



# Get Involved at CVEA

## **Board of Directors Candidates Wanted**

Join a dedicated group of community members who work on a volunteer basis for the benefit of all CVEA members.

Four director seats will be up for election in 2021. Three seats, one in the Copper Basin and two in Valdez, hold three-year terms, and one in the Copper Basin will be for a one-year term.

As a CVEA director, you can help make decisions that impact your neighbors and friends, the folks up and down the t-line, and all cooperative members.

The Board meets once a month, normally on the third Thursday, for regular board meetings, and on occasion for special meetings. Directors may also travel to participate in statewide and national meetings.

If you have been a member of CVEA for at least 12 continuous months, are a member in good standing, and are not an employee or close relative of an incumbent director or

employee, you may be eligible to be a director. For a complete list of director qualifications, please refer to CVEA's Bylaws Section 4.02, Qualifications, found at [cvea.org](http://cvea.org).

In order for a member to become a candidate, they must be nominated by petition. Candidates must complete a petition signed by at least 15 active CVEA members, whose signatures must match the signatures on file, and submit the petition to the CVEA office in their district by 5 p.m., Thursday, February 11, 2021.

For more information or to have a nomination packet sent to you, contact your local office.

## **The CVEA Community Foundation Scholarship Selection and Contributions Committees Need You**

The CVEA Community Foundation is doing great things in our communities. The Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes providing schol-



ships for students and contributions to educational, scientific and charitable organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under the Internal Revenue Code.

If you are interested in being a part of your local Cooperative, but don't have a lot of time to give throughout the year, the Foundation committees are for you.

The Scholarship Selection Committees review scholarship application packets, determine which students to interview, conduct interviews, and select who will be awarded scholarships. These committees will meet during the months of March and April in 2021.

The Foundation Contributions Committee reviews contribution requests from all local nonprofit organizations, scores them, and makes funding recommendations to the Foundation Board of Directors. If you are interested, plan on participation in September and October.

Each of these committees requires attendance at three or four meetings, and are estimated to take up to a total of 15 hours. Feedback from committee members is that these committees are fun and rewarding.

#### **Help Wanted for Credentials and Election Committees**

A very important part of the annual meeting election process is the Credentials and Election Committees.

The people who serve are responsible for validating the signatures on the back of the envelopes and counting the ballots for director elections and bylaws amendments.

In each district, the Committee is comprised of interested members who are not employees, directors, candidates or relatives of these persons.

The Board will appoint committee members for each district in February. Service on the Credentials and Election Committees takes place during March and April, with most of the work performed the week prior to the annual meeting.

In 2021, the annual meeting is scheduled for May 4 in the Valdez District and May 6 in the Copper Basin District.

If you have questions or would like more information on director elections, or you would like to volunteer to serve on a committee, please contact Sharon Scheidt at 255-1425 or email [sscheidt@cvea.org](mailto:sscheidt@cvea.org). ■



## 2021 Community Foundation Scholarship Opportunities

The Foundation will award roughly \$8,000 in scholarships in 2021. CVEA will offer two \$500 and one \$1,000 General Scholarships, and one Youth Rally Leadership Camp Scholarship in each district.

The General Scholarships will be awarded to well rounded high school seniors who plan to pursue post-secondary education through a vocational or technical school, an apprenticeship training or a college degree program.

This scholarship continues to be merit based, with scores equally weighted among four categories: education, community involvement, future education/career goals, and need.

The Idaho Youth Rally Scholarship provides an opportunity for sophomores and juniors attending high schools in CVEA's service area to attend a week-long electric industry leadership camp in Caldwell, Idaho in July, where students practice leadership, communication skills, and teamwork while learning about electric utility practices and issues. While at the camp, students have an opportunity to earn educational scholarships that will be available to use for their education when they graduate.



In 2020, the Youth Rally was cancelled due to COVID-19, but planning is currently underway for 2021. If it is determined the event can be held safely, it is expected CVEA students will have an opportunity to participate.

The Foundation scholarship programs are funded with unclaimed escheated capital credits, fundraisers, and voluntary donations from CVEA members, like you.

Scholarship recipients will be decided in April and announced at CVEA's Annual Meeting, and at 2021 graduation ceremonies.

Scholarship information and applications are available online at [cvea.org](http://cvea.org) under Community Support in the Scholarship section.

The deadline for submitting completed scholarship application packets is 6 p.m., Thursday, February 18, 2021.

If you have questions about the Community Foundation contribution or scholarship programs or need assistance, please contact Sharon Scheidt at 255-1425, or email [sscheidt@cvea.org](mailto:sscheidt@cvea.org). ■



# Space Heaters

## Best Friend or Worst Enemy?

CVEA encourages members to be cautious of companies offering expensive space heater models promising energy efficiency and cost savings. These savings are not typically realized, and worse, member bills most often increase due to higher kWh usage from the heaters.

According to the US Department of Energy using space heaters in your home or business as a way to replace your central heating system is much less efficient and can lead to paying more on your monthly electric bill. In fact, they estimate that, on average, using your home heating system costs less than half of what it would take to heat a home or business using portable heaters.

Controlling energy savings depends on how well your house retains heat. The less heat you need to maintain your desired temperature, the more efficiently your system will function. If you're having trouble keeping your home or office warm, consider looking into a more permanent fix to conserve heat before using space heaters.

One quick and inexpensive tip is to look for areas where warm air may be escaping; around windows, doors, corners, and vents,

and plug the leaks with weather stripping or other appropriate sealing products. This can help you save money and stay warmer.

### Space heater energy tips

In certain situations, space heaters can be a good option for staying warm in small rooms, or colder than normal parts of your home or office. If you do use a space heater, keep these steps in mind to get the most savings:

- Don't use a space heater to heat large areas; buy a space heater that is made to heat a room about the size of the one where you plan to use it to avoid using more energy than you need.
- Compare wattages between similar models to see which one is more efficient.
- Look for a thermostat or timer setting that can save energy while keeping the room from becoming overheated.
- If you are using the space heater, turn down the thermostat on the central unit to avoid doubling up on your heating costs.
- Follow all safety instructions associated with your space heater and never leave your heater unattended.

# A Public Power Conversation

Meet Scott Corwin, executive director of the Northwest Public Power Association

Scott Corwin was born in Oregon and became an avid outdoor sports enthusiast. He fished, hunted and skied with his father and his father's friends, who were dedicated to mentoring the next generation.

After high school in Portland, Scott left for the woods of New Hampshire and Dartmouth College. He came back west for law school at the University of Washington. After taking the bar exam, he crossed the country to work in the U.S. Senate in Washington, D.C., first as legal counsel to iconic Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, then on the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"Getting those bar results in the mail was a thrill only eclipsed by the senator personally giving me the oath of office," Scott says. "I was very fortunate to work with top Senate and executive branch leaders of that era, who exhibited unrivaled leadership and statecraft."

Returning to Oregon, Scott worked in the Oregon House of Representatives speaker's office, then moved into the energy sector as director of government affairs for Portland General Electric before moving to PNGC Power.

"That was a real turning point because I got a firsthand look at consumer-owned electricity and how rewarding it was to work for rural electric cooperatives," Scott says.

He took the helm at the Public Power Council in 2007, representing consumer-owned utilities in policy advocacy related to the federal Columbia River power system. In 2019, Scott embraced a new challenge with the Northwest Public Power Association, which provides education, training, communications and government relations to electric cooperatives and public power utilities in nine western states and Canada.

Scott has been a frequent expert witness before Congress, has been on numerous industry advisory committees, and served on charitable and community boards, including a term as chair of the March of Dimes for Oregon and Southwest Washington. He is married to Kristen, a kindergarten teacher. They have three children ages 13, 17 and 19.

Scott continues the tradition of handing down a love of the outdoors to his kids, who are closely watching the snowfall this year in anticipation of the upcoming ski season.

## How does the Northwest Public Power Association help electricity consumers in the West?

NWPPA was created in 1940 as a not-for-profit by utilities owned and governed by their consumers, so there is a direct relationship and focus on value to customers.

First, we help train the utility workforce that keeps the power flowing. Electricity is a complex and always changing business; a consistent program of learning and workforce development is critical.

Second, we help utilities stay informed, connect, learn and share best practices that benefit customers by creating an array of communications tools (industry directories, newsletters and magazines) specific to our part of the electricity business in the West.

Third, we lead advocacy on policy issues, especially in the federal realm, that hit the bottom line of customers' cost of electricity or safety. Examples include getting a law passed to streamline federal regulations hindering the ability of utilities to clear hazardous trees near power lines for fire prevention, and working to protect local control and safety where the Federal Communications Commission threatened to override utility policies regarding how communications equipment is attached to electric utility poles.

## What are some of the biggest issues facing electric utilities and their customers in 2021 and beyond?

When we survey members or I moderate utility panel discussions, hot topics tend to surface. Looking toward 2021, there is still uncertainty about how the pandemic will impact utility operations. This affects crew schedules, office accessibility for customers and staff, and supply chain logistics for equipment.

Consumer-owned utilities are well-positioned to know what their customer-owners expect of them regarding options for electricity generation, new energy services such as enhanced energy efficiency,

management of power loads, an ability to charge electric vehicles, or use new customer interfaces that are web- and app-based to manage their account and energy use. Utilities tend to have large long-term investments in their infrastructure, so it can take time to plan, invest and implement this industry change effectively.

The cost and adequacy of the power supply is a concern. State and federal climate change policies tend to mandate generation from variable sources with less ability to adjust to hour-by-hour power demands. Other issues are adequate transmission to deliver power where it is needed, expansion of power markets, equitable pricing policies, and the rate at which new battery or other energy storage technology is developed. Electricity remains one of the toughest commodities to store in large volume, with important exceptions, such as water stored behind dams. That plays an important role in managing system stability in the West.

## What lessons do you think consumer-owned utilities will take from 2020?

In the West, many public power utilities and their customers faced a one-two-three punch from the physical challenge of operating in a pandemic, the economic challenge of their communities and businesses under lockdown and the horrifying effects of wildfires. Utilities rose to the challenge to keep delivering safe, reliable electrical service. I think there are many lessons to take from this year.

First, our industry safety culture and emergency management planning are extremely important to help utilities adapt quickly to daunting and ever-changing scenarios. In the case of the wildfires, it was inspiring to hear stories of heroic crews working around the clock in dangerous environments to clear debris and burnt poles, and build new electrical systems.

Second, nimble and quick adoption of technology and modes of working is mission critical. Changes arising out of the



Scott Corwin with his son, Theo, and wife, Kristen, enjoying the view. Scott and Kristen's fathers were both on Mount Hood ski patrol and started them skiing as toddlers. PHOTO BY HADLEY AND RUBY CORWIN

pandemic—like more remote work by some employees—may continue in some form even after life is back to normal. Flex-work, increased remote sensors and controls, and evolution in the way customers interact with utilities have been a long time coming. The pandemic accelerated this. Utilities had to ramp up quickly to get new systems in place. There is still a physical element to much of the operations work that runs a utility, and there is still a personal connection between utility employees and customers. But, as in many industries, technological innovations took a large leap forward in certain parts of the electric utility business.

Finally, even as utilities need to be cautious with their spending, they see that education and training—even in a virtual form—is more important than ever as their workforce faces new challenges and new systems to meet the quickly changing demands of utility management.

### **What are some of the issues utilities in Alaska face that may not be seen as much in the Lower 48?**

Some of the issues are quite similar to the rest of the West. Alaska had 2.5 million acres burned by wildfire in 2019. It is further north, but it can get very dry in summer with a lot of vegetation/fuel

stored. In addition, some areas in Alaska were hit particularly hard by the pandemic when tourism and cruise ships were cut, and when the economic slowdown lowered demand for oil and gas.

Unlike other areas, the region does not have an extensive grid or markets, so generation options are more limited and location specific. Harsher weather and broad expanses of territory also drive up the cost of electricity. This is leading to development of new resources and energy technologies that might be cost-prohibitive elsewhere.

Alaska has a strong and resourceful group of utility leaders and customer-owners coming up with creative localized solutions. These are communities that come together as they always have, in the good times and the bad, to support each other and make sure they can keep the lights and the heat working.

### **How will the 2020 elections affect electricity customers in the West?**

In general, public power utilities are good at working across the aisle, with congressional or executive branch representatives from either major political party. Indeed, most issues that impact the reliability of electricity, the cost of service, workforce issues, infrastructure needs and safety are not

inherently ideological or partisan matters. Still, there are areas worth watching. With a change in the White House, there will be a new set of cabinet-level officials and staff in important agencies that regulate the energy industry. Especially in agencies regulating the environment and public lands, the regulatory emphasis will certainly shift.

If control of the House and Senate stays under the status quo, as currently forecast, that branch would not be likely to take actions too far afield from the past few years, even with a different White House. This means even with a major election mostly behind us, there will still be a need for considerable bipartisan work in both branches of government for new regulations or legislation relating to issues that matter to western utilities, such as wildfire prevention and suppression, vegetation management, relicensing of hydropower projects, treatment of hydropower as a renewable resource, funding of low-income energy assistance, comprehensive energy legislation, incentives for research, advanced technology or climate-related policies.

Energy policy has a way of sitting for years at a time and then moving quickly under the right circumstances. It will be an interesting year and one in which electricity users will want to stay aware and involved. ■



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Mile 187 Glenn Hwy.  
**Valdez District**  
907-835-4301  
367 Fairbanks Dr.

#### Important Dates

##### January

##### **CVEA Bylaws Amendment Petition**

**Deadline:** Recommended Bylaws amendments must be submitted by petition no later than 6 p.m. Thursday, January 7, 2021

##### **CVEA Bylaws Amendment Public Meeting:**

There will be a virtual public meeting to discuss Bylaws amendments recommended for the 2021 ballot at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 20, 2021

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The January meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, January 21, 2021, in Valdez

##### February

**Director Nomination Deadline:** 5 p.m. Thursday, February 11, 2021

##### **CVEA Offices Closed:**

The CVEA offices will be closed Monday, February 15, 2021, for President's Day

**Scholarship Application Deadline:** 6 p.m. Thursday, February 18, 2021

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The February meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, February 18, 2021, in Glennallen

AK-34

**CVEA would like to wish all of our members a safe and happy New Year!**



## **Want Your Vote to Count? Update Your Signature Card!**

When you vote on CVEA business, such as the Board of Director election and Bylaws amendments coming up in April, you are required to sign the ballot envelope. If the signature does not match the signature on the membership card on file with CVEA, the vote cannot be counted.

For residential customers, if you have changed marital status, or names, please contact CVEA to ensure those changes are reflected on your signature card. If you receive a card in the mail, please complete and bring to your local CVEA office or mail it in.

Organizations, businesses, and associations usually have board members who are authorized to transact business. The person who signs the election envelope must be an authorized signer on the account. If your Board of Directors or executive officer has changed in the past year, then it is time to update your CVEA membership card.

If you have questions or are unsure what is on your residential or business signature card, please contact your local office at 822-3211 in Glennallen or 835-4301 in Valdez.