



Our board members are elected to represent each of our five geographic subdivisions. Public information and public involvement are crucial to the success of your publicly-owned electric utility. We generally publish Boardlines in September, but due to our change of editors opted for November this year.

BOARDLINES

November
2009



Board members Curt Abbott, Ron Benfield, Larkin Kaliher and Judy Matheny discuss Central Lincoln communications. Not shown: Board member Tom Tymchuk.



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What is the BiOp?

Recently, you may have heard about the BiOp either in the news or from a letter we sent with your bills a couple of months ago. However you may not know what the BiOp really is. First, BiOp is short for Biological Opinion. BiOps are required by the Endangered Species Act for major activities that might affect the listed species.

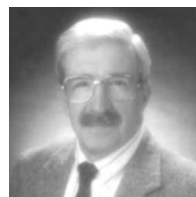
So why all the fuss about an 'opinion'?

The BiOp that we have been focusing on surrounds thirteen species of endangered fish that traverse the Columbia and Lower Snake rivers through a series of federal dams. The 'opinion' actually contains measures that dictate how the dams are managed. Biological opinions are reviewed periodically and the current plan has been tied up in court for several years. It seems there are different opinions about the opinion. However, Northwest families and businesses – you and I – have spent a lot of money creating better conditions for fish by investing in passage mechanisms at the dams and habitat throughout the system. The good news is that fish numbers are climbing. (Yes; they actually count them!). Also the federal managers have worked out agreements with most of the tribes along the rivers to finance even more projects to promote fish survival at a cost of about \$100 million a year for the next ten years.

The BiOp however remains in the courtroom. Just recently the Obama administration affirmed that the current BiOp is both scientifically and legally sound. Let's hope that helps to get it out of the courtroom and into implementation mode. The bottom line for you and me is that about 20% of our electric bill is going to help fish survival at a total cost of about \$700 million this past year. We can hope that in the near future we can fund a few less lawyers and the BiOp issue can be settled at

least for another ten years.

It is also interesting to note that there is another BiOp for the commercial and tribal harvest of fish on the same rivers. There has been no legal challenge to that BiOp. Apparently some feel that electric users have much more to spend on fish survival than harvesters do.



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We like hearing from you!

Many of us have seen bumperstickers that read "How's My Driving? Call 1-800-How's-My-Driving" which, of course, is meant to be funny as there are far more letters than a real phone number and other drivers' input isn't really wanted at all.

Central Lincoln is publicly-owned, which means our sole purpose for existing is to serve you. We do want and welcome your input! That's why we keep and maintain offices in Depoe Bay, Florence, Newport, Reedsport, and Toledo so you can pay bills in person or offer feedback to us. Click on our website, and send an email to webmaster@cenacoast.com, and you should receive a reply within 24 hours. There are also email addresses and phone numbers for each board member on this site (clpud.org). We appreciate hearing from you.

If your power ever goes out, Central Lincoln has a sophisticated computerized system that ensures you will never receive a busy signal when you call in (1-866-484-3783) to let us know your electricity is out. It also helps us very quickly map where outages are so we can get your power back on as quickly as possible.

Periodically we hold customer focus group meetings to listen to your

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thoughts and concerns. We also have telephone surveys done as well. You are also welcome to send us a note with your monthly payment.

In the years to come, electricity rates are likely to become more and more complex, perhaps even requiring that electricity used at the busiest times may be more expensive than power used in the middle of the night. In the next twenty years, Central Lincoln may be forced to buy more expensive power to meet all of our customers' needs, since affordable electricity will be more limited. I promise we'll do our best to communicate this information clearly and concisely. Please, don't hesitate to let us know what you are thinking about your publicly-owned electric utility.



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What is in the future?

Central Lincoln PUD is taking a giant step from the old to the new. As with cell phones and television changing from analog to digital, the electric industry is changing from mechanical to digital (electronic) meters.

Over the next few years your utility will be transitioning from manual entry of monthly meter reading, verbal outage reporting, and visual identifying of system service needs - into a system that will automatically integrate electronic meter reading with the billing, greatly assist with the identifying of outage locations and identifying failing equipment. The system is called Advanced Metering Infrastructure, (AMI). The first visible evidence to the customers will be the appearance of their electric meters. Central Lincoln will replace the aging mechanical meters with new electronic meters. The new meters will communicate with Central Lincoln over the power lines.

Benefits to you the customer/owner and Central Lincoln will be to provide current information and integrate this information with the computer system. When complete: 1) Meters will be read electronically, improving accuracy by eliminating miss readings; 2) These readings will then integrate with customer billing, reducing human error when entering; 3) Provide more detailed information about power consumption; 4) Offer improved service reliability by monitoring the quality of the lines and equipment, i.e. Identify and allow repair of problems before they become outages; 5) Report outages as they occur; 6) Identify the outage location, thereby reducing response time for repair crews to bring power back for each customer, and 7) Verify when power has been restored to our customers.

CLPUD has been preparing for several years to make the transition: 1) By the installation of fiber optic cable between all substations, maintenance shops and offices,



We'll soon be installing digital (electronic) meters like these.



Our current mechanical meters.

which has allowed monitoring of system performance; 2) Installing test meters up the Yachats River Valley to work out bugs; and 3) Upgrading computer systems.

This preplanning has resulted in an overall cost saving as the cost of electronic metering has come down and their capabilities have increased. This is an exciting project and a big step into the future.



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Let's help those in need

Each of us knows someone that is struggling financially due to the recession—in some cases this might be family members, in others, friends. Economic conditions here on the Central Coast have been tough, and as the flow of visitors dwindles in the winter, so do the jobs of many who live here, forcing some to decide between buying food or heating their homes when it's quite cold outside.

There are simple ways for all of us who can afford it to help out:

Some caring Central Lincoln customers ask us to "Round Up" their bills to the nearest dollar, and the small extra amount (from 1 to 99 cents) is used to help folks in need. You can do this by writing "Please Round Up every month" on your bill stub when you make your next payment, or just give us a call at your local Central Lincoln office—the contact numbers are on the back of your bills.

Some folks volunteer to donate a set amount each month through a monthly pledge. We thank donors for helping out in this way.

Other donors add an amount they wish to contribute when they pay their bills—some as much as \$50 or more—and this is a huge help also. (Thanks for letting us know this a contribution and is why your check is higher than the amount billed!)

To "Round Up", donate monthly, or contribute, just write us a note on your payment stub when you pay your bill. You can let us know via email at webmaster@cenacoast.com. Or give us a call at your local Central Lincoln office—again, contact numbers for each are on the back of your monthly bill.

Funds collected are distributed to three nonprofits in Central Lincoln's district. Folks in need should contact if they need help:

- For Douglas and Coos counties:
Lower Umpqua Ministerial Association, Reedsport: 541-271-2895.
- For Lane County:
Siuslaw Outreach Services, Florence: 541-997-2816
- For Lincoln County:
Community Services Consortium, Newport: 541-265-3293



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