

Making a Difference Every Day

Your electric utility and the neighbors who work there contribute to the community

By Pam Blair

For public power utilities and their employees, service means more than delivering electricity to customers. It means providing a “hometown touch,” offering amenities and participating in programs that enhance the lives of the people and the communities they serve.

Below are ways utilities contribute to their communities.

Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative, Eugene, Oregon—Employees participated in the United Way Day of Caring, helping nonprofit groups with projects. The co-op helped a nearby school district served by an investor-owned utility repair a failed underground electrical cable that left the high school football field lights inoperable.

Central Electric Cooperative, Redmond, Oregon—Employees volunteer with the Patriot Guard Riders, which attends the funerals of American soldiers as invited guests of the family, shielding mourners from interruptions by protestors. Four times a year, the co-op hosts a blood donor express in the company auditorium, making it convenient for employees to donate regularly.

Clearwater Power Company, Lewiston, Idaho—Town meetings are held throughout the service area, giving members a chance to meet co-op staff and ask questions. The co-op provides a \$10 sponsorship to all youth on the co-op’s lines who complete a marketable 4-H or FFA livestock project and/or a 4-H electricity project.



A Midstate Electric member gets a blood pressure check during the annual meeting in La Pine, Oregon.

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, Heppner, Oregon—

The co-op contributed to the Fourth of July “Blues Cruise” Classic Car Cruise-In at Ione, installed and helped wire a new scoreboard for the school’s football field, contributed to Heppner Elementary School’s Book Fair/Make a Reader Today program, donated to the South Gilliam County Ambulance Fund and contributed time, personnel, machinery and equipment to the Willow Creek Community Golf Course work day.

Columbia Power Cooperative, Monument, Oregon—The co-op offers \$2,000 in scholarships for continuing education for high school students, supports the county fairs by bidding at the livestock sale, volunteers time and equipment to install Christmas lights and regularly contributes to EMT volunteers.

Copper Valley Electric Association, Glennallen, Alaska—During National Cooperative Month, employees volunteer at the recycling center. An Alternative Energy Scholarship was given to a senior who completed a project on the local potential of wind energy.

Golden Valley Electric Association, Fairbanks, Alaska—Twenty employees, managers and board members spent a day installing windows and insulating a local Habitat for Humanity home for a single mother with two children. Thirty-one employees and family members joined GVEA’s Heart Walk Team, raising nearly \$5,800 for the annual American Heart Association.

Harney Electric Cooperative, Burns, Oregon—Employees help each year with a Halloween parade and the breakfast with Santa. An apprentice lineman is a volunteer coach for the Burns High School football team.

Idaho County Light and Power, Grangeville, Idaho—The co-op donated poles to a local ski area so it could make improvements to its night skiing lights.

Kotzebue Electric Association, Kotzebue, Alaska—The co-op helped start a Boys and Girls Club.

Lane Electric, Eugene, Oregon—The co-op hosts a golf tournament to benefit cancer research and donates to a middle school Solar Car Challenge.

Midstate Electric, La Pine, Oregon—As part of the annual meeting, the co-op provided health screening and healthy lifestyle tips. The co-op provided monetary donations of more than \$30,000 for various community projects.

Nespelem Valley Electric Cooperative, Nespelem, Washington—The co-op donates power for a community event and participates in a high school career day.

Northern Lights Inc., Sagle, Idaho—The co-op donated money so the food bank could buy a forklift.

Nushagak Cooperative, Dillingham, Alaska—Employees designed and built an outhouse for the Annual Outhouse Race during the Beaver Round-Up.



A team from Golden Valley Electric Association in Fairbanks, Alaska, installs windows at a Habitat for Humanity home.

Okanogan County Electric, Winthrop, Washington—The co-op donated six poles and the cost difference for a transformer upgrade to the Skate Rink Association, which supports a public ice skating rink and hockey teams. It also donated \$2,000 to the Methow Valley Education Foundation for its scholarship fund and \$500 to the Methow Arts Alliance to help pay for the Missoula Children's Theater to put on a performance at the schools, using local children in the cast.

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, Baker City, Oregon—The co-op installed photovoltaic systems at three high schools. Each system includes an online monitoring tool that allows students to track energy production and correlate the data to weather conditions and the sun's position. The co-op is working with

the fair board to eliminate unused meters at the fairgrounds in Burns, reducing monthly meter charges. The co-op donated the labor to bring in a three-phase line to feed a large transformer there.

Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, Portola, California—Volunteers partner with the U.S. Forest Service to build and maintain trails for nonmotorized sports in and around the Tahoe basin.

Surprise Valley Electrification, Alturas, California—The co-op donates staff time and equipment to put up Christmas decorations and banners, replace ball field lights, repair flagpoles, install playground equipment and offer an electrical safety program. It also supports Project Graduation, Little League, Special Olympics, Junior Rodeo, junior livestock shows, and 4-H and

FFA auctions. Employees donate food for holiday baskets.

United Electric Cooperative, Heyburn, Idaho—Elementary school students visited the co-op during an emergency evacuation drill. The office is the designated shelter in the event of a disaster at the school.

Valley Electric Association, Pahrump, Nevada—The co-op has recruited more than 200 members to serve as Ambassadors. They have assisted with a solar water heater pilot program and were instrumental in getting a bylaw change passed.

West Oregon Electric Cooperative, Vernonia, Oregon—The co-op gave out three scholarships to members interested in pursuing careers as lineworkers. Employees participated in a citywide garage sale, raising money for the co-op's energy assistance program. ■