



# June 2022

## Newsletter

### Propane Welcomes New Employee

Okanogan County Energy is pleased to welcome new propane technician Jimmy Barnhart. Jimmy has lived and worked in the Methow Valley for the past 13 years. Jimmy has worked as an equipment operator and diesel mechanic and is happy to learn the ropes and join our team. Jimmy and his wife live in Carlton with their two children.



### Electric Welcomes New Employees

Okanogan County Electric is excited to welcome Kathy Tilley to the front office team as our new Member Services Representative. Kathy has worked in the utility industry for some time in Electric Distribution, Wind Energy and Hydro Dams in the North Cascades. Kathy recently moved with her partner Jeff to a cabin off Twisp River Road. Kathy loves the friendly down to earth nature of the Methow and is excited to continue her work in the utility industry because it never gets boring! You may see her out hiking, walking and foraging with Jeff and their two dogs Gilley and Lilly Tilley.



Joining our line crew is Journeyman Lineman, Willie Devin. Willie brings 7 years of experience from working in the industry in Montana and California to our crew. Willie is returning to the Methow Valley where he grew up and is excited to be closer to his family and settle back in at home.



### OCEC Wildfire Mitigation Plan Member Meetings

OCEC will be hosting member information meetings on our updated Wildfire Mitigation Plan this month. Meetings will be held in Twisp, Winthrop and Mazama. Staff will review the updated Wildfire Mitigation Plan and be available to answer member questions.

- Monday June 13th 4:30-5:30pm at Methow Valley Community Center Gym, Twisp
- Tuesday June 14th 4:30-5:30pm at The Winthrop Barn, Rooster Room, Winthrop
- Wednesday June 15th 4:30-5:30pm at The Mazama Community Center, Mazama

# Broadband Study Update

OCEC continues to work, along with our partner Methownet, on the feasibility study for construction of a high-speed fiber broadband network in our electric service territory. As you may have read in the news the federal government will be providing grant funding opportunities for development of rural high-speed fiber broadband networks through competitive processes held at both the federal and state level. While we do not have the results yet from the feasibility study, we wanted to share some actions our member-owners can take that may give OCEC additional information to support any grant applications we may submit:

- Washington State Broadband Access and Speed Survey
  - o The Washington State Broadband Office has an online tool that they use to help identify gaps in high-speed internet service to advance their goal to have universal broadband access in Washington by 2024. We encourage OCEC member-owners who have not already used this tool to log into the website below. Then follow the instructions for this 1-minute survey to provide additional data points on current internet speeds, as well as areas of limited/no internet access. If there is currently no internet service available at your property, it's even more important to utilize this tool.
    - o <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/washington-statewide-broadband-act/speedtestsurvey/>
- Community Organization Support
  - o Do you work at, manage, or run a community business or community non-profit that would see benefits from the buildout of a high-speed fiber broadband network? We would like to hear from any organizations that would be interested in providing letters of support should OCEC decide to move ahead with this project and seek grant funding. Please follow the link below and fill out the form so we can begin to gather contact information for those community partners to call upon, if and when the time comes.
    - o <https://www.ocec.coop/survey>

We are committed to keeping our member-owners informed on critical issues, such as this potential fiber broadband network construction, and we appreciate the engagement.

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**Our mailing address is:** PO Box 69, Winthrop, WA. 98862  
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