18-19, 2020—Portland, Ore.

EMPLOYER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TEAM PREPARATIONS
Who Should Attend: General managers, operations managers, members of the employer bargaining team, and chief negotiators. We recommend that you send more than one team member to this class.
March 18-19, 2020—Portland, Ore.

UTILITY WAREHOUSING FROM A TO Z
Who Should Attend: Warehouse and materials management professionals.
March 24-26, 2020—Wenatchee, Wash.

FOREMAN LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM PART 2
Who Should Attend: Foremen and crew leaders.
March 24-26, 2020—Shelton, Wash.

ASCEND TO LEADERSHIP: BASECAMP
Who Should Attend: Managers at all levels who wish to enhance their skills, build their toolkit for leadership, and connect with other leaders across the industry. Completion of the Leadership Skills Series or Foreman Leadership Certificate Program is highly recommended, but not required, prior to attending the Ascend to Leadership program.
March 24-26, 2020—Sacramento, Calif.

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE MEETING
Who Should Attend: Utility environmental professionals (new and experienced), government agency staff, vendors, and anyone who is tasked with or interested in environmental issues, regulatory compliance, or mitigation in the environmental arena of electric utilities.
April 6, 2020—Reno, Nev.

ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW
Who Should Attend: Electric utility engineering and operations personnel, as well as those in information technology, safety, purchasing, environmental, accounting, communications, or any area where a more in-depth knowledge of engineering and operations would be beneficial.
April 7-9, 2020—Reno, Nev.

ONLINE — ENGINEERING WEBINAR SERIES: DESIGNING ROADWAY ILLUMINATION
Who Should Attend: Engineering personnel and others who would benefit from an understanding of current electric utility engineering principles and practices.
April 14, 2020—Online

ONLINE — CFO & SENIOR ACCOUNTANT WEBINAR SERIES: IMPORTANT CFO DUTIES
Who Should Attend: CFOs, senior accountants, accounting staff, and finance staff who want to better understand CFO duties.
April 16, 2020—Online

IT CONFERENCE PRE-SESSION CLASS: TECHNOLOGY, LEADERSHIP, PLANNING, AND DECISION MAKING IN A CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
Who Should Attend: IT professionals, senior managers, and anyone involved in the utility’s budgetary and decision-making processes.
April 20, 2020—Hood River, Ore.

ADVANCED PROJECT PLANNING, ORGANIZATION, AND EXECUTION
Who Should Attend: Any utility employee looking for advanced instruction for organizing and/or managing projects.
April 21-22, 2020—Spokane, Wash.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES: HR BASICS & BUILDING A MORE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE
Who Should Attend: Supervisors and managers, and those employees who will be transitioning to a supervisor or manager role in the near future.
April 22-23, 2020—Spokane, Wash.

INFLUENCING OTHERS: HUMAN DYNAMICS WORKSHOP
Who Should Attend: Anyone who engages in frequent human interactions, such as utility and community leaders, customer service representatives, human resources professionals, and field employees.
April 28-29, 2020—Tacoma, Wash.

MANAGING AND LEADING CHANGE
Who Should Attend: Anyone experiencing or anticipating change within his or her utility, especially those driving change, implementing change, and communicating about change with customers and members.
April 28-29, 2020—Tacoma, Wash.

OREGON UTILITIES RECORDS MANAGEMENT GROUP
Who Should Attend: Records managers, records coordinators, administrative assistants, executive assistants, and anyone managing records for their department.
April 30, 2020—Eugene, Ore.
FOUR STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

By Julie Ryan

ollowing approval of the proposed strategic plan, there is an audible sigh of relief in the board room. The months of planning and engagement have resulted in clearly defined strategic priorities, and your leadership group is aligned to deliver on a great set of strategies. Now you can take that vacation you put off and bask in the glow of successfully completing this big initiative. But wait! Now the implementation is in front of you. It does not matter that you have a stellar strategic plan if you don’t deliver on it. Implementation is the next job ahead.

Rest easy, you can still take that vacation. While many companies struggle with strategy implementation, yours will not because you have a plan to avoid the typical pitfalls. A smooth implementation plan notes sequential activities, parallel activities, and outcomes. As work unfolds over the coming months. The implementation plan with different tasks and interdependencies that are updated most carefully mapped out, with more detail and more specific over time. And the first 12 to 24 months of activities will be the most challenging in a traditional, top-down work culture. It will require clear communication about where and how decisions are made in order to push decision-making deeper into the organization.

Your mind now shifts to the board. Their questions throughout the strategic planning process and their interest in the strategic plan’s success foreshadow their likely desire to hear about the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ progress.

4. Reporting

Your mind now shifts to the board. Their questions throughout the strategic planning process and their interest in the strategic plan’s success foreshadow their likely desire to hear about the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’. implementation. You want the reporting package to be a helpful management tool as well as a status report for the board. The objective will be to provide valuable and timely information.

And lastly, you already noted in your work calendar that the strategic plan should be refreshed in the next two to three years. While many of the strategic priorities will continue to be relevant in the future, the strategies may require a different way of working together. For decades, change occurred at a glacial pace inside the utility and work was easily compartmentalized into different areas. But with increasing regulations and swiftly changing technologies, this is less so. For example, your planned future investment in new grid technology could impact field operations, engineering, IT and operational technology, human resources, and more areas. Realize that people may not be used to a rapidly changing environment. Changes to traditional roles or responsibilities can be uncomfortable for some employees, so acknowledge that change management may be needed to help employees acclimate to changes inside the utility.

Looking holistically at what needs to be completed, you realize that limiting decision-making to the executive level will stymie efforts to implement the strategies. Decisions must be pushed further down into the organization, delegating to those with the necessary technical skills and experience. Yet this can be challenging in a traditional, top-down work culture. It will require clear communication about where and how decisions are made in order to push decision-making deeper into the organization.

Some organizations fail to consider alternative scenarios, which can expose them when reality is different from the assumptions. When utilities slip into defensive or reactive mode, that can trigger an over-response where the strategy is left by the side of the road. Your mind now shifts to the board. Their questions throughout the strategic planning process and their interest in the strategic plan’s success foreshadow their likely desire to hear about the strategies’ progress. Targets must be calibrated appropriately to be consistent with the success measures in the strategic plan and to create the right outcomes. The board reporting package will need to be restructured to provide updates on the strategies’ implementation. You want the reporting package to be a helpful management tool as well as a status report for the board. The objective will be to provide valuable and timely information.

And lastly, you already noted in your work calendar that the strategic plan should be refreshed in the next two to three years. While many of the strategic priorities will continue to be relevant in the future, the strategies will evolve based upon what gets executed in the next few years and what changes in the industry.

Julie Ryan is the managing partner at Aether Advisors LLC, advising clients on strategy and risk management. She can be contacted at jryan@aetheradvisors.com.
Introducing the 2 Newest Product Lines from Golight Inc. the Stryker ST and the Golight GT Series. Same great functions but added features such as our Multi Light Wireless Remote Control, Home Command Button, Increased Candela, and Higher IP Ratings. See our full product line at www.golight.com.
Ravalli Electric Co-op employees and directors received the gift of a new co-op facility this year and celebrated this momentous occasion with a holiday grand opening on December 19, 2019. More than 600 people—and even Santa Claus—attended the event at the co-op’s new location in Victor, Mont.

“It was an overall great event,” said REC General Manager Mark Grotbo. “We had a lot of interest in the building as we were constructing it, so letting the public come and walk through and see what we had done really helped them see our vision.”

Nestled in the beautiful Bitterroot Valley of Western Montana, Ravalli Electric Co-op had been serving members for over 70 years at their old location in Corvallis. The co-op currently services 11,201 meters and 1,265 miles of line. The co-op has tracked continuous growth of its system as more and more people move to the land of coveted fly fishing, huckleberry-covered mountains, and star-filled skies of the well-known Big Sky Country.

An idea is born

During a strategic planning session in 2016, the Ravalli Electric Board of Directors decided the need for a new facility had finally become a reality with the trending growth. The old co-op had simply run out of space for its equipment and staff; something had to be done. After months of evaluation, it was deemed the current location was not suitable for expansion and the co-op would need to relocate to a new home.

REC surveyed several properties available in the Bitterroot Valley before purchasing a 52-acre parcel in the heart of its service territory. The project was planned on just 15 of those acres, leaving a lot of options for the remaining property including room for expansion, business opportunities, and future growth. The new location also provides better access to both ends of the valley and REC’s service territory.

A building committee made up of Grotbo, REC Project Manager Bob Lee, and two directors from the board immediately began to research and plan for the new co-op facility. This included a trip to St. Louis to see several other newly built co-op facilities.

“Our plan was to visit other co-op facilities and take note of what they had done to help guide us in our planning,” said Grotbo. “We really wanted to have a good sense of what we would and wouldn’t need, look at what types of energy efficiency options co-ops were utilizing, and find out what makes a good headquarters to be able to adequately serve our membership and also keep our employees happy.”

Moving from Corvallis to Victor

After a year of research and planning, construction of the facility began in June 2018. On November 19, 2019, the entire REC staff moved from the old facility to the new one 15 miles down the road.

“We moved 43 semi-loads of materials and goods,” said Grotbo. “We were open for business at our old location on Tuesday, and open at our new location on Wednesday. It was a total team effort and I am very proud of our staff for making it happen.”
The new building consists of a 20,000-square-foot office space and a 30,000-square-foot warehouse space, which replaces the co-op’s two former separate buildings. The building will help improve efficiencies; improve workflow for inside and outside functions; combine workforces; and provide enough room to accommodate all 33 REC employees as they merge into one location.

**Energy efficiency highlights**

Although the new facility is not LEED-certified, REC directors and staff used energy efficient options whenever possible. High-rated insulation was used in the office and warehouse areas. High-efficiency HVAC systems, including LG ductless heat pumps, were installed throughout the building with energy recovery on all systems.

The office building is two stories tall and the second story is all windows to allow optimal natural light throughout the building. The LED lighting system inside and outside the facility is also light intelligent and motion-controlled for energy savings.

“I really wanted every office to have a window for natural light,” said Grotbo. “Not only for energy efficiency measures, but for our employees to have a view of the beautiful outdoors which is now one of the top-ranked attributes employees want to have for a comfortable and enjoyable workplace.”

The warehouse, which is triple the size of the old warehouse, has 10 drive-through bays for utility vehicles. REC line crews can now comfortably fit their entire fleet system indoors for protection. With a larger warehouse and fleet storage area, line crews and service fleet will be able to better respond to outages as well as regular maintenance work. The vehicle bay is also equipped with a radiant floor heat system, ensuring the trucks can be warm and ready to go at all times of the year, especially during Montana’s frigid winter months.

A solar panel breezeway lines the front entrance to the uniquely designed building. It not only generates power but also keeps snow off the walkway for members coming into the office.

The new facility was built with a plan for expansion for the future in mind. Each functional area has a plan of where and how to expand in the future, if necessary, as the Bitterroot Valley continues to grow.

“While we don’t plan on having to do anything to the new headquarters for at least 15-20 years, we are fully prepared and have plans in place already to add on to the building if needed,” Grotbo said.

**Moving onward and upward**

Although closing the old office was bittersweet for some REC employees who have been with the co-op for almost 30 years, they look forward to being able to provide better service to the REC membership from the new and improved location for many years to come.

“It has been an exciting journey watching this project progress from an idea to reality,” said Grotbo. “This building is a commitment to our members and the community and was built to serve many generations of co-op members.”

Melissa Greenwood is the manager of communications at Ravalli Electric Cooperative, which is now located in Victor, Mont. She can be contacted at (406) 961-3001 or mgreenwood@ravallielectric.com.
It’s a well-known fact: People don’t like change. So when change is needed, what’s the best way to communicate it to your change-resistant customers? Emerald PUD faced this challenge as 2019 came to a close.

The change to be announced was about the way credit card payments would be handled beginning in January 2020. In an ongoing effort to be compliant to the highest of card-processing standards and to best protect customers’ personal information, Emerald’s customer service team was preparing to discontinue the manual entry of customer credit card numbers on payments made by phone. The decision was made to begin transferring customers to the automated Pay-by-Phone system if they wish to make a payment using a credit card, ensuring the most secure payment method for the customer. It was the right decision for the utility and its customers, but the customer service team expected the news would be upsetting to some.

The challenge in communicating the upcoming change was based on the affected customers. Most were longtime customers—many of them elderly—who were known to be opposed to using any electronic means to make a payment. They were part of a large pool of technology-shy customers throughout Emerald’s rural district who prefer to make their monthly payments using more traditional methods such as mailing a check or calling in their card number to a trusted customer service representative. After reviewing the number of payments made over the phone with a representative in the past six months, it was determined that more than 500 customers consistently made their payments this way. These customers would need to be delicately informed that the familiar, comfortable payment process they were accustomed to would soon come to an end, and future credit card payments would need to be made through an automated phone system.
According to Customer Service Supervisor Kelli Strange, there are several reasons these customers choose to make credit card payments by phone with an agent. “Some of the most common reasons we hear are that customers are intimidated by computers and automated phone systems or by the idea of having to keep track of a password or PIN,” said Strange. “And for some, I think they genuinely look forward to the human interaction of talking with a friendly representative each month.”

Before customers were notified of the change, the customer service team sat down to discuss how it could best be communicated. They outlined three goals they hoped to achieve:

1. Reiterate that the Pay-by-Phone system is secure.
2. Reassure customers that the customer service team will continue to be available to help with any questions or concerns.
3. Communicate that the driving factor behind the change was to best serve our customers and protect their information; avoid any language that would wrongly suggest regulation compliance was the catalyst for the change.

With these goals in mind, the CSRs began talking to customers about the upcoming shift to Pay-by-Phone while Emerald’s communications department crafted the first written communication: a postcard to customers who had paid this way within the past six months. The postcard allowed only limited space for text so it was kept brief and focused on four key pieces of information: what was changing and why, along with assurance that their credit card information had always been safeguarded appropriately and that the CSRs would continue to be supportive and easy to reach. This messaging was also featured in several issues of the utility’s PowerLines newsletter.

In addition to customer communications, the department further encourages customer interaction by inviting them to call or visit for any kind of account support. They have also made an iPad available at the front desk to coach customers through some of the “intimidating” tasks. Those who are wary of paying online or nervous about setting up an account on SmartHub, Emerald’s account management system, are invited to the office to have a CSR assist them through making a payment or setting up an account using the iPad. This offer has received a great response.

Through late December, most of the change-resistant customers had responded well to the news, yet many had continued to call in and speak to a representative to make their payments. The real test will come at the start of January when they can no longer pay with a CSR using a credit card.

At that time, focus will shift to a different well-known fact: The only constant in life is change.

Kristine Lindemulder is the communications coordinator at Emerald PUD in Eugene, Ore. She can be contacted at (541) 744-7410 or kristine@epud.org.
Greening a Fleet
Clark Public Utilities Proves Sustainable Vehicle Technology Is a Worthy Investment
By Dameon Pesanti

Washington’s political leaders have worked for more than a decade to put the state at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

Some organizations with large fleets may see the increased regulations as a burden. For Clark Public Utilities they’ve only served to reinforce its belief that it’s been on the right path all along.

Since 2006, the utility has leaned into building a more sustainable and environmentally friendly fleet, one that far exceeds any standards set by federal, state, or local regulators.

As a result, the utility’s fleet has stayed well ahead of emissions-targeted mandates and achieved its goal of reducing expenses, increasing reliability, and keeping customers satisfied.

“As regulations become more stringent, our sustainability practices have become more worthwhile,” said Clark Public Utilities Fleet Services Manager Paul Chamberlain. “Whenever a new threshold comes into effect we don’t have to scramble to meet it—we’re already there.”

For Chamberlain, the term sustainability goes beyond the environmentalism trappings it’s commonly associated with. It means maximizing equipment efficiency and usable life; minimizing maintenance and downtime; and reducing waste whenever possible in the fleet of 265 units.

“A lot of organizations balk at ‘greening’ the fleet because it’s often more expensive upfront,” Chamberlain said. “But we think of it as a cost-effective investment that supports efficiency and meets state sustainability goals.”

Sustainable fleet practices have reduced overall fuel consumption by nearly 35,000 gallons a year; significantly lowered maintenance expenses and downtime; and decreased emissions by nearly 20%. But perhaps most importantly, they’ve helped boost overall customer satisfaction in the utility’s politically bifurcated service area.

Environmentally minded customers appreciate the commitment to reducing emissions; the growing number of electric and hybrid vehicles; and the utility’s pledge to use and seek out less polluting fuels. Fiscally conservative customers are satisfied in knowing we’re reducing waste and expenses; using equipment longer; and making purchases only when necessary.

The first step to being more sustainable is right-sizing the fleet. Although the number of employees has grown over the last decade, the number of vehicles in the fleet has stayed about the same. Rather than growing the fleet, the utility emphasizes shared vehicles, motor pools, and purchasing vehicles that carry more people.

Whenever a new vehicle is purchased it’s evaluated for what products can be added to improve efficiency without impeding performance or interrupting employee workflow and work practices.

The most efficient upgrades on heavy- and light-duty trucks has been idle management and auxiliary heaters. The $6,500 systems paid for themselves in less than two and a half years thanks...
to reduced fuel consumption and maintenance and repair costs.

The idle management system automatically shuts down the engine when the vehicle is at rest, while still allowing all electronics, including the heater, to operate without interruption. The engine restarts when work practices dictate or the battery needs to be recharged.

An hour of idle time in a diesel truck burns more than a gallon of fuel, equals about 35 miles of engine wear, and can reduce vehicle life by 4 to 5 years. Also, modern diesel engine emission systems require high temperatures to operate properly, but idling engines run too cool to thoroughly combust fuel.

Before incorporating the technology, utility vehicles spent half to nearly three-quarters of their time idling. Utility maintenance crews spent an inordinate amount of time maintaining emissions-related systems that would prematurely fail and crews were occasionally forced to bounce from one truck to the next. Trucks were also frequently replaced prematurely due to high maintenance costs and reduced reliability.

Incorporating idle management in 2014 broke the cycle. Now, when engines run they’re at work and at appropriate temperatures. When the truck is at rest, the engine is off but crews still have the resources they need to get their jobs done.

Starting in 2016, the utility switched to renewable diesel, which also furthered the improvements. Not to be confused with biodiesel, renewable diesel is made from agricultural waste. It’s chemically identical to petroleum diesel, but combests more completely and cleanly because it has as a higher cetane number, less carbon, and contains up to 85% less sulfur than ultra-low sulfur diesel.

Together they’ve added between 25,000 and 50,000 miles of life to every diesel vehicle, reduced fleet fuel consumption, and dramatically slashed fleet emissions; however, the greatest savings comes from reduced maintenance costs and less vehicle downtime. Now trucks spend more time in the field serving customers and less time in the shop. This helps crews stay on task instead of wasting time with roadside breakdowns or transferring equipment between vehicles.

Clark’s transition to all-electric or hybrid vehicles started in 2011 with Toyota Priuses and Nissan Leafs—light-duty motor pool vehicles used around the community and between the utility’s two locations. After technology proved itself, the utility went a step further with the introduction of fuel-saving hybrid SUVs in the meter reading fleet, and further still with the purchase of emissions-free electric forklifts for the warehouse.

In 2018, the utility purchased two plug-in hybrid sedans and three plug-in hybrid Ford F-150s with a fourth going into service soon. The four-door, four-wheel-drive crew trucks can go anywhere they need while consuming about 30% less fuel. The aftermarket hybrid truck kit costs about $24,000 per vehicle, but it is expected to pay for itself through fuel-savings, reduced maintenance expenses, and extended vehicle life.

In many cases, the utility had to be willing to be an early adopter because many technologies were new to the market and had to be configured to meet its work practices. Fleet would like to add hybrid medium-duty and first responder trucks, but the available technology is not yet cost-effective.

The utility’s venture into sustainability began in 2006 when it researched and tested self-contained auxiliary motors called “pony motors.” On paper, they reduced idling and fuel consumption on large aerial trucks and eliminated the need for gasoline generators with diesel trucks. However, the motors took up valuable truck space, didn’t produce any maintenance or fuel savings, and produced emissions disproportionately. Management soon realized it made more sense to install power inverters with auxiliary batteries.

The second attempt was in 2009 with a grant for idle mitigation. The fleet tested a cold-climate start/stop system in the trucks. However, that quickly failed because the system couldn’t meet the utility’s work practices.

Today, the results speak for themselves but getting there required plenty of research, trial, and error by every member of the fleet team.

Linemen don’t like when you muddle with their equipment, but crews had to be patient and willing to be part of the experiments. Managers had to be open to their feedback and willing to let go of ideas that didn’t work. Crucially, the utility’s senior management had to have patience and faith that the trials and investments would pay off.

“The journey to a sustainable fleet wasn’t an easy one and we learned that change is difficult,” Chamberlain said. “But across the utility our employees are focused on lowering costs and increasing reliability. Soon everyone understood that we could achieve those goals…by building a fleet that both reduces emissions and our dependency on fossil fuels.”

Dameon Pesanti is a media specialist at Clark Public Utilities in Vancouver, Wash. He can be contacted at either (360) 992-3449 or dpesanti@clarkpud.com.
Wheatland’s Finnerty Inducted into Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame

In 2019, the same year he celebrated his 80th birthday, Jack Finnerty was inducted into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame, an institution with a chief goal “to preserve, promote, perpetuate, publish, and document Wyoming’s rich working cowboy and ranching history through researching, profiling, and honoring individuals who broke the first trails and introduced that culture to this state.”

Finnerty has served on the Wheatland REA (Wyo.) Board since 1979, and the Tri-State Board since 1988, the longest serving Tri-State director. In these roles, his focus has always been serving the members, the end-use consumers who count on electricity to be reliable and affordable. He approaches every decision with their needs in mind.

As his fellow Wheatland director Bob Brockman said, “Jack always displays his love and passion for the members of our cooperative, his fellow board members, the employees of our co-op, and the principles of the cooperatives. His wisdom and guidance is cherished by all those he serves with.”

Klickitat’s Net Metering Fee on Hold

After careful consideration, the Klickitat PUD (Goldendale, Wash.) Board of Commissioners has chosen to realign the KPUD net metering policy with the intent of state public policy and suspend implementation of an infrastructure fee. This means that Klickitat PUD will no longer collect infrastructure costs for net metered customers until the legislatively set cap of 4% or the year 2029 is reached. This change will require a public hearing process as it affects an approved electric rate. The public hearing process will determine several outstanding details and Klickitat PUD’s future path. Public hearings will be scheduled this year.

The board has been discussing key issues in-depth and re-evaluating the net metering policy for several months. The discussions have encompassed two distinct definitions of public policy: local public policy, which is defined and administered by the KPUD Board; and state public policy, which is defined and administered by the legislature.

During this process, KPUD has been re-evaluating the net metering infrastructure fee and how it aligns with the broader intent of the net metering policy passed in Olympia. In addition, the KPUD Board has been looking at the full benefit of the net metering program and the impact on efforts in Olympia.

OPALCO, Fall River Send Out Capital Credit Checks

In December, capital credit checks were sent out to OPALCO (Eastsound, Wash.) members who were active in 1994, plus some from 1995. The capital credit distribution total is about $1.3M, which includes the remainder of 1994 and a portion of 1995. In 2018, OPALCO started utilizing a smoothing methodology to ensure general retirements are as even as possible and to plan for bigger margins that occurred in the past 20 years. The check amounts range from $5 to thousands (for big energy users like grocery stores); most checks are $50–$250.

Fall River Electric Cooperative (Ashton, Idaho) mailed checks to nearly 6,500 of its owner-members totaling $1,013,000 under its patronage capital program.

“Cash-back payments made to our customers are a unique and tremendous benefit to being a member of our cooperative. It is made possible with the approval of our elected board of directors,” said Fall River Electric CEO/General Manager Bryan Case. “They analyze the financial health of our cooperative and only pay out patronage capital when it is in the best interest of our entire membership.”

Kerth Chosen as SMUD Board President

The SMUD (Sacramento, Calif.) Board of Directors elected Rob Kerth as president of the board. His term as president will run from January through December 2020. He previously served as board president in 2015. Kerth has been serving his second term on the SMUD Board of Directors since 2014; he was previously elected to the SMUD Board in November 2008 and served a four-year term. He represents Ward 5 which includes midtown, downtown, North Sacramento, Natomas, Rio Linda, and Elverta.

Kerth is a third-generation Sacramentan and former two-term city councilman who got his start in public service as a neighborhood activist for the historic Woodlake district of North Sacramento. While on the Sacramento City Council, he was recognized as a major force for revitalization efforts not only in his district but also in other long-established neighborhoods.

During his time with the city of Sacramento, Kerth also specialized in regional problem-solving. His assignments included the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento Regional Transit District, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency. Kerth developed notable expertise on infrastructure issues throughout the six-county Sacramento region.
Grant PUD Participates in Holiday Parade

On December 14, Grant PUD trucks rolled in the Miracle on Main Street parade in its home community of Ephrata, Wash. Grant PUD makes an annual appearance in this parade, which caps a day of fun that includes Santa’s arrival, storytelling at the local library, a Jingle Bell Fun Run, and a food drive for the local food bank. Volunteers walk alongside the trucks, handing out candy to the crowd.

Jefferson PUD Breaks Ground on Expansion

On November 25, after years of discussion and planning, Jefferson County PUD broke ground on the expansion and remodel of its 310 4 Corners Rd. Operations Facility in Port Townsend, Wash. Commissioners Jeff Randall, Ken Collins, and Dan Toepper joined General Manager Kevin Streett in a ceremonial dig and dirt toss. Hoch Construction of Port Angeles is leading the project, which is expected to continue through most of 2020.

Since entering the electrical business, PUD employees and operations have been spread across multiple locations around the county. The goal of the $4.25 million project is to bring all employees and all PUD board meetings onto one modern campus. The existing 1970s era operations center has been closed since October and will be gutted and remodeled for employee office space. A 4,500-square-foot addition will house public meeting space and a new improved customer service center as well as additional office space.

Streett expects the upgraded facility to reopen in late 2020 or early 2021. He noted that funding for the project comes from cash reserves, and that the PUD is not borrowing or raising rates to pay for the expansion and upgrade.

SnoPUD to Keep Rates Steady in 2020

The Snohomish County PUD (Everett, Wash.) Board of Commissioners approved the 2020 budget for the electric system on December 17, including staff’s recommendation to forego a rate increase in the next year. It’s the third year in a row the PUD has avoided raising electric rates.

“Bringing affordable power to our ratepayers is one of our key pillars at the PUD and I’m proud to say we are able to keep rates steady in 2020,” said PUD GM/CEO John Haarlow. “PUD employees continue to work hard to keep costs down and maximize efficiency.”

Commissioners also approved the budget for the PUD’s water and generation systems.

The PUD’s residential electric rate remains 10.4 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), keeping it competitive with other Northwest electric utility rates and below the national average of 12.95 cents/kWh.

The 2020 budget includes a $650 million operating budget for the PUD’s electric system, down from last year’s $665 million operating budget. Most of the decrease is due to lower BPA costs and a substantial reduction in debt service payments related to the Jackson Hydroelectric Plant.

Central Lincoln Announces Shift in Directors

Last year, Central Lincoln PUD (Newport, Ore.) named Tyrell “Ty” Hillebrand, P.E. to be its director of Engineering and Operations and promoted Finance and Resource Supervisor Brandon Hignite to director of shared services, which now oversees the Accounting, Information Technology, Procurement, and Power Resources groups.

Hillebrand has served Central Lincoln in a variety of capacities in his nearly five years at the utility, most recently as director of shared services, supervising the Purchasing, Accounting, Information Technology, and Information Services departments. Hillebrand grew up in Central Lincoln’s service territory, and earned his Professional Engineering license while at the Washington Department of Transportation, where he received multiple promotions before coming to work at Central Lincoln.

Hignite received his bachelor’s degree in political science from Southern Utah University, and minored in computer science for his “fun” classes while in college. He served the Bonneville Power Administration as a law clerk while he was earning his J.D. from the Lewis and Clark Law School, graduating in May 2009. Many of Hignite’s assignments while at BPA included procurement law. He has been with Central Lincoln for nine years and is a graduate of Western Energy Institute’s Business Acumen for Emerging Leaders program.
Dennis Munden Named Ag Advisor of the Year

Columbia REA (Walla Walla, Wash.) Board Director Dennis Munden has been named Agriculture Advisor of the Year by the Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame.

The Agriculture Advisor Award is given to an individual who has had a significant impact in ag-advancement and educational programs and similar organizations influencing the industry through leadership, guidance, and community involvement.

Munden is retired as an agriculture education teacher at many local schools, including Kamiakin, Columbia, Pasco, Warden, and Riverview High Schools. He has been recognized as the WA Association of Agriculture Educators Teacher of the Year in 1994 and 1997; National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association State Winner for Ideas Unlimited and Outstanding Agriculture Program; Crystal Apple Award Winner; and winner of numerous other recognitions for his commitment and effort in agriculture education.

He has been a Columbia REA Board member since 2004, and has held all three officer positions—secretary/treasurer, vice president, and president—during his tenure.

Munden and three others will be honored at the 2020 Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame Installation Gala at the Pasco Red Lion on January 16, 2020, presented by the Pasco Chamber of Commerce and the Port of Pasco.

Scheller, Hicks Honored by Douglas PUD

Douglas County PUD Commissioners Ronald E Skagen, Molly Simpson, and Aaron J. Viebrock awarded service awards to two long-term employees during the November 25 commission meeting held at the District’s Wells Hydroelectric Project in Washington.

The commissioners awarded Utilityman II Julie Scheller with her 20-year service award and Operations Supervisor—Wells Project Brian Hicks with his 30-year service award.

Both thanked the commission and Hicks said, “It’s been wonderful working here. I’m blessed more than I deserve.”

Railbelt Utilities Sign Groundbreaking Agreement

After years of effort, all six Railbelt utilities have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to move forward with an organization to work more closely together to manage Alaska’s largest interconnected grid.

The Railbelt Reliability Council is the organization that will define and enforce electric reliability standards; coordinate joint planning through an integrated resource planning process; and ensure consistent interconnection protocols for utilities, independent power producers, and others who would like to use the grid. The RRC will also study if there are more effective ways for the Railbelt electric system to reduce fuel costs for ratepayers.

The recently signed MOU lays out a basic structure for the RRC and indicates steps to form an Implementation Committee responsible for developing the foundational documents and setting up the organization.

The signatory utilities include Anchorage Municipal Light and Power and Chugach Electric Association serving the Anchorage area; Golden Valley Electric Association in Fairbanks serving the Interior; Homer Electric Association serving the majority of the Kenai Peninsula; Matanuska Electric Association serving the Mat-Su Valley and Eagle River; and Seward Electric, a municipally owned utility serving the Seward area.
Grays’ Financial Outlook Raised to Stable

Back-to-back years of strong performances, a dedication to stabilizing finances, and the expectation of continuing improvement have led Fitch Ratings to raise the Grays Harbor PUD’s (Aberdeen, Wash.) financial outlook from “negative” to “stable” and award the utility with an “A” credit rating.

“This is the result of a team effort to develop and then successfully execute a financial plan,” said PUD Board President Russ Skolrood. “This goes to prove that hard work and planning can make a real difference. I am very proud of the PUD staff and their work that brought us to this point.”

In compiling their report, Fitch Ratings examined the PUD’s financial history over the last decade and outlook for the next four years; their ability to respond and adjust to changing power markets; and their financial liquidity, including stability in financial reserves.

The Fitch Ratings report credits an improved financial performance in 2017 and 2018, driven by favorable conditions resulting in higher operating income and the utility’s effort to rebuild cash reserves. Perhaps most importantly, the report states Fitch’s expectation that the financial profile will remain supportive of the rating through 2022, when “improvement is expected due to a decline in operating costs from the termination of an expensive power purchase contract.”

Mason 1 Launches Second Solar Project

In response to customer interest, Mason County PUD No. 1 (Potlatch, Wash.) is rolling out a second community solar project. Community Solar II will be approximately 55 kilowatts in size and sited atop the PUD’s new vehicle storage warehouse that is starting construction this winter and scheduled to be completed in April. PUD 1 electric customers have the option to purchase up to 100 units of the project at $100 per unit, until all 965 units are subscribed. The PUD also received a generous $50,000 grant from Bonneville Environmental Foundation, along with BEF’s free project management services. The grant funds purchased 500 additional units that are set aside for qualifying low-income electric customers.

“Bonneville Environmental Foundation has been a critical partner for both of our community solar projects. They’ve guided us through every step from siting the arrays, to scoping the projects and reviewing bids,” said Kristin Masteller, PUD 1’s general manager. “Now they’ve assisted us even further with this grant which allows us to open the project to customers who likely wouldn’t be able to participate otherwise. These customers will receive a new type of energy assistance that we haven’t been able to provide before. This low-income program we’ve developed with BEF is really creative and we’re excited to roll it out in 2020.”

Chelan PUD’s Bolz, Mitchell Honored by Peers

Chelan PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.) Commissioner Dennis Bolz received the Washington PUD Association’s highest honor last month for his commitment to public power and its customer-owners. The Lifetime Achievement Award from WPUDA came at the group’s annual meeting in Vancouver, Wash., on December 5.

Bolz, a longtime educator, was instrumental in building the association’s training and education programs. He served as an executive officer of the PUD association for four years. He was elected association secretary in 2013, continued to serve as vice president (2014), president (2015), and past president (2016).

In Chelan County, he represents at-large District B. Bolz was elected to his first four-year term in November 2006 and took office in January 2007. He was re-elected in November 2018 to a fourth four-year term running through 2022. Bolz was a longtime educator and former school superintendent before being elected to the Chelan PUD Board.

Josh Mitchell, the PUD’s residential energy adviser, was also recently honored. He received the Leadership in Energy Efficiency Award for Collaboration from the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance.

Mitchell helps customers save energy in their homes and apartments. He troubleshoots problems, develops rebate programs to make energy-efficiency improvements affordable, and helps set PUD conservation goals. His willingness to work with customers and with colleagues from around the Northwest earned him honors for promoting energy efficiency in consumer products.

Dan Peterson Receives Lifetime Award

Former Pend Oreille PUD Commissioner Dan Peterson also received Washington PUD Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes the commitment of an individual to the philosophy and purpose of public power and water and to WPUDA.

Peterson served in leadership positions at WPUDA, including as an officer and as president of the association. He also served as chairman of the association’s Legislative and Government Affairs Committees for 10 years. Peterson, who has been active in his community and in the utility industry, shows exceptional commitment and dedication to public service.
OMICRON Announces New StationScout Functions

StationScout offers a unique combination of simulation and testing functions to simplify automation, control, and process control communication testing in substation automation systems. The new commissioning functions for StationScout improve testing efficiency in the substation network, resulting in additional time savings.

One significant benefit in this respect is the ability to define test cases in advance. Each individual test step or even entire test sequences can be repeated at any time or easily duplicated for other IEDs, allowing factory acceptance tests, site acceptance tests, or routine tests to be conducted more efficiently. The results can be exported in a standardized format for documentation purposes at the click of a button (in Word or Excel).

In addition to the clear visualization of the entire substation network in StationScout, test engineers are now also able to select individual signals and group them together in a defined watchlist, to specifically monitor these signals or adapt their simulation values.

OMICRON is an international company providing innovative testing and diagnostic solutions for electrical power supply systems. For more information, visit www.omicronenergy.com.

Union Robotics Unveils Industrial Dielectric UAV

Union Robotics, an Oregon-based robotics company, unveiled the Meadowhawk DE, an industrial unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) made from ASTM F711-rated dielectric material designed to fly safely around high-voltage assets. The Meadowhawk DE is specifically engineered for electric utilities.

The Meadowhawk DE Inspection Package is designed to be a turnkey solution for inspecting electric utility assets. Designed and manufactured in the U.S.A., the Meadowhawk features include single- and dual-operator flight modes; on-site operations training; and US-based customer service and warranty. The Meadowhawk Inspection Package includes a 20MP/4k camera; however, it can be equipped with a variety of sensor options and a cargo release hook.

Union Robotics treats its customers like family because drone safety is not only about being compliant in an ever-changing landscape, but also to ensure no more lives are lost to what should be fully preventable accidents. For more information or to place an order, visit www.union-robotics.com.

QNAP® Copper Naphthenate Hopes to Succeed Pentachlorophenol

Utility companies nationwide are being alerted to an eventual interruption in pentachlorophenol supply after Cabot Microelectronics’ announcement that KMG-Bermuth will not be building a new pentachlorophenol plant upon closure of their plant in Mexico at the end of 2021.

Nisus Corporation, a global manufacturer of sustainable wood preservatives, manufactures QNAP copper naphthenate, which is positioned to fill the void and provide additional benefits, including a superior environmental profile and longer service life for poles.

QNAP copper naphthenate is not a persistent organic pollutant and contains no dioxins. QNAP is an 8% copper-oil-borne preservative solution that is manufactured according to AWPA Standards. It is also an EPA-registered general use preservative.

Nisus Corporation is the leading manufacturer of sustainable wood preservatives and sustainable pest control products to the railroad, utility, and lumber industries. If you would like more information, please contact Linde Millsat (800) 264-0870 or lindem@nisuscorp.com.

Pioneer Names 2019 Comms Team of the Year

Congratulations to Raft River Rural Electric Cooperative Communications Manager Mandi Hitt and Receptionist Trudy Tracy for being named the 2019 Pioneer Utility Resources Communications Team of the Year.

For the first time in 25 years, the honor of Communicator of the Year is being awarded to a duo for their exceptional teamwork and outstanding approach to Ruralite magazine.

In selecting Hitt and Tracy for the award, Ruralite editors cited professionalism, dedication to keeping their community informed, and effective use of magazine pages.

“They do a great job using all communication methods at their disposal,” said Ruralite Assistant Editor Brandon Pomrenke, who coordinates production of the magazine for Raft River Rural Electric Cooperative. “Always quick to offer story recommendations and edits, they promptly address local concerns and ensure their members are kept up to date.”

Pioneer Utility Resources is a communications co-op delivering innovative solutions to publicly owned utilities since 1954. Visit www.pioneerutilityresources.com for more information.
NWRP Responds to Lower Snake River Dams Draft Report

The draft report on the Lower Snake River Dams Stakeholder Process has been released, revealing complex issues and highly diverse opinions about the importance of the four lower Snake River dams (LSRDs) as part of the region’s clean energy future. Northwest RiverPartners was one of the stakeholders interviewed as part of the study.

“The draft report shows many perspectives, but it remains clear that the four lower Snake River Dams are critical to the region’s ability to achieve a clean energy future without the hardships of blackouts,” said Kurt Miller, NWRP executive director. “Our communities—and especially our disadvantaged communities—simply cannot afford regional blackouts and spiking energy prices.”

The stakeholder input was compiled by a combination of four consulting firms. Their report does not serve as a policy recommendation.

Northwest RiverPartners is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization who represents most of the not-for-profit, community-owned utilities in the Northwest. For more information, visit http://nwriverpartners.org.

SPIDA® Reveals SPIDAcalc v7.2 – Arrow

SPIDA Software, the trusted industry provider of structural analysis software and the first Structure Management System for utilities, is proud to announce SPIDAcalc v7.2 – Arrow, the latest release of its infrastructure analysis software.

Utilities and telecommunication companies often have limited key asset information about their distribution grid when making critical decisions regarding safety, hardening, optimization, modernization, and design. Additionally, many organizations do not have this asset data formally integrated within their enterprise systems.

SPIDAcalc v7.2 – Arrow empowers organizations to centralize a digital twin representation of their physical assets through the power of SPIDAstudio, a cloud-based platform providing central data storage for SPIDAcalc files. Arrow provides a complete, turn-key solution to make infrastructure data searchable, reusable, and readily available when needed for future projects or reporting needs.

Arrow connects GIS systems to SPIDAstudio, presenting users across an organization with the trusted data needed to create SPIDAcalc projects.

Serving the electric and telecommunication industries since 2007, SPIDA Software’s cost-effective Structure Management System is a unique platform developed to create a digital twin of utility overhead systems and a centralized portal for the coordination of activities including joint use and engineering. For additional information, visit www.spidasoftware.com/solutions/calc.

Riverside Public Utilities Selects Tantalus

Riverside Public Utilities in Southern California has selected smart grid technology leader Tantalus Systems as its smart grid solutions partner for its community of 320,000 residents. The decision came as a result of RPU’s plans to leverage its existing infrastructure while simultaneously planning for future innovation.

Of particular importance was the need to make the most of RPU’s investments in encoder receiver transmitter (ERT) metering technology. Tantalus’ solutions will give RPU the ability to transform the utility’s operations into a digital platform capable of supporting multiple applications that improve customer service and deliver reliable power to attract new businesses to its community. RPU will leverage Tantalus’ Advanced Metering Infrastructure across the utility’s electric distribution network.

As part of RPU’s efforts to plan for the future, the utility selected the exclusive Tantalus ERT “overlay” solution which permits a phased migration from the existing ERT one-way communication meter reading system to a full two-way communication AMI system. This migration will enhance customer service, boost customer satisfaction, improve reliability, and increase operational efficiency for the utility.

Tantalus is a purpose-driven smart grid and AMI solutions provider that has focused exclusively on serving public power and electric cooperative utilities across North America for more than 30 years. For more information, visit www.tantalus.com.

NISC Board Approves New Partnerships

The NISC Board of Directors approved the addition of several new members and associate members during its December 11 meeting, bringing NISC’s membership total to 846.

The following utility and telecommunication companies were welcomed to the NISC family: Clay Electric Cooperative (Keystone Heights, Fla.), South Dakota REA (Pierre, S.D.), Range Telephone Cooperative (Forsyth, Mont.), and Sherwood Mutual Telephone Association (Sherwood, Ohio).

“We are pleased to welcome these new members to NISC,” said Susan Imm, NISC vice president of Member and Industry. “Continued growth benefits all our members by enhancing NISC’s economies of scale, while allowing for continued significant investment in research and development and steady membership rates. We’re grateful for the strong and collaborative partnerships with our current members, and appreciate the trust these new members have placed in NISC to improve efficiencies and enhance their ability to be competitive in a rapidly changing market.”

National Information Solutions Cooperative is an information technology organization that develops, implements, and supports software and hardware solutions for its members. Additional information about NISC can be found at www.nisc.coop.
Energy and Environment Legislation Poised for Action in a Contentious Election Year

By Ryan Serote

Congress wrapped up 2019 with several surprising bipartisan accomplishments in a flurry of activity just before adjourning for the year. Despite the acerbic debate and partisan vote on impeachment in the last legislative week in December, Congress finished its work on the Fiscal Year 2020 spending bills, approved a tax package, and came to agreement on the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) trade accord. These actions significantly clear a backlog of work so that Congress can move forward with 2020 priorities.

Nevertheless, Washington, D.C., begins 2020 on a decidedly sour note. The first order of business before the United States Senate is the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump. Shortly afterward, the presidential primaries will begin in February in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina. Another dozen-plus states follow on Super Tuesday in March. Despite these political distractions, Congress is poised to develop and advance major legislation in 2020 that focuses on energy reliability and resilience, energy storage technologies, environmental regulations, water infrastructure, taxes, and many others.

The Democratic majority in the House hopes to build upon the many climate hearings held across numerous committees, turning to one or more climate action bills that focus on the path to reduce US emissions to net zero by 2050. One high-profile bill is expected to emerge from the House Energy and Commerce Committee and include a Clean Energy Standard, in addition to other titles. Additional efforts will be outlined in a report of recommendations from the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, which has held its own series of exploratory hearings over the past year. Overall, the numerous hearings have focused on options to decrease fossil fuel generation; increase renewable penetration; improve energy efficiency; and develop new technologies like electric vehicles, carbon capture and sequestration, energy storage options, and advancements in nuclear and other zero-emission generation sources.

The House Natural Resources Committee is also examining climate issues as they pertain to federal lands and waters. Committee Chairman Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) recently introduced a bill to halt new fossil fuel leases on all federal lands. The committee has also performed oversight of the Bureau of Reclamation as it seeks to help water managers across the West adapt to changes in the climate that may alter river system operations. Grijalva is also planning to maintain close oversight over the Interior Department and has expressed frustration about the slow response to his committee’s requests for information. In particular, he is seeking additional details about the decision-making at the Department that has led to a plan to relocate hundreds of Bureau of Land Management positions from Washington, D.C., to Grand Junction, Colo., and other western state locations. The Natural Resources Committee may pursue a subpoena to get additional information from the government.

In the Republican-controlled Senate, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) advanced 52 pieces of energy legislation in 2019, along with 22 public lands bills. In 2020, Murkowski intends to assemble an energy bill aimed at addressing clean energy and climate change. The package would include numerous energy efficiency, storage, and technology bills. This effort also has a political dynamic, as Senate Republicans want to show a contrast between themselves and Green New Deal advocates. The Republicans’ strategy of focusing on energy storage and technology is attracting significant attention and backing from Republican senators who expect to have close races this year.

The Senate will also continue to expend much time and effort processing nominations in 2020. For energy and environment nominees, filling the two open seats on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is a top priority. James Danly, President Trump’s nominee for the open Republican seat, is poised for confirmation despite there being no nominee for the open Democratic FERC seat. Nominees for the deputy secretary job at both the Department of Interior (Kate MacGregor) and Energy (still to be named) will also be on the Senate’s to-do list.

With significant activity expected on energy and environment issues, there will be many opportunities to pursue and advance NWPPA’s legislative priorities throughout 2020. Our signature advocacy event—the NWPPA Rally in D.C.—will provide our members with an excellent opportunity to make an impact with lawmakers on issues important to our public power utilities.

Ryan Serote is a principal at MEGUIRE WHITNEY LLC, NWPPA’s Washington, D.C., consulting firm. He can be reached at ryan@meguirewhitney.com or (703) 789-6310.
On December 19, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the impacts of wildfires on electric grid reliability. The hearing focused on challenges associated with balancing the need to protect public safety with keeping the lights on for consumers in fire-prone areas. NWPPA Executive Director Scott Corwin provided testimony at the hearing. Corwin’s comments focused on the need to quickly implement and make full use of new authorities granted to federal land managers to manage vegetation in utility rights of way (ROW) and work with utility ROW owners to address hazard trees. NWPPA recently wrote a comment letter to the Forest Service on its vegetation management in utility rights of way rulemaking, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and responsiveness by federal land managers with ROW owners.

“Every fire season reminds us that we are out of time to address hazardous vegetation,” said Corwin. “Continued delays are not an option.”

Bill Johnson, CEO of Pacific Gas & Electric, was also among the witnesses, and was questioned extensively about the public safety power shut-offs (PSPS) that PG&E has instituted recently to deal with the threat of wildfire after being found liable for massive fires in California last year that destroyed several communities and claimed several lives. Johnson discussed the difficult decisions that led to shutting off power during several high-wind events in California. He also stated that PSPS would likely continue periodically over several more years but could become more narrow in scope and duration through integrating technology.

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Sitting Down with BPA Administrator Elliot Mainzer

Edited by Joel Scruggs and Brenda Dunn

Nearly eight years ago, we sat down with Elliot Mainzer for an interview for our March 2012 Bulletin. At that time, Mainzer held the title of executive vice president of Corporate Strategy for the Bonneville Power Administration. A lot has changed since then, including his promotion in January 2014 to BPA administrator, so we wanted to check in with him. NWPPA Executive Director Scott Corwin sat down with Mainzer at our office at the end of last year to talk about wildfires, transmission issues, and even some jazz.

NWPPA: I was struck by one of your answers in the 2012 interview that seems timely and relevant today. When asked about the challenges facing the utility industry in the next 10-20 years, you responded, “the economy (or rate pressures), aging assets, energy efficiency, balancing challenges, the BiOp, and the (Columbia River) Treaty.” What progress has been made on those fronts?

Mainzer: All of those issues are relevant still today, and many of them drove the development of BPA’s 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. When I became administrator, public power spoke with a unified voice and expressed a high level of concern with the rate and cost trajectories at Bonneville. For me, job number one has been to bend our cost curve and get Bonneville on a more sustainable rate trajectory. We’ve made meaningful progress on that front, thanks to a lot of hard work by BPA leadership and staff and the continued input and support of our customers and regional partners.

Today, at $36/megawatt-hour, Bonneville’s power product is a solid deal for customers—that price includes many attributes and services that are not easily replicated in the wholesale electricity market. That said, we must stay very diligent to keep rate escalation under control.

NWPPA: And what are some of the practical steps to keeping costs under control?

Mainzer: We’ve built a team that embraces the ethic of sustained, disciplined cost-management and have worked hard to build a culture and a set of management tools that will sustain our progress over the long-term. This includes program and operating plans that link our business metrics and budgets to the strategic plan, and 10-year rate and cost modeling which will keep us focused on long-term competitiveness.

NWPPA: How about some of those other issues, like aging assets and energy efficiency?

Mainzer: We’ve increased the level of investment in the hydro system since the last time I spoke with NWPPA. To sustain the health of the federal hydro system, we’re gradually increasing capital spending from $200 to $300 million.
annually. Even more money is going into the transmission system to keep it healthy, agile, and flexible. We have also been investing about $25 million every two years into grid modernization. These are steps we’re taking to leverage the big changes underway in the electricity market.

On energy efficiency, in 2012 we were in a period of really low energy prices. Customers wanted more self-determination, more self-funding capacity. So we made some changes to the program design and allowed customers to take on slightly more self-funding responsibility. Now, as we move into a period of concern about resource adequacy, we are once again witnessing the value of sustained energy efficiency investments.

NWPPA: What about balancing challenges?

Mainzer: The explosion in wind energy development on the federal system between 2007 and 2012 took the federal hydroelectric system to its physical margin of balancing capability. To supplement the capability of the federal system, we began procuring balancing capacity during certain times, including from demand-side resources. When the Western Energy Imbalance Market began operations in 2014, it created a whole new set of tools to take some of the pressure off the federal system. Now, we are less focused on selling ancillary services to the wind developers in our balancing authority and more focused on marketing our surplus capacity and flexibility across the broader EIM footprint.

NWPPA: The BiOp, the federal hydropower system’s compliance under the Endangered Species Act, always seems to be a focal point for BPA.

Mainzer: Back in 2012, we were focused on the 2014 supplemental biological opinion for the operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System. The court rulings of 2016 sent us back to the drawing board, and today our discussions about fish and hydropower are centered on the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement. The CRSO is a major undertaking for the federal agencies and the cooperating agencies that are participating in the process. Throughout the CRSO, I have tried to bring a spirit of intellectual honesty to the debate about salmon and the river system, to honor the different perspectives, and look for ways to bring the region together around creative solutions that address our shared interests in salmon recovery, reliable and affordable clean electricity, and economic vitality for the many communities that depend on the Columbia River Power System for their livelihoods. The flexible spill agreement that we signed last year demonstrated the power of collaboration when we work side by side and seek mutual understanding. BPA is committed to such collaboration going forward.

NWPPA: Any recent news on the Columbia River Treaty?

Mainzer: Modernizing the Columbia River Treaty has proven to be a complex and time-consuming task. We continue to work with our partners at the State Department to secure a successful outcome for the United States that is consistent with the regional recommendation we submitted several years ago. The stakes in the Treaty are very high and will have implications for the region for many years to come. Rebalancing Canada’s share of the downstream power benefits calculation, preserving flood risk management, and supporting ecosystem function all remain important issues. I am hopeful that 2020 will be a breakthrough year for the negotiations and know that the outcome is of high interest to many key stakeholders in the region.

NWPPA: NWPPA also has members that see BPA largely through use of its transmission system. Anything on the horizon for transmission that you are excited about?

Mainzer: I view the transmission system as the gateway to the future. As a result, we have put a lot of energy into creating a more responsive, agile, and commercially savvy BPA Transmission Services organization. I’m also excited about the creation of the new consolidated regional transmission planning organization, Northern Grid. While recognizing the tremendous value of physical transmission assets, we have also explored non-wires options and new ways of collaborating with customers.

An excellent example of this is the recently energized Hooper-Springs transmission line in southeast Idaho. BPA identified the need for a 22-mile line to increase reliability during winter months in an area where temperatures frequently drop well-below zero. After years of siting and environmental compliance work, we were set to begin construction in 2017. Our customer in the area, Lower Valley Energy (an NWPPA member), stepped forward and asked to construct and own the line. Within weeks, we developed an agreement between BPA and LVE where they could leverage their local relationships and experience to construct the line at less cost and lease capacity back to BPA. As a result, BPA preserved its ability to deliver federal power to LVE and avoided the need to draw on existing transmission.

For all of us with demanding jobs, it’s important to learn to manage stress and support your mental health … I continue to play jazz and practice my saxophone. The creative process is good for my soul and good for my mental health.

"
NWPPA: The role of BPA administrator is known as one of the most challenging jobs in the Northwest energy business. How do you maintain a life/work balance?

Mainzer: For all of us with demanding jobs, it’s important to learn to manage stress and support your mental health. For me, there are three things. First, I try to go into the weekends with as many short-term issues resolved as possible. This gives me some time to breathe and relax without constantly worrying about work. Second, I stay connected and enjoy quality time with my family. My wife and I are pretty good about getting out for date night and spending time with friends. My twins are now 10, and I try to regularly attend their basketball and soccer games. Third, I continue to play jazz and practice my saxophone. The creative process is good for my soul and good for my mental health.

NWPPA: As you know, NWPPA specializes in education and workforce development. As a manager, what do you see as some of the greatest needs in the training realm right now for your workforce?

Mainzer: We focus on a fungible, agile, and elastic set of skills. We put a lot of value on written and verbal communication skills along with the ability to synthesize complicated issues for management decision-making. We value the ability to provide both quantitative and qualitative analysis in a succinct format. More important to me than ensuring our people’s physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing is safety. Safety helps the organization run more efficiently, too. We’ve been enjoying the best safety performance in BPA’s history the last several years.

I also believe that organizations should spend time developing their leaders. High-performing teams are full of high-performing individuals; those people are highly motivated, want a sense of self-determination, and want to solve problems and add value. So I have tried to move away from a highly centralized decision-making model to a more delegated decision model where vice presidents and managers have real authority to get things done.

We have also developed a set of seven leadership behaviors to drive a common management culture at BPA that can best be summarized as value people and deliver results.

NWPPA: Another challenge for the region in the near future is resource adequacy. How is BPA working with other utilities to address this issue?

Mainzer: This is one of the most critical issues facing the region today. With several coal plants set to retire soon, the Northwest faces a shortfall of several gigawatts of capacity to serve load.

The team at the Northwest Power Pool is doing a good job of bringing utilities throughout the region together...
One of the first things I did as administrator was to establish safety as our top core value. There’s nothing more important to me than ensuring our people’s physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing.

We are blessed to have this clean and affordable power resource.

At the same time, it is important to continue addressing the impact of the hydroelectric system on salmon and the Columbia River ecosystem. We take our fish and wildlife responsibilities very seriously at BPA, as well as our trust and treaty responsibilities to the region’s Tribal Nations. In the years ahead, our power system will continue to evolve. I encourage continued thoughtful development of creative approaches that address the needs of salmon and leverage new technologies and markets.

NWPPA: How do grid modernization efforts facilitate some of those strategies for enhancing revenues as well as reliability?

Mainzer: Our portfolio of more than 35 grid modernization projects is designed to increase automation, improve accuracy, and enhance visibility into how the federal power and transmission systems are functioning in real time. Our grid modernization projects address IT architecture, physical assets, operations, and human performance. These enhancements will free up underutilized capacity for additional sales, manage grid congestion more efficiently and reliably, and provide insights into how best to invest in the system to unleash future value. These projects are critical precursors to our ability to participate in the EIM, leverage new technologies, and continue to evolve with the western electricity market. Grid modernization is the literal transformation of Bonneville into a modern, agile utility positioned to deliver value and superior service to our customers and stakeholders for years to come.

NWPPA: You mentioned the EIM. What are some of the key strategic results you are looking for from BPA’s potential participation in the Western EIM?

Mainzer: The process of preparing to participate in the EIM is in itself a useful exercise in that it forces you to have much greater state awareness and discipline around your real-time operations. Actual EIM participation should enable BPA to take greater advantage of real-time opportunities to buy and sell economy energy across a wide footprint, increasing net revenues. We have also made clear our expectation that the CAISO’s broader market infrastructure must develop mechanisms to compensate for flexible, clean capacity, which is the most valuable service that BPA brings to the table. Governance also remains an important issue. We’re advocating for a more diverse, durable governance structure that reflects the interests of the broad set of market participants.

NWPPA: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Mainzer: I have appreciated our partnership with NWPPA over the years and continue to be impressed with the programs you offer at NWPPA. During my time as administrator, our collaboration with our public power customers has made us a better organization and hopefully positioned us to remain their provider of choice for many years to come. Through focused delivery on our strategic goals, we have tried to build a more responsive and resilient BPA.

This will allow us to better adapt to the many changes facing our industry and to sustain our strong position as an engine of the region’s economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Joel Scruggs is the director of Communications at BPA and can be contacted at jlscruggs@bpa.gov. Brenda Dunn is NWPPA’s editor and can be contacted at brenda@nwppa.org.

“...our collaboration with our public power customers has made us a better organization...”
The Job Opportunities is a service provided to NWPPA member systems and associate members. Member price is $125 per listing for a 30-day period.

- Job Opportunities ads are also accepted from non-members. Ads are $365 per listing for a 30-day period.
- For an additional $50 per 30 days, your job listing will be pinned to the top of the job listings page, always visible to your prospective candidates.
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- The *Bulletin* is mailed by the 15th of each month.
- Complete the online Job Opportunities ad placement form at www.nwppa.org.
- NWPPA reserves the right to edit all listings in order to fit size requirements in the publication.

For more detailed information, visit www.nwppa.org/jobs.

**POSITION:** Working Foreman  
**COMPANY:** Canby Utility (Canby, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** $53.11 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 11, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Email bbenson@canbyutility.org.

**POSITION:** Utility Safety Trainer  
**COMPANY:** Columbia REA (Eastern and Western Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** February 21, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Email jobs@columbiarea.coop.

**POSITION:** Working Foreman  
**COMPANY:** Midstate Electric Cooperative (La Pine, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** February 3, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Visit www.midstateelectric.coop/careers.

**POSITION:** Water/Wastewater Operator or Trainee  
**COMPANY:** Public Utility District #1 of Klickitat County (Goldendale, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** February 2, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Visit http://klickitatpud.com/.

**POSITION:** Engineering Supervisor Systems  
**COMPANY:** Tillamook People’s Utility District (Tillamook, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** $7,827 - $9,979 per month, DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** February 1, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Visit www.tpud.org/careers.

**POSITION:** Manager Engineering-Systems Planning & Protection  
**COMPANY:** Grant County PUD (Ephrata, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** $95,825.60 - $167,689.60 per year (DOE)  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** January 31, 2020  
**TO APPLY:** Visit www.grantpud.org/careers.
POSITION: Electrical Technician  
COMPANY: Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)  
(Sacramento, Calif.)  
SALARY: $61.81 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 31, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.smud.org/en/Corporate/Careers-at-SMUD.

POSITION: Human Resources Manager  
COMPANY: Northern California Power Agency (NCPA)  
(Roseville, Calif.)  
SALARY: $141,315 - $176,654 per year, DOE  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 31, 2020  

POSITION: Member Services Representative  
COMPANY: Peninsula Light Company (Gig Harbor, Wash.)  
SALARY: $19.86 - $30.42 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 30, 2020  

POSITION: Purchasing/Facility Supervisor  
COMPANY: Midstate Electric Cooperative (La Pine, Ore.)  
SALARY: DOE  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 25, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.midstateelectric.coop/careers.

POSITION: System Engineer  
COMPANY: Wasco Electric Cooperative, Inc. (The Dalles, Ore.)  
SALARY: DOE  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 24, 2020  

POSITION: Power Line Technician  
COMPANY: District of Summerland (Summerland, B.C.)  
SALARY: $49.29 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 24, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.summerland.ca/your-city-hall/employment.

POSITION: Compliance Administrator  
COMPANY: Umatilla Electric Cooperative (Hermiston, Ore.)  
SALARY: DOE  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 24, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.umatillaelectric.com/about/career-opportunities/.

POSITION: Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project Manager  
COMPANY: City of Roseville - Roseville Electric (Roseville, Calif.)  
SALARY: $103,575 - $138,802 per year  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 23, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.roseville.ca.us/jobs.

POSITION: Electric Program Supervisor - Line  
COMPANY: City of Redding (Redding, Calif.)  
SALARY: $7,655 - $12,092 per month  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 20, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.cityofredding.org/jobs.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman  
COMPANY: Idaho Falls Power (Idaho Falls, Idaho)  
SALARY: $37.99 per hour minimum  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 19, 2020  

POSITION: Electric Utility Operational Technology Engineer  
COMPANY: City of Redding (Redding, Calif.)  
SALARY: $6,527 - $10,371 per month  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 19, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.cityofredding.org/jobs.

POSITION: Journeyman Estimator  
COMPANY: PacifiCorp (Albany, Ore.)  
SALARY: $44.12 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 19, 2020  

POSITION: Journeyman Meterman  
COMPANY: Peninsula Light Company (Gig Harbor, Wash.)  
SALARY: $46.19 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 18, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.penlight.org/about/jobs/.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman–Local 125 (Walla Walla, Wash.)  
COMPANY: Pacific Power (Walla Walla, Wash.)  
SALARY: $50.15 per hour  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 18, 2020  

POSITION: Planner/Coordinator (#11519)  
COMPANY: Chelan County PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.)  
SALARY: $82,880 - $103,600 DOQ  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 17, 2020  

POSITION: Safety Coordinator  
COMPANY: Springfield Utility Board (Springfield, Ore.)  
SALARY: $6,274.68 - $7,387.48 per month  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 17, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.subutil.com/jobs/.

POSITION: Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project Manager  
COMPANY: City of Roseville - Roseville Electric (Roseville, Calif.)  
SALARY: $103,575 - $138,802 per year  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 23, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.roseville.ca.us/jobs.

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SALARY: $7,655 - $12,092 per month  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 20, 2020  
TO APPLY: Visit www.cityofredding.org/jobs.
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