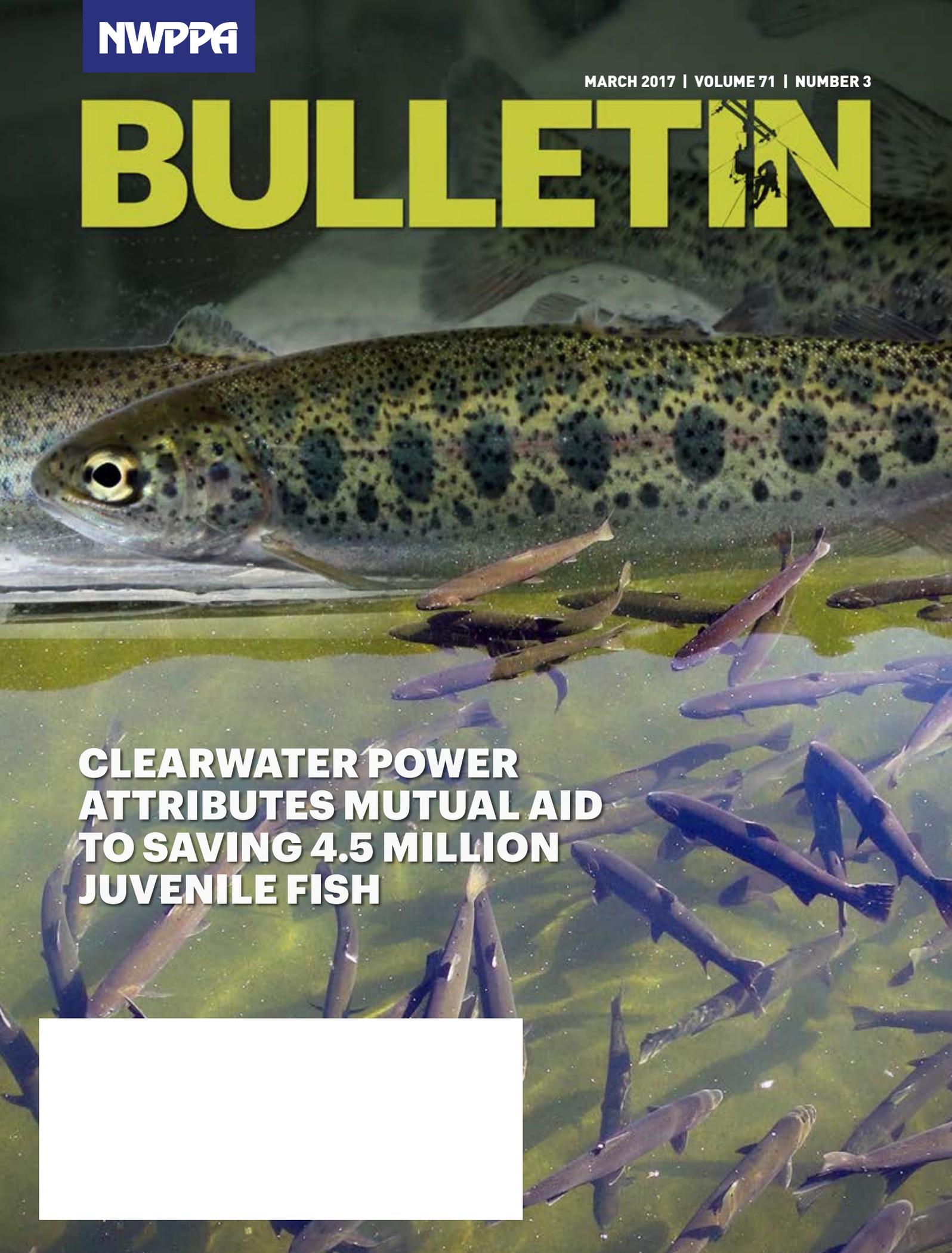
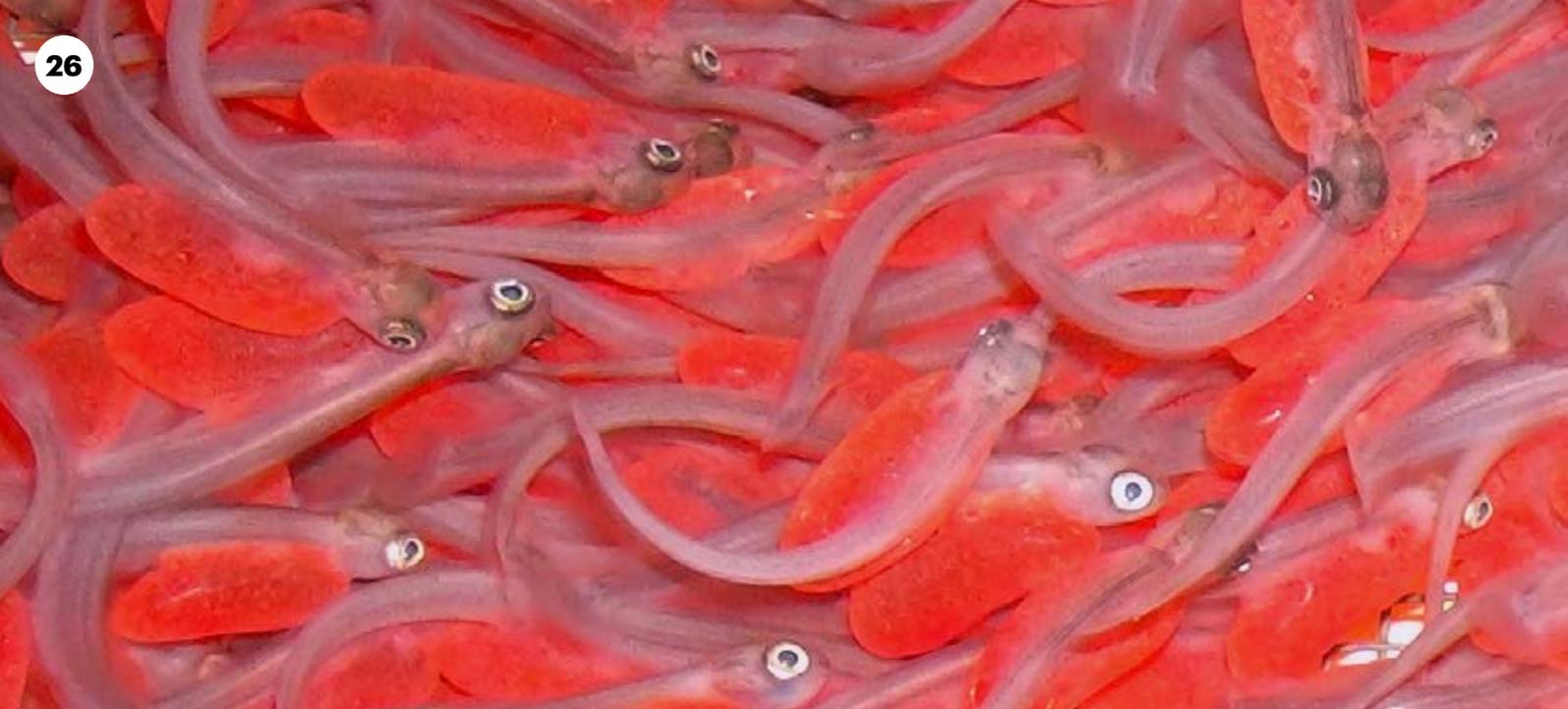


# BULLETIN



**CLEARWATER POWER  
ATTRIBUTES MUTUAL AID  
TO SAVING 4.5 MILLION  
JUVENILE FISH**





**On the cover:** A tribe, a local utility, and two federal agencies pull out all the stops for an aquatic CPR operation at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery.

Opinions expressed in single articles are not necessarily policies of the Association. For permission to reprint articles, write or call the associate editor.

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# NWPPA Confers with Advisory Committee for Education and Training Needs



On February 23, the NWPPA training team met with the Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee in Vancouver, Wash., to discuss how to execute an ambitious agenda for 2017 and begin planning events for 2018.

“We are working hard to focus on the areas that will support internal development due to retirement gaps, technology upgrades, and business model changes,” said NWPPA Director of Education and Workforce Development Elaine Dixon.

Utilities are thinking about how to develop their people and teams to provide growth opportunities internally as well as adding new skills and ideas that enhance the history and experience of the current team.

“We are in a big retirement wave,” said Dolores Stegeman, Transmission and Distribution manager at Tacoma Power in Washington. “We have moved from afraid to brave and it’s a great opportunity for internal advancements.”

NWPPA is supporting this movement with its Succession Planning Toolkit (available on our website); technical, financial, administrative, and leadership certificates; as well as nearly 200 events that support development and growth.

“I’m excited to explore and experience the Senior Leadership Program this year,” said Diane Griswold, HR director for Kootenai Electric Cooperative (Hayden, Idaho). She and two other members of the Kootenai leadership team are attending together and, along with Larry Dunbar, Energy Services director for the City of Ellensburg, Wash., plan to provide feedback about next steps in the leadership development programs.

Business models and rates are also high on the agenda. Heidi Kelley, HR director for Matanuska Electric Association in Palmer, Alaska, is facing big changes. “We’ve been a small distribution co-op, now we are a generating facility so our challenges, and opportunities, are changing,” she said.

Marc Farmer, general manager of Clatskanie PUD in Oregon, agreed: “We need to continue the discussion around base and demand charges; a rate structure that covers fixed costs.”

“This is an opportunity for a new engagement with customers,” said Bob Hammond, Energy Services director for the City of Richland, Wash.

NWPPA will continue these discussions, and many more, with utility and industry experts at conferences such as the Engineering & Operations Conference and Trade Show, April 10-13, in Reno, Nev.; the Annual Conference and Membership Meeting, May 7-10, in Sunriver, Ore.; and the Northwest Communications and Energy Innovations Conference, September 17-20, in Sacramento, Calif.

The advisory committee also spent time discussing areas of focus for NWPPA’s Education and Workforce Development team to think about when planning its events for 2018. Security in the workplace, drone regulations, AMI/AMR training, electrical system planning, records maintenance, and transmission basics were all on the list of topics to consider.

To add to the classes, conferences, roundtables, workshops, webinars, and section meetings NWPPA delivers each year, we are about to launch two elearning courses: *The History of Public Power in the Northwest* and *Utility Basics* developed specifically for NWPPA members. We will add to this series with short video learning modules on safety and security, as well as other topics that can be watched on demand, such as managing conflict, facilitating meetings, and documenting performance. City of Seward (Alaska) Utility Manager John Foutz volunteered to be the first on the list to receive these courses!

NWPPA continues to strive to meet member needs with a wide variety of courses and programs delivered across the membership territory. We could not do this without the continued support of the Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend for making it a productive and enlightening meeting.

To stay current on what is available to help meet succession planning and individual development plans, review the eCatalog on our website under Training and Education.

NWPPA

# 77<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Meet Us On the Road to Inspiration, Innovation, and Information

There are a lot of changes and challenges on the road to inspiration, innovation, and information, so we've paved NWPPA's 2017 Annual Conference and Membership Meeting with experts and colleagues who will share their knowledge, expertise, and experiences to enhance our journey. Come join us along this road in Sunriver, Ore., May 7–10. Watch your mail for a full program and agenda; but until that arrives, we've provided a sneak preview of some of the session topics and speakers below:

#### **Start with Why—Stephen Shedletzky, Head Engagement Officer, Simon Sinek & Start With Why**

Be inspired by our opening keynote presentation, *Start with Why*. We often know what we want to say and even how we are going to say it, but we can communicate more effectively by starting with why. Shedletzky speaks, leads workshops, consults, and coaches to help leaders and organizations discover, articulate, and live their why—their driving purpose, cause, or belief. He serves those inspired by the movement to inspire and live in service to others.

#### **The Rate of Change to Rates—Gary Saleba, President, EES, with colleagues Anne Falcon and Steve Anderson**

The changing landscape of rates is a challenging issue for many of our members. Is your rate structure sustainable in a declining kilowatt-hour sales world? Hear about innovative approaches emerging onto the landscape and thinking outside the box of 70 years of history in setting rates.

#### **Consumers in Control—Larry Bekkedahl, Vice President, Portland General Electric; Neil Strother, Principal Research Analyst, Navigant; and Debra Smith, CEO, Central Lincoln PUD**

One in three consumers has something on their smart phone that controls something in their house. Come to this session to hear three perspectives (a user, a utility, and a consultant) discuss home technology and energy management systems that are changing consumer engagement.

#### **Big Data, Big Innovation—Dan Barnett, Vice President, North American Utility Sales, Space-Time Insight**

You have the data, but can you use it? The beauty of data is that it is information you can use to strengthen your engagement with consumers and members. Barnett's expertise includes knowing how software companies generate ideas; work with customers and partners to hone the ideas into solutions; and then take them to market. He leads executive conversations about integrating and analyzing big data, as well as leveraging an "Internet of Things" technology and thinking.

#### **CEO Panel—Michelle Bertolino, City of Roseville; Steve Wright, Chelan PUD; Mark Johnston, Anchorage Municipal Light & Power; and Matt Michel, Lane Electric Cooperative**

Always filled with interesting perspectives, Public Power Council Executive Director Scott Corwin will moderate this panel and inspire the CEOs to share their innovative approaches to the challenges of today.

#### **Generation Atomic—Eric Meyer, Executive Director, Generation Atomic**

A new generation of nuclear—who and what is it? You may be surprised! After Meyer became aware of the severity of climate change and how nuclear power was essential to mitigating the damages, he dedicated his life to building the grassroots movement needed to save and expand nuclear power. He plans to devote his life to fighting for nuclear energy because he sees its complete necessity to protecting the environment for future generations.

We hope to see you at our 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & Membership Meeting, May 7–10, at the Sunriver Resort in Sunriver, Ore. To register, you can visit [www.nwppa.org](http://www.nwppa.org), send an email to Gail Patterson at [gail@nwppa.org](mailto:gail@nwppa.org), or call the NWPPA office at (360) 254-0109. **NWPPA**

# NWPPA Welcomes Beth Iversen to the Team



**W**hen you call the front desk at NWPPA, you will now be greeted by Beth Iversen, our new senior administrative assistant. Iversen started on January 31. Prior to working with NWPPA, Iversen was the office manager for her husband's business, Iversen Enterprises, LLC, which operated Portland Adventure Boot Camp for Women for nearly 10 years. She also worked as a virtual assistant for a private consulting firm and as a senior administrative assistant to an international consulting firm.

"I was amazed to discover how much work our small team accomplishes every day!" she said. "I am happy to be part of such an efficient, streamlined team."

Raised in Elizabethtown, Ky., Iversen attended the University of Kentucky with a focus on social work. Following her love of music, she also received a technical certification from the Conservatory of Recording Arts and Sciences (CRAS) in recording engineering. She completed her practicum for CRAS at Novastar Post Inc. in Hollywood, Calif., working in post-production sound for audio restoration. Currently she sings with the Consonare Chorale, a semi-professional Portland choir.

Iversen's primary duties will be providing customer service to members and staff; clerical support for member services, executive/board services, and legislative and regulatory consultants; administrative/accounting functions; and member database activities of the Association. **NWPPA**

## Celebrating **60** years as a public power partner!

**Established in 1957** by the Washington state legislature to meet the collective needs and aggregate the resources of public utilities statewide and, through cooperative action, build and operate electrical generating facilities. We're marking 60 years as a joint action agency and honored to partner with our 27 members to serve more than 1.5 million customers.

**ENERGY NORTHWEST**  
www.energy-northwest.com • www.northwestcleanenergy.com

- Member Utility
- Generation Project

# FIRST-EVER POT & POWER WORKSHOP DEEMED A HUGE SUCCESS

NWPPA member utilities have long dealt with marijuana grow operations versus load supply. With several state initiative measures passed over as many years, utilities now grapple with how to work with licensed growers and support load growth for an industry that uses large amounts of electricity.

On February 8, NWPPA hosted *Pot & Power: Growing Issues for the Utility Industry* in Portland, Ore., and brought together utility staff, marijuana grow experts, law enforcement, and state agencies. The workshop format focused on information sharing, attendee engagement, and discussion.

Objectives of the workshop included helping members understand how and why the marijuana grow business places high demand on the electric grid; the information legal growers need from the utility; and perspectives from several state agencies.

Cowlitz PUD Electrical Engineer Jeff Bauman opened the workshop with a 90-minute presentation on the stress that can be placed on the electric grid because large-scale growers use indoor facilities to grow a crop that demands 18-24 hours of continuous light and large commercial blowers to circulate air. He continued his presentation with a primer on seed to sale of marijuana—touching slightly on the RFID tracking process—and shared an inside look at various grow operations in Cowlitz County, Wash.

Kent Singer, the executive director of the Colorado Rural Electric Association, gave an update on the marijuana industry in Colorado, which was the first state to legalize recreational marijuana. He discussed issues his co-op members are facing with transformer overloads, power theft, large cash payments from growers, and why legalization may not be a Rocky Mountain high for his member utilities.

Singer also moderated a lively CEO panel discussion reflecting on issues discussed throughout the day. CEO panel participants included Annette Creekpau, Mason PUD No. 3; Corey Borgeson, Golden Valley Electric Association; Paul Hauser, Trinity PUD; and Matt Michel, Lane Electric Cooperative. Each executive discussed how he or she is dealing with marijuana grow operations from operational and policy perspectives. However, there were two points that all could agree on: 1) growing activity should not take place in residential neighborhoods, and 2) there are many unlicensed growers in everyone's service territory and utilities should be very careful about sending employees into places where criminal activity is occurring.

Creekpau described the economic growth in Mason County due to cannabis growers and processors. "We have 37 licensed growers and processors in Mason County. These



(L-R) Mason PUD No. 3's Annette Creekpau, Golden Valley Electric Association's Corey Borgeson, Trinity PUD's Paul Hauser, Lane Electric Cooperative's Matt Michel, and Colorado Rural Electric Association's Kent Singer.

companies are revitalizing port properties where lumber mills and other businesses shut down. Marijuana entrepreneurs are also making investments in facilities in various locations throughout the county," she explained.

Attendees were also given an opportunity to talk with a licensed large-scale grower. Sara Batterby, CEO of Hi-Fi Farms, and John Morris, co-founder and board secretary of Resource Innovation Institute, spoke of the challenges in understanding zoning laws and scheduling for facility development with utilities – this provided a new perspective for attendees. Batterby pointed out that banking issues were no longer a problem for growers, and listed several banks in the area that accepted licensed growers as customers. Batterby said that as long as the federal government maintains its position on marijuana, big ag corporations will not be players in the marijuana industry.

"I very much appreciated the opportunity to connect with the NWPPA community and share insights about the rapidly growing cannabis sector," said Batterby. "Early collaboration between our industries bodes well for the establishment of a mutually beneficial relationship in support of a key driver of our Oregon economy over the next several years."

Other presentations included a first-year highlight from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission; licensing and education issues by the Washington State Liquor & Cannabis Board; and crime trends from the Clark County Drug Task Force.

"NWPPA's Pot & Power workshop provided a great opportunity for many public power utilities to discuss how marijuana legalization is impacting utility operations," said Singer. "I learned a lot from my public power colleagues in the Northwest and appreciated the chance to compare notes about how we are all dealing with this emerging industry." NWPPA

# 2017 GM, Director Surveys Now Open

**N**orthwest Public Power Association's 2017 General Manager's Compensation Survey and the 2017 Director, Commissioner & Other Elected Officials Survey are now both open and ready to be completed by NWPPA utility members. If you are a member utility general manager or senior HR manager and did not receive an email with the survey links, please email Brenda at [brenda@nwppa.org](mailto:brenda@nwppa.org).

Each survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete, and the survey reports that are generated are a valuable source of comparison information for utilities and their boards. All survey information is kept confidential and may only be accessed by general managers and HR senior management at NWPPA member utilities.

Both surveys will remain open for members to update or complete until **April 21, 2017**. At this time it will be closed and a report will be generated with the survey results. A final report summarizing the survey results will be available by June 30.

If you have trouble at any time during the survey process, or would like a copy of your responses from either of the 2015 surveys, please email Brenda at [Brenda@nwppa.org](mailto:Brenda@nwppa.org)

Please note that these are the only two utility compensation surveys that NWPPA will facilitate this year. (Labor and Employee Relations Group surveys are managed separately and will continue to be offered annually.) In 2015, the Association began rotating its annual surveys on an every-other-year basis. Therefore, these two surveys will be offered this year, and then not again until 2019; the next Linecrew Wage and Benefits Survey will be available in 2018.

NWPPA

**NWPPA**

**REGISTER NOW!**

# 2017 Engineering & Operations Conference and Trade Show

April 10-13, 2017 | Reno, Nev.

**Public Power in the Wild Wild West**

# NWPPA Gearing up for 2017 Communication Contest

**A**fter setting a record last year for the most Excellence in Communication entries received, the 2017 Northwest Communications and Energy Innovations (NIC) Conference Planning Committee decided to keep this year's contest identical to the 2016 contest. Why mess with a good thing, right?

The number to beat from last year is 204 entries from 37 different NWPPA utility and association members. To help facilitate another record-breaking year, there will again be nine categories plus a people's choice award in photography, which was super popular last year!

The nine categories will be: 1) Annual Report, 2) Newsletter, 3) Advertising Campaign, 4) Special Publication, 5) Internal Publication, 6) Website, 7) Social Media, 8) Photography, and 9) Wild Card. Keep an eye out for the Call for Entries, which will give more information about each category, what to enter, and how to enter.

The committee received so much positive feedback about the inaugural people's choice award last year that they said facilitating it again this year was a no brainer. Similar to last year in Missoula, all of the photo entries will be on display at Sunday night's welcome reception in Sacramento on September 17 and we will ask all attendees to vote for a favorite. Pend Oreille PUD won the inaugural award with its photo of Dick Shaw in the field with his chainsaw. Who will win it this year?

Set aside what you would like to enter in NWPPA's 24<sup>th</sup> Excellence in Communication contest and be ready to submit everything in early April when the 2017 *Call for Entries* brochure is emailed to general managers and communicators. Not sure what to enter or what the judges will like? Watch NWPPA's Facebook page ([facebook.com/NWPPAssoc](https://facebook.com/NWPPAssoc)) over the next few months for examples of 2016's first-place entries.

As in years past, all of the winning entries and utilities will be honored at the NIC's annual banquet, this year being held on September 19 at the Embassy Suites in Sacramento, Calif. The conference itself will run from September 17-20 at the Embassy Suites. Look for more information about the conference in upcoming *Bulletins* and on [www.nwppa.org](http://www.nwppa.org).

If you don't receive a 2017 *Call for Entries* brochure, it will also be posted to our website in early April; the brochure will have all of the details about this year's competition, including entry fees, categories, and how to submit your entries. All entries and fees must be postmarked by Friday, June 30. Contact Brenda Dunn at [brenda@nwppa.org](mailto:brenda@nwppa.org) if you have any questions about the contest or would like a copy of the *Call for Entries* when it is available. **NWPPA**

## A Look Back at Public Power

### 50 YEARS AGO – 1967

Over 1,500 mercury-vapor street lights were furnished by Seattle City Light to Water District No. 20 at a 65-cent monthly charge to water users (Wash.) ... The City of Forest Grove Light and Power Department officially dedicated its new \$250,000 headquarters building (Ore.) ... NWPPA Executive Secretary Gus Norwood was elected to the Consumer Research Foundation Board of Directors ... Chelan PUD was collecting electrical antiques for a Historical Electrical Museum at Rocky Reach Dam (Wash.) ... The Oregon PUD Directors Association elected Tillamook PUD's Carl L. Rawe as president.

### 25 YEARS AGO – 1992

Salem Electric tested a new energy conservation and environment education program called "In Concert With The Environment" (Ore.) ... March 6 was graduation day for 25 former timber workers retrained as energy conservation specialists through a program sponsored by Clallam County PUD (Wash.) ... Bonneville Power Administration signed the Dworshak Wildlife Agreement, which set aside 70,000 acres to make up for the lands lost to the Dworshak Dam and Reservoir (Idaho) ... In a national survey, one in three utilities said the potential risks of EMF contributed to delays or failures in attempts to site new transmission and distribution lines.

### 5 YEARS AGO – 2012

Brandon Wittman was appointed as the new general manager of Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative (Mont.) ... Customers of Snohomish County PUD hit an energy milestone when their combined solar energy production reached one megawatt, double their solar energy output of two years ago (Wash.) ... Flathead Electric Co-op Board of Trustees approved a power purchase agreement with F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company (Mont.) ... Standard & Poor's Rating Services raised its rating for Columbia River PUD's (Ore.) electric system revenue obligations from "A Stable" to "A+ Stable," and also raised Clallam County PUD #1's (Wash.) rating from "A" to "A+." **NWPPA**

# April, May, and June 2017

Please visit [www.nwppa.org](http://www.nwppa.org) to view the full course descriptions for these and other courses.

### 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 10, 2017 — Reno, Nev.

### NWPPA 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 10–13, 2017 — Reno, Nev.

### SENIOR LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES SESSION 2, SERIES 5—LEAD YOUR TEAMS

**Who Should Attend:** Directors, managers, graduates of the Leadership Skills Series, and newly appointed senior leaders.

April 11–12, 2017 — Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

### RAISING YOUR ENERGY IQ, 201 (FORMERLY UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTIAL ENERGY USAGE)

**Who Should Attend:** All utility employees can benefit from this course, especially those who interact with customers; employees who have the need to explain residential home energy consumption; and employees in member/customer service, conservation, marketing, community outreach, and renewable energy. Recommended, but not required, is completion of the *Raising Your Energy IQ, 101* (formerly *High-Bill Inquiries*) class.

April 18–19, 2017 — Portland, Ore.

### **NEW!** HARDENING WINDOWS NETWORKS

**Who Should Attend:** Network, server, desktop, and security administrators; and management-level individuals interested in this topic.

April 25–28, 2017 — Vancouver, Wash.

### LEADERSHIP SKILLS #3: PERSONALITIES AND ATTITUDES IN THE WORKPLACE

**Who Should Attend:** Supervisors, managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future, and have completed *Leadership Skills #1: Situational Leadership*.

April 26–27, 2017 — Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

### NUTS AND BOLTS OF WORK ORDERS

**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.

April 27–28, 2017 — Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

### A GUIDE TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF RUS ACCOUNTING

**Who Should Attend:** Accounting staff from cooperatives and any other utility using RUS accounting methods.

May 1–2, 2017 — Anchorage, Alaska

### **NEW!** LEADING MILLENNIALS, PREPARING FOR GENERATION Z

**Who Should Attend:** Any manager or supervisor who would like to develop practical skills for managing the newer generation entering the workforce.

May 2, 2017 — Vancouver, Wash.

### HOW TO PERFORM AN ARC FLASH HAZARD CALCULATION STUDY —IEEE 1584

**Who Should Attend:** Electric utility engineering managers, engineers, and others responsible for developing arc flash standards for their utility.

May 2–3, 2017 — Tacoma, Wash.

### SUBSTATION SERIES: SUBSTATION TRANSFORMERS & LTC MAINTENANCE

**Who Should Attend:** Line and substation personnel, as well as engineers who have responsibility for distribution and transmission substations.

May 3, 2017 — Tacoma, Wash.

### ACCOUNTING & FINANCE FUNDAMENTALS FOR UTILITY PERSONNEL

**Who Should Attend:** Administrative professionals and anyone who wants to understand how each role in the utility impacts the budget and financial statement.

May 3–4, 2017 — Anchorage, Alaska

### QUALIFIED WORKER TRAINING—OSHA 1910.269

**Who Should Attend:** Individuals who do not hold an electrical journeyman certificate, but as a part of their duties must enter or open secured areas such as substations, pad mounted transformers, switch gear, vaults, and metering cabinets. Engineers, technicians, meter readers, and other operations personnel are required by OSHA 1910.269 to have this training.

May 4, 2017 — Tacoma, Wash.

### SUBSTATION SERIES: SUBSTATION BATTERY MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

**Who Should Attend:** Line and substation personnel, as well as engineers who have responsibility for distribution and transmission substations.

May 4, 2017 — Tacoma, Wash.

### NWPPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Who Should Attend:** Utility managers; assistant managers; senior staff; power supply managers; utility board and council members; associate members; and trade association heads. For more information, see page 4.

May 7–10, 2017 — Sunriver, Ore.

*Continued on page 10*

# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

## **ANNUAL MEETING PRECONFERENCE CLASS: ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS**

**Who Should Attend:** Any electric utility industry employee (utility or vendor) whose job performance will benefit from a basic understanding of the operations side of the utility business, including engineering; operations; safety; purchasing; information technology; regulatory and rates; customer service; public relations; legal; accounting; as well as utility commissioners and board members.

**May 8, 2017 — Sunriver, Ore.**

## **ANNUAL MEETING PRECONFERENCE CLASS: ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Who Should Attend:** Utility policy makers, such as board members, commissioners, and appointed or elected officials with utility oversight responsibilities.

**May 8, 2017 — Sunriver, Ore.**

## **NEW! ONLINE — NEGOTIATIONS: FROM START TO FINISH (3-PART SERIES)**

**Who Should Attend:** General managers, labor relations managers, members of collective bargaining teams, HR professionals, labor relations professionals, and anyone who wants to truly understand negotiations from beginning to end. Receive a discount by registering for all three webinars at once.

**May 11, 18, & 25, 2017 — Online Presentation**

## **NEW! ONLINE — NEGOTIATIONS: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS**

**Who Should Attend:** General managers, labor relations managers, members of collective bargaining teams, HR professionals, labor relations professionals, and anyone who wants to truly understand negotiations from beginning to end.

**May 11, 2017 — Online Presentation**

## **FACILITATING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**

**Who Should Attend:** Supervisors, managers, and any staff who lead business or team meetings.

**May 16, 2017 — Bend, Ore.**

## **LEADERSHIP SKILLS #2: LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES**

**Who Should Attend:** Supervisors and managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future.

**May 17-18, 2017 — Bend, Ore.**

## **NEW! ONLINE — NEGOTIATIONS BOOT CAMP**

**Who Should Attend:** General managers, labor relations managers, members of collective bargaining teams, HR professionals, labor relations professionals, and anyone who wants to truly understand negotiations from beginning to end.

**May 18, 2017 — Online Presentation**

## **ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS**

**Who Should Attend:** Any electric utility industry employee (utility or vendor) whose job performance will benefit from a basic understanding of the operations side of the utility business, including engineering; operations; safety; purchasing; information technology; regulatory and rates; customer service; public relations; legal; accounting; as well as utility commissioners and board members.

**May 23-24, 2017 — Sacramento, Calif.**

## **DIVERSIFIED COMMUNICATIONS**

**Who Should Attend:** Customer service professionals and any others who need to communicate effectively with customers and members.

**May 24-25, 2017 — Sacramento, Calif.**

## **LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: AC TRANSFORMERS, ADVANCED THEORY, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

**Who Should Attend:** Journeyman linemen, foremen/supervisors, engineers, and those involved in planning, scheduling, and engineering operations for a utility.

**May 24-25, 2017 — Sacramento, Calif.**

## **NEW! ONLINE — NEGOTIATIONS: CLOSING THE DEAL**

**Who Should Attend:** General managers, labor relations managers, members of collective bargaining teams, HR professionals, labor relations professionals, and anyone who wants to truly understand negotiations from beginning to end.

**May 25, 2017 — Online Presentation**

## **STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: UNDERGROUND LINE DESIGN AND SUBDIVISION LAYOUT**

**Who Should Attend:** Staking engineers.

**June 5-7, 2017 — Boise, Idaho**

## **LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES SESSION #1 - SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Who Should Attend:** Supervisors and managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future.

**June 6-7, 2017 — Whitefish, Mont.**

## **WRITING EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

**Who Should Attend:** Anyone who needs to write job descriptions for positions, including board members, utility managers, and human resources staff.

**June 6-7, 2017 — Vancouver, Wash.**

## **STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: PROTECTION/BASIC SECTIONALIZING DESIGN**

**Who Should Attend:** Staking technicians.

**June 7-8, 2017 — Boise, Idaho**

## **STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: LINE INSPECTION**

**Who Should Attend:** Staking technicians.

**June 8-9, 2017 — Boise, Idaho**

## **DISTRIBUTION ENGINEERING SERIES: SESSION 1 - PLANNING AND ANALYSIS**

**Who Should Attend:** Engineers and senior technical personnel involved in distribution system design, planning, modeling, and analysis.

**June 12-16, 2017 — Vancouver, Wash.**

## **INTRODUCTION TO RATE MAKING**

**Who Should Attend:** Staff/analysts who are new to rate setting or the utility industry, as well as those new to demand response or interested in developing a demand response program for their utility.

**June 14, 2017 — Spokane, Wash.**

## **ADVANCED RATE MAKING**

**Who Should Attend:** Analysts and managers who are interested in developing new rates or updating the rate structures for their utility.

**June 15, 2017 — Spokane, Wash.**

## **STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: UNDERGROUND LINE DESIGN AND SUBDIVISION LAYOUT FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES**

**Who Should Attend:** California utility staking engineers.

**June 26-28, 2017 — Alameda, Calif.**

### ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS

**Who Should Attend:** Any electric utility industry employee (utility or vendor) whose job performance will benefit from a basic understanding of the operations side of the utility business, including engineering; operations; safety; purchasing; information technology; regulatory and rates; customer service; public relations; legal; accounting; as well as utility commissioners and board members.

June 27-28, 2017 — Idaho Falls, Idaho

### STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: PROTECTION/BASIC SECTIONALIZING DESIGN FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES

**Who Should Attend:** California utility staking technicians.

June 28-29, 2017 — Alameda, Calif.

### NRECA CCD 2640—FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING

**Who Should Attend:** Directors, policy makers, and general managers of cooperative utilities.

June 28-29, 2017 — Lakewood, Wash.

### TELEPHONE EXCELLENCE

**Who Should Attend:** Customer service professionals and others who work with customers by phone.

June 28-29, 2017 — Idaho Falls, Idaho

### STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: LINE INSPECTION FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES

**Who Should Attend:** California utility staking technicians.

June 29-30, 2017 — Alameda, Calif. **NWPPA**

## 2017 NWPPA Conferences

### NWPPA ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

April 10-13 — Reno, Nev.

### NWPPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

May 7-10 — Sunriver, Ore.

### NORTHWEST COMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY INNOVATIONS CONFERENCE (NIC)

September 17-20 — Sacramento, Calif.

### LABOR & EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP (LERG) ANNUAL MEETING

October 11-13 — Spokane, Wash.

### 3 Cs CONFERENCE

October 25-27 — Spokane, Wash.

### NWPPA/APA ALASKA ELECTRIC UTILITY CONFERENCE

November 13-15 — Anchorage, Alaska

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Line and substation personnel, as well as engineers who have responsibility for distribution and transmission substations, should not miss out on these training opportunities in Tacoma, Wash.

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MAY 3—SUBSTATION TRANSFORMERS & LTC MAINTENANCE

MAY 4—SUBSTATION BATTERY MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

**NWPPA**

## RUS ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTING & FINANCE FUNDAMENTALS

### ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

#### A GUIDE TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF RUS ACCOUNTING

**Who Should Attend:** Accounting staff from cooperatives and any other utility using RUS accounting methods.

May 1-2, 2017

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**Who Should Attend:** Administrative professionals and anyone who wants to understand how each role in the utility impacts the budget and financial statement.

May 3-4, 2017

**NWPPA**



# BRITNI DAVIDSON- CRUICKSHANK

## Loves Helping Provide Energy Assistance to Salem Electric Members

**A** native of Oregon, Salem Electric's Britni Davidson-Cruikshank grew up in Hood River along the Columbia River. Not afraid of working hard, she started waitressing at a neighbor's restaurant at 14 years old and continued the job through college. She attributes this job to why she loves providing customer service to others.

"Working at the fast-paced restaurant was where I learned about customer service," she said. "I quickly learned if you weren't organized and efficient it was really easy to get overwhelmed. I learned to keep busy and look beyond the immediate tasks to find ways to improve efficiency and overall customer satisfaction."

Soon after graduating from Western Oregon University with a Bachelor of

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# “No two days are the same, the members are a top priority, and you help where you are needed.”

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Arts in Spanish, Salem Electric hired her as a customer service representative in April 2003. Nearly 15 years later, she is still with Salem Electric and says she continues to enjoy the variety and fast pace of customer service as well as interacting with members.

“The cooperative spirit was one that I identified with from my experience at the restaurant,” she said. “No two days are the same, the members are a top priority, and you help where you are needed.”

In 2012, Davidson-Cruickshank was promoted to special services representative and began administering the Salem Electric Member Heating Assistance Program, which was created to provide energy assistance to Salem Electric’s low-income members. She was again promoted in 2013, this time to customer service supervisor, and continued administering SEMAP.

“My favorite thing about being a customer service representative was working with members, so I was happy to continue that at a more intimate level,” she said.

“Britni is one of those people that finds solutions. She has the members’ best interests in mind as she works through any issue,” said Salem Electric General Manager Terry Kelly. “With the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation we are fortunate to have people like Britni to take over a leadership role and guide us into the future. She will be joining the management team as member services manager following a retirement in late May.”

The SEMAP is unique in that Salem Electric schedules the appointments, meets with the member, and provides funds for the heating assistance. Salem Electric believes there are many benefits to having the program in-house: any member of the customer service department can schedule an appointment;

customer service staff can make payment arrangements based on the member’s appointment; if the member forgets his or her appointment time, the calendar can be easily accessed to view appointment times; and it’s a great tool for employees to offer members in dire situations.

To qualify, Salem Electric members must have permanently installed electric heat and meet income guidelines. Seniors and persons with disabilities are given first priority (they may apply in December) and are eligible to complete the application by mail or make an appointment to come to the office; non-senior and non-disabled members may begin scheduling appointments in January. The customer service department does its best to make accommodations for members facing imminent disconnection to get them qualified before service is disconnected. Appointment schedules fill up fast, and it is not unusual for appointments to be booked out 6-8 weeks.

Qualifying residential Salem Electric members may also qualify for free weatherization. Measures include: ceiling, floor, wall, and duct insulation; caulking and weather-stripping; and air sealing improvements. In 2016, Salem Electric was able to weatherize 27 low-income homes.

“Offering the free weatherization program piece to our assistance program has been helpful to our members,” said Davidson-Cruickshank. “It’s increased their comfort level in their home while lowering their bills.”

In addition to the SEMAP, Salem Electric members may also receive assistance from the federally funded Low Income Energy Assistance Program or the cooperative’s Dollar-Check-Off Program. Salem Electric partners with two local agencies to administer funds from the Dollar-Check-Off Program to

members facing disconnection throughout the year. Funding for the program is collected monthly from members who pay an extra dollar on their bill and from members assigning their capital credits to the program.

“My favorite thing about administering the SEMAP is working with the members. Many of our low-income members work seasonally, so receiving high winter bills when they’re out of work can be impossible to pay, and many of our members are on a fixed income, so providing assistance during the winter is a huge relief,” said Davidson-Cruickshank. “On a daily basis I get to help our members pay their bill. I get to see the relief on their face when their shut-off notice is cancelled or the tears of joy when they realize they’ll be able to pay their rent. Honestly, I feel lucky to be part of such a great program.” **NWPPA**

*Brenda Dunn is the associate editor at NWPPA. She can be contacted at [brenda@nwppa.org](mailto:brenda@nwppa.org).*



By Kristine Lindemulder

# EMERALD PUD CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING WASTE TO WATTS

As the saying goes, one man's trash is another man's treasure – but for Emerald People's Utility District, the "treasure" is found in transforming resulting landfill gas into enough electricity to power an entire community for a year. On average, that is what can be expected annually from Emerald's methane power plant located at the Short Mountain Landfill in Lane County, Ore.: production of enough electricity to power about 1,500 homes.

At Emerald's methane power plant, naturally occurring, ozone-damaging landfill gas is transformed into valuable electricity, offering substantial benefits to the environment, the atmosphere, and the utility's ratepayers.

This month, Emerald PUD celebrates the power plant's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the successful completion of its recent renovation.

## How it began

In 1985, Emerald approached Lane County with a concept of a landfill-gas-to-electricity plant. Lane County responded with a public request for proposals that was, in turn, granted to Emerald. In November 1988, Emerald's Resource Planning Citizens Advisory Committee – the customer committee charged with studying Emerald's resource strategy – recommended to the board of directors the development of the Short Mountain Project. After extensive study, a public hearing, and careful analysis, Emerald's board made the decision to proceed with development in March 1991.

It was concern for the environment that motivated Emerald to choose equipment with the best emission-control technology available. The Caterpillar engines selected for the project were specially designed to be low-emission

engines, low enough to meet stringent California emission standards. The Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority approved and permitted the project.

Phase 1 became operational in 1992, and a second phase expansion was started in 1993. The total cost was \$2.6 million, and the project paid for itself in about seven years. The end result: generation of roughly 19 million kilowatt-hours and approximately 2.5 average megawatts annually. In 1996, the plant was awarded the US Department of Energy National Award for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

"Emerald was the first utility in the Northwest to generate power from landfill gas. When you think about it, it's pretty amazing," said Scott Coe, general manager. "Emerald had only five years under its belt as an operating utility, but we were quick and nimble and able to lead the way when it came to green energy initiatives. People still look to us today for projects that are new and innovative."

## Environmental responsibility

Landfills are one of the main sources of methane emissions in the United States. Methane, a harmful greenhouse gas, is naturally generated as landfill waste decomposes. Pound for pound, its comparative impact on climate change is about 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

Emerald is a partner of the Environmental Protection Agency in its Climate Challenge Initiative to combat global warming. The methane power plant is a formidable defense against the damage the Short Mountain landfill would otherwise cause. At the plant, the landfill gas is captured before it reaches the atmosphere and is moved

into the combustion process to create electricity. In 2014, more than 368 million cubic feet of gas was captured and transformed – more than a million cubic feet of methane per day prevented from harming the atmosphere!

"Since the plant has been in operation, we've generated enough energy to provide power to 35,000 homes for a year, and eliminated greenhouse gases equivalent to what is produced by a vehicle driving more than 800 million miles – that's more than four times the distance to and from the sun," Coe said. "It is an incredible accomplishment."

The methane power plant extracts naturally occurring methane through vertical and horizontal wells in the landfill. Thirty vertical wells ranging between 45 and 85 feet deep, and 65 horizontal wells buried in the landfill, capture 1,200 cubic feet per minute of landfill gas. As new sections of the landfill are filled, Emerald will install additional wells to replace old wells.

After landfill gas is extracted from individual wells, it is piped through the collection system and brought to the power plant. The gas passes through a system that removes moisture and filters out particulates. After this process, the gas is injected into large gas-fired, internal combustion engines and burned to generate electricity.

## Advancing with technology

The engines at the methane power plant had been reliable and productive for more than 20 years; however, electricity production was known to vary drastically from year to year, by as much as one million kilowatt-hours or more. Among the contributing factors for the variances were changing concentrations of decomposing organic landfill material and fluctuating weather



*Landfill Gas Generator Technician Jason Rice is one of only 2.5 employees needed to maintain and operate the system.*

*The plant's original gas blower was replaced with a larger, more efficient model that offered automation controls through an intricate electrical panel.*

and precipitation levels, but there were also equipment limitations to consider. The aging technology required heavy operator involvement to keep the engines working at their peak efficiency, and the risk of damaging the engines was always present. Operators struggled to manage the rapidly changing, incoming fuel pressure and avoid damaging the temperamental units.

These challenges prompted the utility to investigate available equipment upgrades. In 2015, the board of directors voted to implement a series of improvements – improvements that thrust the plant into the familiar forefront of innovation.

Over the span of nearly two years, Emerald saw each of the plant's four engines rebuilt and modernized with a new, advanced control system. This gave the plant operators more settings options and allowed some adjustments to be completed remotely, cutting down after-hours labor. The plant's original gas blower was replaced with a larger, more efficient model that offered automation controls through an intricate electrical panel. The panel enables the blower system to maintain desired pressure and a new heat exchanger to reduce gas temperatures, making the generation process more productive.

"The new controls are similar to upgrading a car engine from a carburetor to a fuel injection system," explained Jason Rice, landfill gas generator technician. "It makes the engines much more reliable and increases production."

The updated engines now feature the capability to adjust automatically to erratic gas supply, thereby performing at their optimum efficiency level and protecting the equipment with minimal operator involvement. The new control system also provides greater mitigation of the landfill's gas emissions, allowing more of captured gas to be processed and less to escape into the atmosphere. As a result of these implementations, kilowatt production has increased by 20 percent and operational overtime has been reduced significantly.

"I'm proud of the work we do here at the power plant," said Rice. "It feels good to know we're removing dangerous greenhouse gases from the air, and providing clean energy and a healthier environment for our customers and communities."

### **Looking forward**

Emerald's methane power plant is a relatively low-cost resource. It helps keep Emerald's rates low by providing

additional energy for the utility while requiring only 2.5 employees to maintain and operate the system.

"Since the Short Mountain landfill plans to accept refuse for many years into the future, we expect the methane power plant to continue to produce electricity for another 25 to 30 years," Coe said. "We are excited to see what it can accomplish in that time."

The methane power plant is currently performing a weekly generation of 368,137 kWh, or 19,143,128 kWh annually, and reduces the landfill's greenhouse gas emissions by 1.6 million cubic feet per week, or 584 million over the course of a year. Over the plant's 25 year history, it has produced more than 478,578,200 kWh.

Since all four engines were upgraded and operational by the end of 2016, Emerald expects these production results to increase in 2017. **NWPPA**

*Kristine Lindemulder is the communications coordinator for Emerald People's Utility District in Eugene, Ore. She can be contacted at (541) 744-7410 or [Kristine@epud.org](mailto:Kristine@epud.org).*

By Linda Mar

# ENERGY NORTHWEST Leverages Technology to Gain Efficiencies

**D**uring the course of the last three years, Energy Northwest began several projects to leverage technology to streamline business processes, ensure correct retention of records, and reduce paper usage. The implementation of automated procedure process workflows and electronic content and records management, both available tools within Microsoft SharePoint, provided the agency substantial efficiency gains.

### Automated procedure process workflow

In early 2014, EN's Records & Information Management team looked at ways to streamline the agency's procedure revision process. At the time, the process required individuals to walk around with large stacks of paper from office to office to get desired reviews and approvals. The time-consuming, arduous, and labor-intensive process generated hundreds of thousands of pages of paper each year. The paper would then be scanned, the revision information processed in the document management system with an uploaded image, and the paper recycled.

The team introduced a proof of concept to move to a fully automated procedure revision process using created workflows to mimic the existing manual process. The original proof of concept, while not without flaws, proved that full automation was a viable solution to provide an efficient and effective procedure revision process. Beginning in September 2014, the EN Records & Information Management team worked with their colleagues in the Information Services department and a vendor to develop workflows and code required for supporting a fully automated process. They built workflows in Microsoft SharePoint (using both SharePoint and Nintex functionality) and incorporated use of electronic signatures for reviews and approvals. This was a first for Energy Northwest.

In June 2015, the team implemented a fully automated process to support revisions to procedures at the Columbia Generating Station nuclear plant. The system now requires minimal interaction for issuance, and document management system updates are now automated.

Six months later, the team used the existing application to roll out a similar system for the agency's corporate policies, procedures, and instructions.

### Looking ahead

The team is now working on a form revision workflow and automation for the plant's Engineering department.

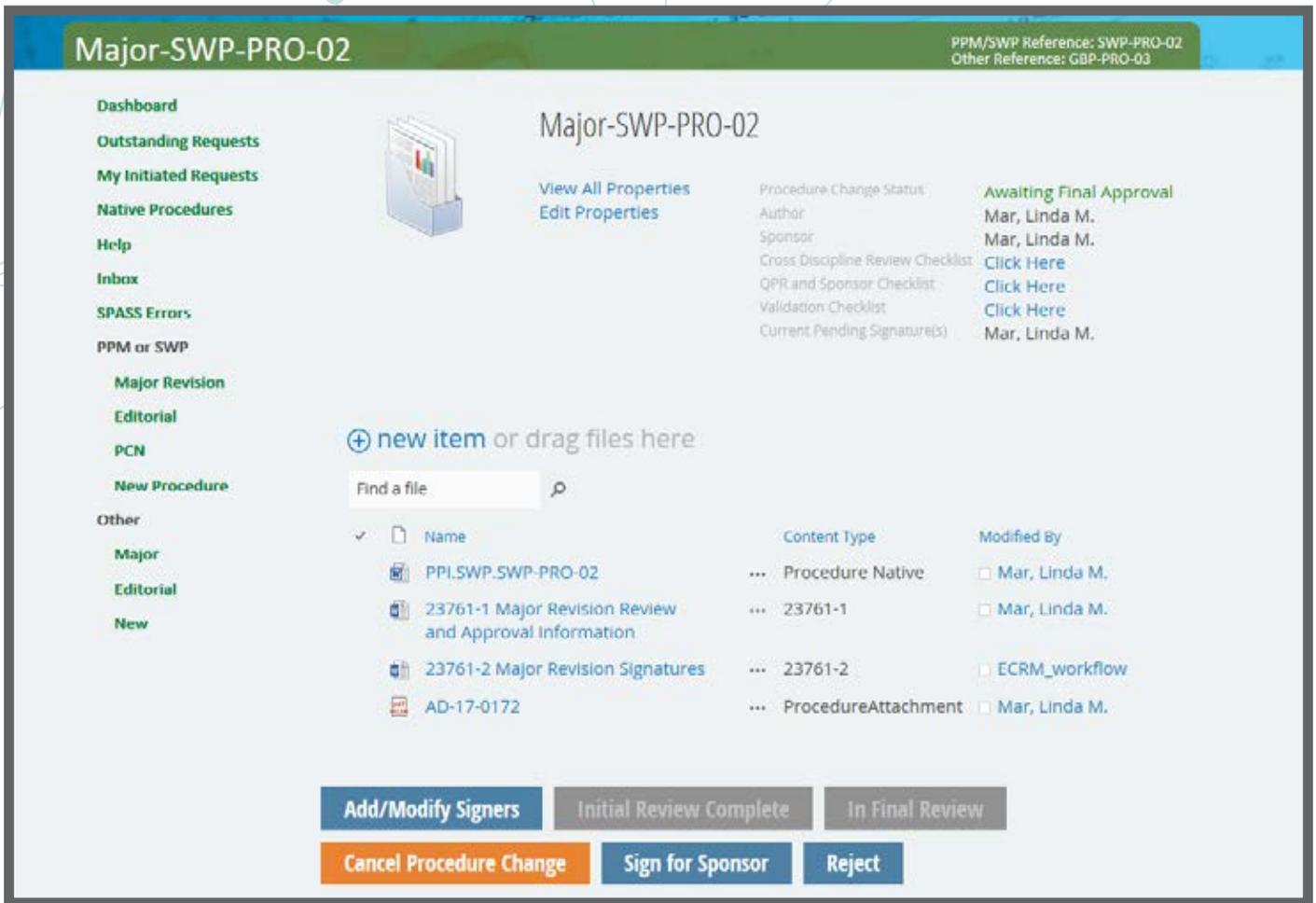
This spring, the team will deploy a form revision process workflow. The current process involves employees going to the intranet to download a form to complete and print for signature routing within the department. The form revision process will allow an employee to open a document, fill in the appropriate areas, and route for signature electronically without having the need to download and print.

The team is also working with Engineering to provide a process to automate calculation revisions and plans to work on engineering document revisions. By automating and streamlining these processes, the result will be more efficiency, again resulting in faster turnaround time for issuance and reduction in paper usage.

### Electronic content and record management

In conjunction with the workflow implementations, Records & Information Management and Information Services staff worked to roll out an electronic content and records management solution, scheduled for completion in June, using Microsoft SharePoint with Gimmel. The three-year project allows EN to manage electronic documents and records within a structured environment. All agency departments are in the process of transitioning to the electronic contents and records management from the use of a shared network drive to Microsoft SharePoint.

Prior to shared drive enhancement, each department managed their drive and each drive was unique to meet the team's working environment, making management of records difficult. The team spent a lot of time explaining the benefits of the improved process with department representatives.



(Above) A document set is used to manage the in-process revision. The documents, procedure, and paperwork for all required signatures is included in the document set.

The Records & Information Management and Information Services team worked closely with 51 department representatives, ranging from managers and supervisors to administrative staff and first line workers, to identify department-specific structures, build the required sites, and train individuals. At an established and agreed-upon point in time, the shared drive locations will be locked to “read-” or “delete-” only status to transition department employees over to the new structure built in SharePoint.

As of mid-February, EN is on track to complete implementation of the electronic content and records management sites across all departments. The team will test and place into production a 4.0 version of the automated procedure process workflows this summer following Columbia’s refueling and

maintenance outage. The team will continue to look for ways to improve both systems as well as make the systems user-friendly and create efficiencies. **NWPPA**

*Linda Mar is a supervisor in Energy Northwest’s Records & Information Management. She can be contacted at [lmarr@energy-northwest.com](mailto:lmarr@energy-northwest.com).*

### Nicolas Procos Appointed as Alameda GM

**A**lameda City Manager **Jill Keimach** announced on February 7 the appointment of **Nicolas Procos** as general manager of City-owned Alameda Municipal Power, replacing former General Manager **Glenn Steiger**, who retired from the utility in August.

Recently as manager of utilities administration for the Port of Oakland, Procos was responsible for all utility functions. Prior to that, he worked for the City of Palo Alto Utilities Department, Alameda Municipal Power, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Procos has over 17 years of experience with electric, gas, water, wastewater, and fiber optic utilities.

“We are delighted that Nico has accepted the challenge to lead Alameda Municipal Power,” said Keimach. “We conducted an extensive national search and ended up finding an experienced power utility professional with an impressive career right here in the East Bay.”

Procos took leadership of AMP on February 22, 2017. Assistant City Manager **Liz Warmerdam** had been serving as the interim general manager at AMP since September 2016.



### NCPA Invests in California Solar Energy Project

**T**he Northern California Power Agency has approved a long-term agreement with the Sustainable Power Group (sPower) to purchase renewable energy from a 17-megawatt solar array project in the city of Lancaster. The project, which is expected to begin operations by 2021, will provide renewable energy to five of NCPA's member utilities: the cities of Biggs, Gridley, Healdsburg, Lodi, and the Port of Oakland.

Under the power purchase agreement, NCPA will receive energy from the solar project for 20 years, with options to purchase the facility and add energy storage infrastructure. NCPA is equipped to provide scheduling coordination services between the solar facility and the participating NCPA member utilities. The project is expected to produce up to 50,500 megawatt-hours of renewable energy annually—enough electricity to power more than 7,500 homes. This will help each of the five participating NCPA utilities move closer to their goal of a 50-percent renewable energy portfolio by 2030.

In addition to providing renewable energy, the agreement is also cost effective. The 20-year contract includes a fixed price of \$39 per megawatt-hour, which is substantially less than many other forms of power generation in the state.

“This project helps illustrate the value our publicly owned electric utilities experience through joint action,” said NCPA's general manager, **Randy Howard**. “They receive tremendous value by working together to achieve the economies of scale that make these types of cost-effective renewable energy opportunities possible.” **NWPPA**

### PCWA Modernizing Gold Rush Canals

**A**t its February 2 meeting, the Placer County Water Agency (Auburn, Calif.) Board of Directors approved a construction contract to upgrade PCWA's Greeley Canal with new automated technology. The Greeley Canal Improvements project is part of a larger effort by the Agency to stabilize water deliveries and reduce water losses from its canal system, which dates back to California's Gold Rush.

“The Greeley Canal delivers irrigation water to 300 customers, using about 4,400 acre-feet of water per year,” said Director of Technical Services **Brent Smith**. “To ensure customer deliveries, canals like this spill water at designated regulating points. We anticipate that with the technology upgrades, we can monitor and minimize these spills and save about 400 acre-feet of water per year, or 10 percent.”

Improvements to the Greeley Canal include a previously installed automated head gate, monitoring equipment for enhanced data collection, and a new automated valve. The automated head gate and valve will adjust based on monitoring data, ensuring that the last customer on the canal gets their allocation while minimizing excess flow. **NWPPA**

### Doug Miller Announces Retirement

**P**acific County PUD (Long Beach, Wash.) General Manager **Doug Miller** has announced his plans to retire. Miller, who has served as general manager since 1994, will be stepping away from the helm of the PUD in October 2017. The PUD's chief of engineering and operations, **Jason Dunsmoor**, has been tapped to replace Miller and the two will work together to ensure a smooth transition.

Miller has been active in the Washington PUD Association, serving in leadership positions as chairman (chair and vice chair) of the Energy Committee for multiple terms, vice chair of the Managers Committee in 2002, chair of the Managers Committee, and a member of the Executive Committee in 2002 and 2003.

Miller started his career at the PUD in an intern position during the summer of 1978. He was hired full time as a distribution engineer in 1979 before being promoted to chief of engineering and operations manager in 1989; a position he remained in until being named general manager. **NWPPA**

## Alaska Railbelt Utilities Sign Power Pooling Agreement

Three of Alaska's Railbelt electric utilities have signed an agreement to collectively utilize their generation and transmission assets to benefit tens of thousands of customers. The Power Pooling and Joint Dispatch Agreement, signed by Chugach Electric Association, Municipal Light & Power, the Municipality of Anchorage, and Matanuska Electric Association, was filed with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on January 30.

Signing of the agreement solidifies work of the utilities on a power market, allowing the utilities to buy and sell power when it is more economic than generating their own. By running the most efficient units first, regardless of location or ownership, the utilities estimate the arrangement will jointly save \$12 to \$16 million a year in fuel, operations, and maintenance costs, and will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 90,000 to 120,000 tons per year.

"Working together to provide power to our customers in the most efficient, cost-effective manner means lower costs and improved reliability for everyone," said **Lee Thibert**, Chugach CEO. "This agreement represents a lot of hard work and cooperation on behalf of thousands of Alaska electric customers, and I want to thank everyone involved for the great work done."

A filing requesting RCA approval of the final, long-term agreement is expected in 2018. **NWPPA**

## Judd Honored at Okanogan PUD

During the Okanogan PUD (Wash.) Board of Commissioners Meeting on February 6, General Manager **John Grubich** presented **Erick Judd** with an award for 10 years of service to the utility. Judd is currently a journeyman meterman headquartered in Okanogan. **NWPPA**



(L-R) General Manager John Grubich and Journeyman Meterman Erick Judd.

## Lewis County PUD Welcomes New Commissioner

On January 10, commissioners and staff welcomed newly elected Commissioner **Tim Cournyer** to Lewis County PUD (Chehalis, Wash.). Cournyer represents District 3 that generally comprises the southern and eastern parts of Lewis County. He was raised in east Lewis County and graduated from Morton High School. Cournyer continued his education at Centralia College earning his Associate of Arts degree and transferred to Central Washington University graduating with a Bachelor of Science in accounting. Cournyer was the CFO at Morton General Hospital for 12.5 years and has been working as the CEO of Forks General Hospital for the last two year.

He was elected in November to the six-year term, replacing longtime Commissioner **Charles TenPas**. Cournyer joins Commissioner **Dean Dahlin** and Commissioner **Ben Kostick**. **NWPPA**

## BANC, SMUD Agree to Join ISO's Western EIM

The California Independent System Operator and the Balancing Authority of Northern California, acting on behalf of its member Sacramento Municipal Utility District, signed an agreement on February 24 to participate in the ISO's western energy imbalance market beginning in April 2019.

"We are pleased to have a BANC member join the successful energy imbalance market," said **Steve Berberich**, ISO president and CEO. "SMUD is one of the premiere community-owned utilities in the country that will benefit from access to low-cost resources from the entire EIM footprint."

BANC, a joint powers agency whose members include the Modesto Irrigation District, the City of Redding, the City of Roseville, SMUD, the City of Shasta Lake, and Trinity Public Utilities District, announced last October it would begin negotiations on behalf of its members to develop the EIM implementation agreement with the ISO.

SMUD, the nation's sixth largest municipal utility, will be the first BANC member to join the only real-time market in the West.

"We have coordinated with the ISO for many years and have a solid understanding of how the real-time market works, which will help smooth the technical work needed to align our grid systems," said **Arlen Orchard**, SMUD CEO and general manager. "We look forward to realizing the benefits our EIM participation will generate for our customers as well as having another tool to help achieve California's energy and environmental goals." **NWPPA**

### CRPUD Floating Homes Annexation Vote to Be Held

Columbia River PUD (St. Helens, Ore.) customers who reside in floating homes that sit outside the PUD's political boundary in Multnomah Channel will vote on annexing into the district in May. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution on February 23, 2017, calling for annexation measures to be placed on the ballots in Columbia and Multnomah Counties for the May 16, 2017, election.

CRPUD Board President **Jake Carter** and Director **Rob Mathers** represented the PUD during the hearing before Multnomah County. Multnomah County Commissioner **Sharon Meieran**, whose district includes the affected Multnomah County customers, noted that it appeared that voters in the area were supportive of the annexation effort.

With the passage of the resolution, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners will send ballot titles and explanatory statements to the Elections Departments for Columbia and Multnomah Counties. Under state law, when a special district proposes annexation of territory in two counties, the county with the highest assessed value of the property to be annexed is required to pass resolutions calling for the annexation. In this case, Multnomah County had the higher assessed value, and therefore passed the resolution calling for the annexations in both counties. Each county will now send its own ballots to its electors. **NWPPA**

### EWEB Devotes an Additional \$100K to Help Customers

To help low-income families struggling with higher-than-average electricity bills following the cold weather in December and January, the Eugene Water & Electric Board (Ore.) will devote an additional \$100,000 to its income-eligible assistance programs to lend a hand to an additional 500 households in need.

The extra \$100,000 in low-income funding is on top of the \$1.5 million the utility already budgets each year to help those who meet income eligibility guidelines and also customers who have lost their jobs. Customers who have lost their jobs and are receiving state unemployment benefits can receive a \$200 bill credit, regardless of income.

In 2016, EWEB provided assistance to more than 5,000 households through its Customer Care programs. This year, EWEB is taking additional steps to help customers impacted by the extremely cold weather.

The average temperature in Eugene between December 15 and January 31 was 34 degrees. There were more than 20 days in that time period when temperatures plummeted below freezing. In addition, that additional electric usage during extremely cold weather can move customers into a higher energy price category. **NWPPA**

### Whitfield Recognized for Pellet Stove Innovation

OPALCO (Eastsound, Wash.) recently recognized **Dr. Jerry Whitfield**, who is OPALCO's board vice president, an inventor, and a former Boeing engineer, for his development of the highly efficient pellet stove, which burns compressed wood or biomass pellets. He was also recognized in *Seattle Magazine's* 2016 list of "Top Essential Innovations that Seattle Gave the World." Congratulations, Dr. Whitfield!



**NWPPA**

### Emerald PUD Offers Five Community Scholarships

Emerald People's Utility District (Eugene, Ore.) is accepting applications for its annual scholarship program. "Emerald PUD was started by this community and it is important to us that we give back. Providing opportunities for customer-owners to continue their education is one of the ways we do this," said **Kevin Parrish**, Emerald PUD Board president.

Five \$1,250 scholarships are available to individuals who will attend college or utility industry career training in 2017.

"These scholarships are for senior high school students, returning college students, and adults looking for second-career education or training," Parrish said.

Emerald PUD has offered annual scholarship opportunities to its customer-owners since 1990. This is the ninth year Emerald PUD has offered the scholarship to adults interested in pursuing second-career training as well as high school seniors. This is also the ninth year the funds were targeted specifically to utility industry career training. **NWPPA**

### MEA Announces Safety Contest for Fourth Graders

Matanuska Electric Association (Palmer, Alaska) is highlighting its focus on member safety through a new 2017 Spotlight on Safety Contest for area youth.

In addition to the contest, MEA will present to local fourth grade classes about electrical safety and power distribution basics.

Winners of the contest will be announced at the MEA Annual Meeting on April 25 at the Alaska State Fairgrounds. The deadline to enter the Spotlight on Safety Contest is March 31. **NWPPA**

## Brons Recognized at Douglas PUD

Douglas County PUD Commissioners **Ronald E. Skagen**, **Molly Simpson**, and **Aaron J. Viebrock** awarded Networks Line Foreman **Brian Brons** with his 20-year service award during the February 13, 2017, commission meeting held at the District's East Wenatchee, Wash., office.

Brons thanked the commission and said, "It has been a real pleasure to work here." **NWPPA**



(L-R) Commissioner Aaron J. Viebrock, Commissioner Molly Simpson, Brian Brons, and Commissioner Ronald E. Skagen.

## Chelan Ends Year \$20M Ahead of Budget

On February 6, Chelan County PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.) commissioners got the good financial news that the utility ended 2016 with bottom line results that were \$20 million more than budget for the year. The strong results mean the District is able to invest in major upgrades at Rocky Reach and Rock Island dams without borrowing or raising rates in 2017.

A combination of higher revenues and fewer expenses were the main reasons for the \$95.7 million bottom line results, said Chief Financial/Risk Officer **Kelly Boyd**. The PUD also ended the year with \$483 million in cash, \$46 million more than budget.

The results exceeded the District's financial targets including debt ratio, now at 42.8 percent (target was less than 50 percent) and on track to be less than 35 percent next year—a year earlier than the current goal, **Boyd** said. **NWPPA**

## Clark's Third Annual Race for Warmth Raises More Than \$50K

Produced by Clark Public Utilities, the third annual Race for Warmth was held on January 29 in Vancouver, Wash., and raised more than \$50,000 for the donor-funded heating assistance program Operation Warm Heart.

The timed 10K run took 245 racers out and back along the Vancouver waterfront; another 716 runners and walkers completed a 5K loop through the downtown area.

Generous support from local businesses offset event costs to maximize net proceeds for the cause, and every dollar of registrations went directly to Operation Warm Heart.

"Our event partners, media sponsors, and employee volunteers are all part of the success of this event," said **Maxie Lofton**, communications coordinator at Clark Public Utilities. "Overhead costs other events have to pay for out of the proceeds have been generously covered by our partners, and being a utility with tents and cones on hand, not to mention employees who are certified flaggers to keep participants safe along the route, means the money raised goes straight to helping people in need through Operation Warm Heart."

Since its creation in 1985, Operation Warm Heart has provided nearly \$2.4 million to about 11,000 customers in financial crisis. The donor-funded program helps families in need who may not qualify for other government programs. For more than 30 years, Clark Public Utilities customers and employees have generously funded Operation Warm Heart. **NWPPA**



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### Meguire Whitney Hires Two New Employees

**G**overnment relations and strategic communications firm Meguire Whitney recently hired **Jackson Droney** and **Emily Brunini Peterson**.

Droney joins Meguire Whitney as a principal, focusing on tax and cybersecurity policy as well as emerging issues affecting public power, such as data analytics, drone policy, and other issues. He previously spent nearly seven years as an aide to **Sen. Barbara Boxer** (D-Calif.), the past two years as the senator's senior economic policy advisor managing the tax portfolio.

Peterson, another principal, worked in the U.S. Senate for over 11 years. She has worked in the personal office of **Sen. Thad Cochran** (R-Miss.), specifically focusing on energy and environment-related policy and appropriations matters, and as a professional staff member on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water. At Meguire Whitney, she will focus on water and resources issues, including hydropower, PMAs, and endangered species.

Meguire Whitney is a government relations firm for community-focused electric utilities. For more information, visit [www.meguirewhitney.com](http://www.meguirewhitney.com). **NWPPA**



*Jackson Droney*



*Emily Brunini Peterson*

### Sunverge Names New COO, Board Members

**O**n January 30, intelligent energy storage provider Sunverge Energy announced the appointment of three experienced energy executives to key roles with the company, positioning Sunverge to build rapidly on its 2016 growth trajectory. Sunverge named former Nexant CTO and general manager **Martin Milani** as its first chief operating officer. He is responsible for the company's strategy, development, and delivery of Sunverge's advanced energy storage platform.

The company also named two new members to its board of directors: **John Di Stasio**, former CEO of SMUD and current president of the Large Public Power Council; and **Elisabeth Brinton**, executive general manager of Australian energy retailer AGL Energy Limited. Brinton joins her colleague, AGL Executive General Manager **Alistair Preston**, on the board of directors.

Sunverge Energy allows homeowners efficient management of their own renewable energy generation and helps utilities, retailers, and solar power providers manage those renewable power sources and aggregate them into virtual power plants. For more information, please visit [www.sunverge.com](http://www.sunverge.com). **NWPPA**

### TE Connectivity Releases New Catalog

**T**E Connectivity, a world leader in connectivity and sensors, released its new Identification Solutions Catalog to provide customers easy access to the full range of TE identification products and solutions. The comprehensive catalog includes identification solutions in the following product families: printable tubing; printable tags; standard labels; pre-printed markers; and printers, software, and accessories.

The catalog's index provides a visual reference for customers to quickly locate a part in the catalog by image, part number, or product description.

TE Connectivity is a \$12 billion global technology leader. Its commitment to innovation enables advancements in transportation, industrial applications, medical technology, energy, data communications, and the home. For more information, visit [www.te.com](http://www.te.com). **NWPPA**

### Novinium Hires New Engineering Talents

**O**n February 16, Novinium, an end-to-end safety and reliability solutions provider for utilities, announced the hiring of **Michael Pines**, mechanical engineer, and **Kevin Laux**, field support engineer.

Pines joins Novinium after working as an engineer focused on military shipbuilding in Newport News, Va., and most recently working at a production manufacturing facility in Kent, Wash. His roles on the design and development team are to strengthen Novinium's 3D modeling and design capabilities, and provide a cutting-edge engineering PDM system.

Laux joins Novinium after working on an extensive research project investigating the thermal properties of 3D printed metallic. He holds a Master of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. His roles are to provide engineering services to the operational field team and to support the Novinium help desk.

Novinium is the only full-service power cable expert that partners with utility companies of all sizes to keep networks operating at peak performance. For more information, visit [www.novinium.com](http://www.novinium.com). **NWPPA**



*Michael Pines*



*Kevin Laux*

## Terex Utilities Team Members Help Homeless Services

At the end of January, Terex Utilities team members from across the nation traveled to Omaha, Neb., for the company's annual sales training meeting. While there, 74 of its employees spent time serving four local human service agencies in Omaha and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Projects were facilitated by United Way of the Midlands, which included painting, organizing donations, and assembling care packages. All four local Omaha and Council Bluffs agencies provide shelter and/or meals for the homeless.

"At Terex, one of our core values is citizenship. While planning our annual sales meeting, we wanted to include activities that not only fostered team building, but also gave team members the opportunity to volunteer," said **Jim Lohan**, VP Sales and Marketing, Terex Utilities. "While it was optional for team members to participate, more than 90 percent of our attendees signed up and the experience was impactful."

Terex Corporation is a global manufacturer of lifting and material processing products and services delivering lifecycle solutions that maximize customer return on investment. More information about Terex is available at [www.Terex.com](http://www.Terex.com), [www.linkedin.com/company/terex](http://www.linkedin.com/company/terex), and [www.facebook.com/TerexCorporation](http://www.facebook.com/TerexCorporation). **NWPPA**



*Terex Utilities team members sort through items at the Open Door Mission agency in Omaha, Neb.*

## NRTC and Nest Create Residential DR Program

One of the things NRTC has learned is that today, more than ever, demand management is vitally important to its members.

NRTC and Nest, the leader in connected home technology, have now partnered to offer member co-ops a cost-effective solution for residential demand response (DR) using a product that millions of customers have already adopted.

NRTC solutions make life easier for linemen in the field, technicians remotely monitoring systems, or the manager planning deployment and financing. For more information, visit [www.nrtc.coop](http://www.nrtc.coop) or contact **Dick Martin**, NRTC's director of demand management solutions, at [dmartin@nrtc.coop](mailto:dmartin@nrtc.coop). **NWPPA**

## Alaska Community to Receive ABB Microgrid

ABB will provide an innovative microgrid, combining battery- and flywheel-based storage technologies designed to test scalability and improve power stability, for around 300,000 people in Anchorage, Alaska. The small-scale project, initiated by Chugach Electric Association, aims to identify technologies that will enable the integration of more renewables, including wind power from a 17-megawatt wind farm on Fire Island, located about 4 kilometers off the coast of Anchorage.

ABB's modular and containerized microgrid solution PowerStore™ will blend the complementary capabilities of two storage technologies: flywheel and battery storage. The flywheel will facilitate the integration of fluctuating wind power and the battery will be used for long-term storage. The battery has a capacity of 500 kilowatt-hours with a maximum performance of 2 megawatts.

"This innovative solution shows how energy storage technology can boost renewable energy penetration in Alaska and have far-reaching implications for new renewable projects on the Railbelt as well as in smaller Alaskan communities," said **Paul Risse**, senior vice president, Power Supply at Chugach Electric.

ABB is a pioneering technology leader in electrification products, robotics and motion, industrial automation, and power grids, serving customers in utilities, industry, and transport and infrastructure globally. For more information, visit [www.abb.com](http://www.abb.com). **NWPPA**

## SEL Increases Starting Wage

On February 23, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories announced 100 new assembler openings and a starting wage increase to \$13.50 per hour during a Community Open House celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SEL Lewiston.

More than 945 people attended the event where SEL President **Dr. Edmund O. Schweitzer, III**, made the announcement.

"What better way to celebrate our 5<sup>th</sup> birthday in Lewiston than to announce that we are opening 100 new assembler positions," said Schweitzer.

SEL expanded into Lewiston in response to the number of employees commuting to Pullman from the LC Valley.

"We did the math. We had about 100 employees commuting from the valley. That's about 60 miles per day, 230 days per year which adds up to 1,380,000 miles annually and 34,500 hours of driving time," he said. "That's time that our folks could be at home with their families."

SEL serves the power industry worldwide through the design, manufacture, supply, and support of products and services for power system protection, monitoring, control, automation, communications, and metering. For more information, visit [www.selinc.com](http://www.selinc.com). **NWPPA**

By Elizabeth K. Whitney

# Deconstructing the Chaos Narrative—What’s Really Going on in Washington, D.C.?

**W**ashington, D.C., is accustomed to the upheaval and whiplash that results when party control changes in the White House. That transition typically includes a sense of halt and reversal as the new Administration staffs up, assesses the work its predecessor had in process, and begins putting its own imprimatur on policy.

This year, however, D.C. is being portrayed as being in a state of chaos with the transition to the Trump Administration. To be sure, there is a decidedly different mood in the air – largely associated with the new President’s “Washington outsider” status and the fact that few insiders predicted or prepared for his electoral win. But dismissing the rapid-fire events in D.C. as chaos misses a shift to a new political paradigm we must quickly learn to understand.

Unlike the familiar and predictable tension between the two political parties, the new dynamic exacerbates some aspects of partisanship, fragments others, and disrupts traditional political norms. That disruption is one the Trump Administration believes voters demanded by electing a change agent to the presidency—but more helpful than the chaos framework for describing the new dynamic is one that examines the new and multiple tensions it displays as that change takes place.

### **In the Senate: transition by the numbers, not by the book**

Presidential transitions have been trending towards being more partisan over the last 30 years. Presidents have been increasingly likely to nominate those with strong ideologies to lead agencies, and the Senate’s role to provide advice and consent on those nominees

is more likely to feature contested nominations that delay the work of the incoming administration. For context, President George W. Bush’s nominees received 157 “no” votes in the Senate; Barack Obama’s received 406 across his eight-year term. President Trump has seen 252 “no” votes for just nine nominees so far.

It is not just a partisan approach that is dragging out the process; President Trump has also been slower than past winners to nominate cabinet members and other political appointees after the election, largely because his campaign focused on winning votes rather than on transition matters. The eventual nominees have also been more likely to have never held office before, in keeping with the President’s preference for political outsiders like himself, which has slowed the vetting process.

From a procedural standpoint, the Senate floor will be the bottleneck through which any major legislative changes must ultimately pass to survive. From a political perspective, it is the one place where the Democratic minority has a foothold of power to provide a check on an otherwise unified Republican government. That means the tension between the political parties is more pronounced than usual, and that Senate Democrats feel significant pressure to delay and obstruct the Trump agenda at every turn.

### **In the House: political scrambling**

With the Senate preoccupied by nominations for the foreseeable future, the House has taken the lead on major legislative initiatives. Both health care repeal and comprehensive tax reform are campaign promises on which Republicans now feel intense pressure to deliver.

However, Congressional Republicans were not expecting to control both chambers and the White House, and did not plan a legislative strategy to take advantage of it. While both health care and tax reform can bypass the Senate minority’s bottleneck strategy by using a procedural move known as reconciliation, that process is proving more complicated than originally thought.

One reconciliation measure per fiscal year may advance, and it is tied to the statutory requirements of the budget process. For example, tax reform cannot pass until the FY18 budget process creates reconciliation measures to facilitate it. The FY18 budget process cannot begin until the FY17 process has concluded, and the FY17 process cannot conclude until Republicans have passed a health care bill to satisfy that year’s reconciliation instructions. But standing up a bill that will meet those requirements without collapsing the health insurance market is extraordinarily delicate policy work, and House Republicans are actively working to manage expectations about the scope and timing of reform.

That pressure is compounded by the unpredictable and controversial nature of policy coming from the new White House. Members of the House of Representatives are the most vulnerable to changing political winds because they stand for re-election every two years, and the 2016 election revealed that elected officials have a looser grasp on their voters’ views than previously thought. Therefore, the relevant tensions in the House are no longer between the two parties, but among the various factions within the Republican majority and their varying relationships with the President and his policies.

## Inside the White House: chaos on purpose, but perhaps not by design

Stumbles are to be expected from a president who has never before held elected office. Some practices that are second nature to seasoned politicians, such as consulting with key members of Congress before rolling out major Executive Orders or declining to speak with foreign leaders before taking office, have become points of criticism for the Trump Administration.

It is not a simple lack of familiarity with protocol, however, that drives decision-making in the Trump White House. The President (and, in particular, his top adviser Steve Bannon) are not just disregarding political norms but actively working to disrupt them—seeing this as part of the change voters wanted. While many see disarray in the President's style, some say that Trump intentionally uses shock and distraction to intimidate, confuse, or fatigue other parties, giving him an edge in negotiations.

That deal-making approach may have consequences when applied to governance, according to conventional wisdom, though Trump enjoys continued support from his base voters. It remains to be seen whether Trump's brash style—or his rejection of more sacred norms, such as national security protocol—will eventually cross a line with supporters.

## The fourth estate: media

If Congressional Republicans and the White House have an uneasy relationship, the press and the White House have a combative one. The President and his team have referred to the mainstream media as “the opposition party,” and the press continues to respond with intense coverage of Trump's inflammatory statements and scrutiny of his actions.

Nevertheless, President Trump has a direct line of communication to his supporters through Twitter, and the media is struggling with its own relevance and role in the new dynamic—in some sense,

the media reports on chaos because it is itself in transition.

One lesson to be learned is that elected officials are finding it difficult to trust polling or the media to understand their states and districts, so listening to the voices of people they represent is even more important. That is a good thing for community leaders like local electric utility managers.

## Order in the courts?

Although there will be a contentious battle over President Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, the courts themselves are largely impervious to political turmoil. Instead, by their very nature, the courts seek to impose order and consistency on events.

The Administrative Procedure Act is often the framework for reviewing agency action in the courts. It imposes notice and comment periods, lengthy supporting documents, and other legal requirements, many of which are at odds with the Trump Administration's preference for quick executive action (and—of interest to electric utilities—the last two Administrations have fought most of their environmental battles in the courts; this one is unlikely to be different). The President and House Republicans have laid the groundwork to undo some rulemaking requirements and walk back judicial doctrine—something courts are likely to receive with skepticism.

While this particular tension has not yet fully developed, the President's Executive Order on immigration gave a preview of sorts: after the government's arguments were voted down, the President provided a swift retort on Twitter, but then moved to amend the objectionable parts of the text. This may mean that the White House will take one tactic with respect to public relations and another with respect to legal strategy.

## The end of the beginning

So far the multiple tensions described above have prevented progress on other policy goals important to NWPPA, and it is not clear how they resolve. Unlike past transitions, there is not exuberance

among the victorious party and dejection among the other.

There are two distinct viewpoints that have emerged so far, but—importantly for understanding the new dynamic—they don't break down along traditional party lines. One is a sense that the Trump Administration's approach and policies are increasingly unsustainable (with varying types and degrees of catastrophe being predicted). The other takes a calmer approach, seeming to say, “Let's give the guy a chance and take things a day at a time.” Of course, neither of these views is helpful for predicting what lies ahead for electric utilities, energy policy, or the broader political landscape.

Neither of the competing views is particularly durable, either. Whether the tensions resolve or evolve, sooner rather than later things are likely to change—again. The Senate will soon move past the most contentious nominations, and House committees have already begun focusing on other legislative efforts. The President urged Congress to advance substantive policy priorities at a joint address to Congress on February 28, and a “skinny budget” is expected to follow. These shifts mark a new phase in which the business of legislating will overtake the business of transition. As uncertainty has given way to chaos, the complex tensions will reconcile into a new normal—whatever that may be. **NWPPA**

*Elizabeth K. Whitney is managing principal of Meguire Whitney, NWPPA's Washington, D.C., consulting firm. She can be reached at either (207) 712-7521 or [elizabeth@meguirewhitney.com](mailto:elizabeth@meguirewhitney.com).*

## COVER STORY

By Sarah Smith



# CLEARWATER POWER ATTRIBUTES MUTUAL AID TO SAVING 4.5 MILLION JUVENILE FISH

A tribe, a local utility, and two federal agencies pull out all the stops for an aquatic CPR operation at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery

Steve Rodgers was home in north central Idaho one weekend night in November when he got the kind of emergency phone call nobody wants to receive.

As he set off in his truck for the eight-mile drive down the hillside overlooking the Clearwater River to the large fish hatchery he helps manage, he saw a complete sea of blackness in the populated canyon below.

“There was not a light on anywhere; not in Ahsahka, or Orofino, or Riverside, or at the dam or hatchery complex,” he said. “It was kind of eerie, almost apocalyptic.”

In fact, it might be similar to how it looked in autumn 1805, when Lewis and Clark camped there, near the confluence of the Clearwater River and its North Fork. “Ahsahka,” or the place where two rivers meet in the language of the Nez Perce, has been a renowned tribal fishing site since time immemorial.

Two hundred years later, fish are still the heart and soul of this picturesque slice of Idaho. They are sacred to Northwest tribes and highly prized by angling enthusiasts who support the north central Idaho tourist economy.

Nobody needed to tell Rodgers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s complex manager for Dworshak National Fish Hatchery, what an 1805 level of electricity could mean for the irreplaceable young fish being raised there. No power at a mega-hatchery that relies on electric pumps to provide water to the fish – with limited generator backup – meant the 4.5 million juvenile salmon and steelhead could be lost.

“Every generation of fish growing at this hatchery is critically important,” Rodgers said. “They represent the future, and the years of work by tribal, state, and federal governments to preserve them. The genetics they carry are unique to the North Fork, and cannot be lost.”

On this November 2016 night, the next generation of salmon and steelhead had been raised from 2015’s “eggs with eyeballs” into sleek 14-month-olds the size of a hand. Very soon, in early spring, Dworshak’s unique class of 2017 would be released to carry the hopes of a salmon-loving region down the Columbia River 500 miles to the sea. Two years later, thousands of these fish would swim back from as far away as Alaska to their cradle in the Clearwater River as robust, exceptional adult spring chinook and steelhead.

“This hatchery is one of the largest of its kind in the world,” Rodgers said. “It’s the cornerstone of tribal and sport fisheries in the Clearwater Basin. What’s most special about it, in my mind, is that it’s the home of the Idaho ‘B-run’ steelhead. These fish are much larger than other steelhead stocks. I’m looking at a male mounted on the wall in my office that’s 40 inches long and 23 pounds. That’s an impressively large fish, given all the energy he expended to swim here from the Pacific.”

When Rodgers pulled into the hatchery that night, his Nez Perce Tribal and USFWS employees were racing the clock to restore power and move water around the sprawling complex of outdoor raceways, trying to stretch the life-giving fresh water.

It was the equivalent of an aquatic CPR operation. Ordinarily, the hatchery’s six massive pumps move 75,000 gallons of oxygen-rich water every minute from the river to the fish, but with the power out, the emergency generators couldn’t support all the pumps.

In the concrete ponds where they typically shoot and scatter like playful silver streaks, thousands of juvenile fish were suffocating, losing their ability to swim, flipping belly up in the tanks. More than 5,500 died that night.

That was a sight Rodgers never wanted to see.

“As those fish start to struggle and turn, that’s a signal that you’re right on the edge of losing the whole program,” he said grimly. “To lose these fish now would be devastating to the region.”

## HOW IT HAPPENED

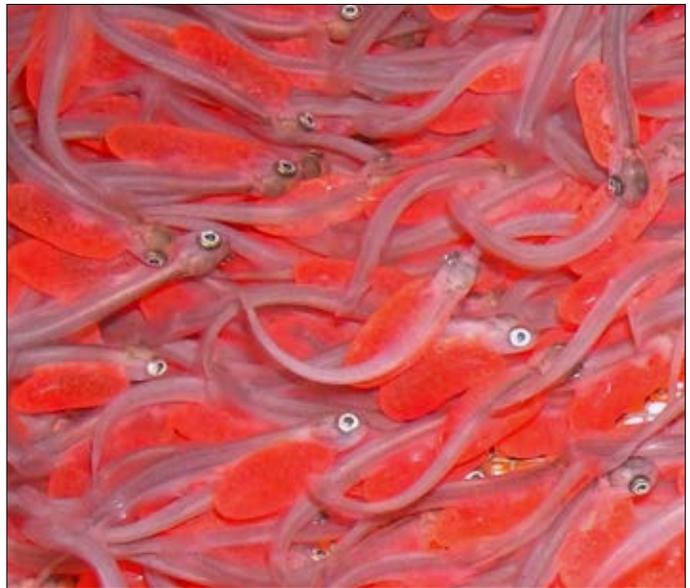
When a critical, custom-built piece of electrical equipment dating to the 1970s fails, it’s a problem.

If it’s a 40-ton transformer and you’re a small, publicly owned utility responsible for serving rural electricity customers across three states and two tribal nations, it’s a bigger challenge.

That was the position Dave Hagen, general manager of Clearwater Power Co., was in. “If you stand to lose 4 million fish in a matter of hours, it’s no doubt catastrophic,” he said.

At 9:30 on Saturday night, November 5, a large transformer suddenly failed at Clearwater Power’s Ahsahka Substation near Orofino, Idaho. When Clearwater’s line crew tried to coax it into restarting, it expired altogether.

And that was the beginning of a story that would call upon the resources of a tribe, a local utility, and two federal agencies, pulling out all the stops to save millions of precious fish during a power emergency.



*One of the largest of its kind in the world, Dworshak National Fish Hatchery raises endangered steelhead and chinook salmon on the Clearwater River near Orofino, Idaho.*

## A TEMPORARY FIX

For four decades, the hulking transformer at Ahsahka Substation—14 feet high and 11 feet wide—had played an essential role in reducing the high-voltage electricity flowing off the Bonneville Power Administration’s regional transmission grid to a safe level for distribution to homes and businesses near Orofino.

Unfortunately, there’s no local garage or handy traveling repair crew for these electrical units that weigh tons. Transformers are strange beasts, long-lived and capable of operating for the better part of a century, but awkward to move and oddly delicate once hoisted off their foundation.

After being lifted out and sent away on a robust trailer, the repairs take months—and that’s the best case. If a transformer can’t be fixed, a replacement usually has to be built to specification, which can take a year to complete.

## COVER STORY

*BPA crews at Bell Substation readied a 115/34.9-kv transformer to hit the road to answer an emergency at Clearwater Power in north central Idaho. Transporting and installing the unit, which measures 35 feet long and 13.5 feet high, cost \$60,000.*



In spite of all that, the general manager of Clearwater Power definitely had some resources to draw on. While the hatchery staff were desperately fighting to buy time for their stressed fish, they could see Clearwater's line crew working in tandem across the river. Calls and support were going back and forth; both sides knew everyone was going flat out to find a fix.

Then the Clearwater Power crew recognized that a backup electrical line, left over from a repair project years earlier, could be pressed into temporary service to share extra power from the town of Orofino with the hatchery. A lifesaver for the hatchery that night, it bought time for Clearwater to seek a longer-term solution.

"We were really lucky with the weather because it wasn't cold," Hagen says. "But that could have changed at any time."

The fix was a godsend, but it was also a stopgap. Once November temperatures dropped and the heaters kicked on in the small town, that surplus capacity being shared with the hatchery complex would be gone in the flick of a hundred thermostats.

The only choice would have been a risky and difficult one—staging an operation to try to load millions of baby fish into trucks and drive them to a temporary billet at other hatcheries, a transfer that posed a host of new perils.

"Nobody was really sleeping well the next few days," Rodgers said. "We'd been right on the edge of a major catastrophe and we were thankful we'd saved the vast majority of the fish. But there was still the question of the backup residential feed and generators: What if those 50-year-old generators died? What if winter hit?"

### AN IDEA

It was a white-knuckle situation, but Hagen thought Clearwater Power had a potential ace in the hole that could save those fish: the small utility's 80-year relationship as a public power customer of the Bonneville Power Administration.

"I looked at our contingency plans. We knew BPA had a portable substation in the Spokane area that it could mobilize to support us," Hagen said.

To protect the reliability of its multi-state transmission system against bad weather, fire, and other risks, Bonneville stages a limited backup inventory of different-sized transformers at sites around the region. With each unit worth hundreds of thousands of dollars or more, these special assets are held in reserve for emergency use on BPA's own far-flung system.

"We called all the utilities we know locally to see if we could find one, but nobody else was able to share equipment," said Doug Pfaff, Clearwater Power manager of engineering. "Most people only have them for their own backup."

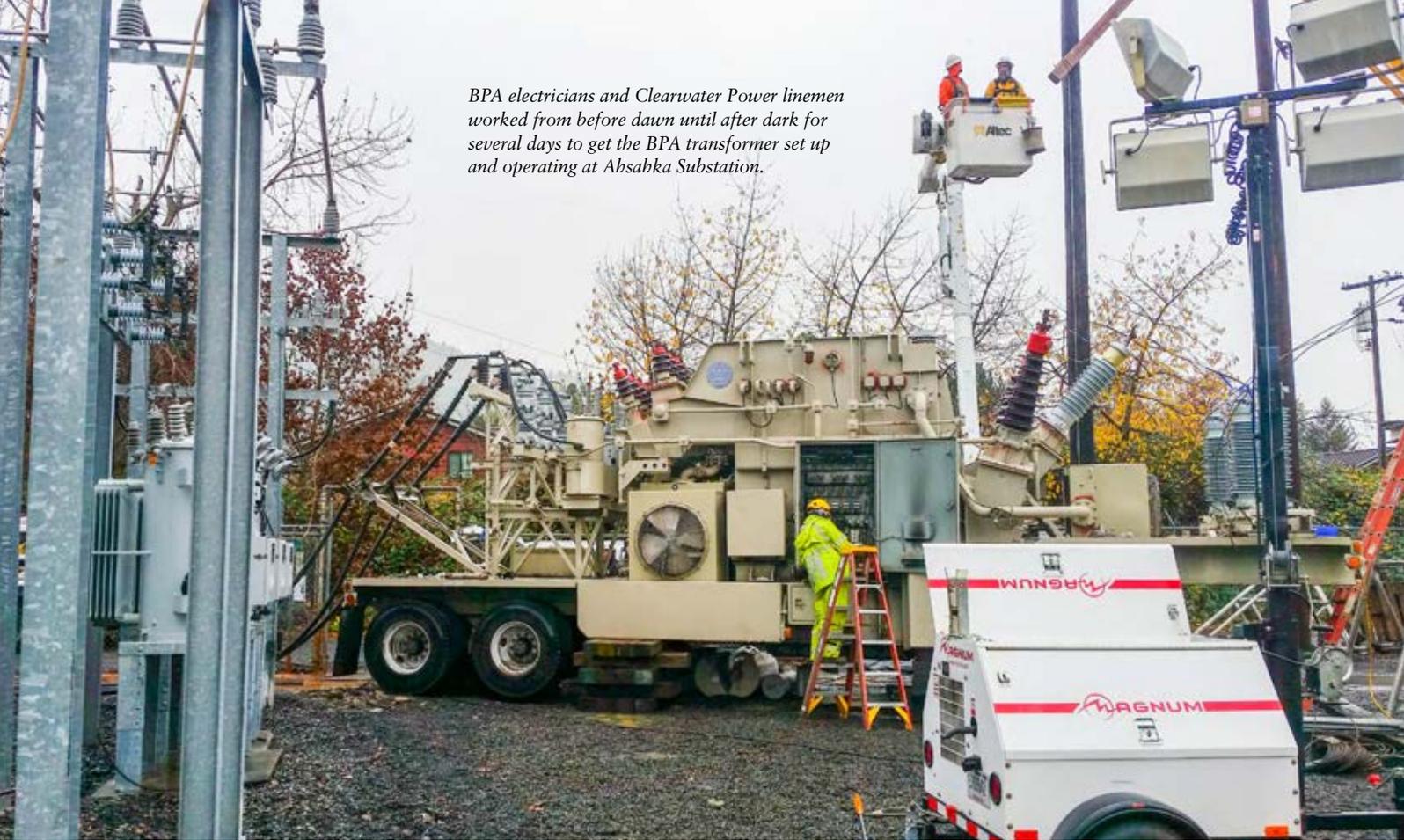
### THE FIX

When Clearwater reached out on Monday morning, BPA customer account executive Craig Hardin knew Bonneville might have a transformer of the right size.

"It's cost prohibitive for most utilities to carry a spare and just have it sitting out there," said Hardin, a former lineman. "We had a spare mobile just waiting at Bell (Substation in Spokane) for someone to have a failure. We don't have too many of them and were fortunate that we had one."

He recognized another factor that could work in favor of a plan to lend it out: BPA had just finished updating and streamlining the key legal procedures that enable the federal agency to respond to other utilities' emergencies.

*BPA electricians and Clearwater Power linemen worked from before dawn until after dark for several days to get the BPA transformer set up and operating at Absahka Substation.*



“We’d just gotten a new mutual-aid agreement executed, and within a matter of 90 days we got to use it,” Hardin says. “In the past, we’d have had to have a reimbursable agreement in place before we could respond. Now you don’t need to do a reimbursable order, you just create a work order and deploy the field people to respond and do the reimbursement down the road.”

It wasn’t easy, with the problem occurring over a federal holiday weekend, but Bonneville’s rigging crew and electricians from Spokane’s Bell Substation and Lewiston, Idaho, found the manpower to come through in the clutch.

“There’s a great and long history of Northwest utilities helping each other when it’s most needed to get the lights back on during a crisis,” says Mark Gendron, BPA’s senior vice president for Power Services. “Sometimes it has been Bonneville that needs the help, and sometimes it’s our utility customers. We happened to be there to help this time.”

Behind the scenes, figuring out the logistics and a \$325,000 contract to lease out a piece of custom equipment drew on members of half a dozen teams in BPA’s Transmission Services.

“The new mutual assistance agreement makes BPA much more agile in our ability to respond rapidly,” says Jared Lacambra, an electrical engineer and former lineman working out of BPA’s Munro offices who helped wrangle the necessary paperwork and personnel to get the transformer on the road to Idaho. “It was really a cross-group effort to get the process in motion to help make everything happen for Clearwater. I’m proud of how quickly our field crews were able to respond, and everyone was pleased at how it all turned out.”

Although Clearwater’s Hagen called the BPA transformer a “portable” unit, that term is relative. Just to mobilize and install such a valuable and unwieldy piece of equipment cost \$60,000 and required the mega-moving skillset of BPA’s

five-man rigging crew, followed by a team effort of seven BPA electricians working with Clearwater personnel.

Rodgers witnessed their dedication. “Every day, those linemen and electricians were already there working in the dark when I drove into my office in the morning,” the complex manager said. “And they were still there when I went home around 9 at night.”

In less than two weeks, Clearwater Power’s customers—including 4.5 million baby spring chinook and steelhead swimming in oxygen-rich tanks—were back on full power.

“There’s the environmental downside to think about,” said Hardin. “What are 4 million smolts that perish worth? You can’t put a price on that. They were pretty excited about not having to truck the fish out of there.”

He added, “My heart went out to these guys. This is the kind of stuff that makes our work compelling, to be able to do things we can to help each other.”

Clearwater was thankful for BPA’s assistance.

“Had we not had the opportunity to work with Bonneville, we’d still be scrambling and trying to find something, having to look elsewhere across the country to rent something,” Hagen said. “And we know that a transformer rebuild or replacement will take six to nine months. The BPA folks made it all come together.” **NWPPA**

*Sarah Smith is a policy writer at Bonneville Power Administration. She can be contacted at [sesmith@bpa.gov](mailto:sesmith@bpa.gov).*

## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

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- Complete the online Job Opportunities ad placement form at [www.nwppa.org](http://www.nwppa.org).
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**POSITION: CFO and Administrative Services Director**  
**COMPANY:** Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA)  
(Vancouver, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOQ  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 23, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Send a letter of interest and résumé in an envelope marked CFO & ASD to:  
Anita J. Decker  
Executive Director  
NWPPA  
9817 NE 54th Street, Ste. 200  
Vancouver, WA 98662.

**POSITION: Telecom Manager**  
**COMPANY:** Jefferson County PUD (Port Townsend, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$52,000 - \$78,000 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** Open until filled  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.jeffpud.org/employment-opportunities](http://www.jeffpud.org/employment-opportunities).

**POSITION: Power Supply (Hydro) Operator**  
**COMPANY:** Pend Oreille Public Utility District (Newport, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$42 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 24, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <http://popud.org/careers>.

**POSITION: Line Superintendent**  
**COMPANY:** Pend Oreille Public Utility District (Newport, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 24, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <http://popud.org/careers>.

**POSITION: Business Development Segment Manager**  
**COMPANY:** NW Natural (Portland, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** \$108,350 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 17, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.nwnatural.com/Careers/JobOpportunities](http://www.nwnatural.com/Careers/JobOpportunities).

**POSITION: Specialist III, Outdoor Lighting Services (R17-005)**  
**COMPANY:** Portland General Electric (Portland, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 20, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <https://www.portlandgeneral.com/careers>.

**POSITION: Journeyman Meterman**  
**COMPANY:** City of Ketchikan (Ketchikan, Alaska)  
**SALARY:** \$38 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** April 29, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.ktn-ak.us/jobs](http://www.ktn-ak.us/jobs).

**POSITION: System Operator in Training**  
**COMPANY:** Chelan County PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$39 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** Open until filled  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.chelanpud.org](http://www.chelanpud.org).

**POSITION: Storeroom (U17-040)**  
**COMPANY:** Portland General Electric (Portland, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 17, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <https://www.portlandgeneral.com/careers>.

**POSITION: Journeyman Meterman**  
**COMPANY:** Municipal Light & Power (Anchorage, Alaska)  
**SALARY:** \$49 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** May 29, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/moa>.

**POSITION: Senior Resource Planner (Rates & Analytics)**  
**COMPANY:** City of Palo Alto Utilities (Palo Alto, Calif.)  
**SALARY:** \$9,363.47 - \$14,045.20 per month  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 20, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.cityofpaloalto.org](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org).

**POSITION: Utility Power System Technician**  
**COMPANY:** TDX Power (Anchorage, Alaska)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 31, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.tdxpower.com/north-slope](http://www.tdxpower.com/north-slope).

**POSITION: Shift Superintendent**  
**COMPANY:** Clark Public Utilities (Vancouver, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 31, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Send résumé with cover letter to [jobs@clarkpud.com](mailto:jobs@clarkpud.com).

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**POSITION:** Journeyman Lineman or Hot Apprentice  
**COMPANY:** Consumers Power, Inc. (Philomath, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** \$36.45 - \$43.39 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** Open until filled  
**TO APPLY:** Send cover letter and résumé to [debg@cpic.coop](mailto:debg@cpic.coop).

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**POSITION:** Rates and Forecasting Analyst  
**COMPANY:** Tacoma Power (Tacoma, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$95,222.40 - \$122,075.20 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 17, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.governmentjobs.com/careers/tacoma](http://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/tacoma).

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**POSITION:** Senior Engineer  
**COMPANY:** Cowlitz PUD (Longview, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$95,828 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 24, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org).

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**POSITION:** Power Production Manager  
**COMPANY:** Burbank Water and Power (BWP) (Burbank, Calif.)  
**SALARY:** \$155,500 - \$189,500 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 23, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Submit information to [Matt.Sadinsky@prepintl.com](mailto:Matt.Sadinsky@prepintl.com).

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**POSITION:** Manager Energy Control Center  
**COMPANY:** Burbank Water and Power (BWP) (Burbank, Calif.)  
**SALARY:** \$155,500 - \$189,500 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 23, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Submit information to [Matt.Sadinsky@prepintl.com](mailto:Matt.Sadinsky@prepintl.com).

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**POSITION:** Meter Technician  
**COMPANY:** Orcas Power & Light Cooperative (Eastsound, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$44 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** April 21, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com).

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**POSITION:** Communication Specialist  
**COMPANY:** Orcas Power & Light Co-op (Eastsound, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 24, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Submit information to [bmadan@opalco.com](mailto:bmadan@opalco.com).

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**POSITION:** Engineering Associate I - Telecommunications  
**COMPANY:** Central Lincoln (Newport, Ore.)  
**SALARY:** \$67,535 - \$82,089 per year  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 24, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.governmentjobs.com/careers/cencoast](http://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/cencoast).

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**POSITION:** Electric Program Supervisor (Settlements & Power Analytics)  
**COMPANY:** City of Redding (Redding, Calif.)  
**SALARY:** \$6,884.00 - \$ 10,875.00 per month  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 21, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.cityofredding.org](http://www.cityofredding.org).

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**POSITION:** Substation and Metering Technician  
**COMPANY:** Jefferson County PUD (Port Townsend, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$47 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 17, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.jeffpud.org/employment-opportunities](http://www.jeffpud.org/employment-opportunities).

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**POSITION:** District Engineer  
**COMPANY:** Matanuska Electric Association (Palmer, Alaska)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 20, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.meaa.coop](http://www.meaa.coop).

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**POSITION:** Manager Energy Delivery #31536  
**COMPANY:** Puget Sound Energy (Bellevue, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** DOE  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 17, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.pse.com/careers](http://www.pse.com/careers) to apply.

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**POSITION:** Substation Technician  
**COMPANY:** KVA Electric Inc. (Arlington, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$51 per hour  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 21, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Send résumé to [info@kvaelectric.com](mailto:info@kvaelectric.com).

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**POSITION:** Director of Engineering & Technical Services  
**COMPANY:** Southeast Alaska Power Agency (Ketchikan, Alaska)  
**SALARY:** \$108,392 - \$136,188  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 29, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit <https://seapahydro.applicantpro.com/jobs>.

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**POSITION:** Energy Efficiency Advisor I or II  
**COMPANY:** Benton PUD (Kennewick, Wash.)  
**SALARY:** \$50,820 - \$66,550 DOQ  
**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** March 21, 2017  
**TO APPLY:** Visit [www.bentonpud.org/careers](http://www.bentonpud.org/careers). **NWPPA**

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