



June 2023
Newsletter

DISCONNECT NOTICE POLICY CHANGE

OCEC has updated its Disconnection & Reconnection of Service Policy 30-210. Delinquent notices are mailed or emailed to members approximately 5 days before disconnection. However, we now have stopped the use of yellow hanging door tags for members who do not pay or respond to delinquent notices. Instead of hanging these yellow notices, staff will make an additional attempt to contact members before the disconnection of service. Members who are having trouble paying their delinquent balances are encouraged to contact the office to discuss payment arrangements and assistance programs available.



DUCTLESS HEAT PUMP REBATE PROGRAM

OCEC's Ductless Heat Pump rebate program is still available to members who replace their existing electric home heating with a ductless heat pump installed by a Comfort Ready Home certified contractor. This program is available to all OCEC members in existing single-family homes with either electric zonal or electric forced air home heating.

All members who have had ductless heat pumps installed by a Comfort Ready Home certified contractor in their existing homes after January 1, 2021, are now eligible.

Local certified contractors include Fisher Refrigeration, Cascade Mechanical and North Cascades Heating & Air Conditioning.

The current rebate of \$800 will be available until funds run out or September 14, 2023.

If interested, visit [ocec.coop/rebates-assistance/](https://www.ocec.coop/rebates-assistance/) to learn more!

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BROADBAND GRANT APPLICATION UPDATE

The Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) informed OCEC and Methownet last week their grant application for a broadband fiber network in the upper Methow Valley was awarded the full amount requested.

“These are very exciting times for our community and we are looking forward to bringing reliable, high-speed broadband fiber to our members’ homes and businesses.” Greg Mendonca, General Manager, OCEC.

“The OCEC has proven over the years to be the best partner to accelerate our goal of providing the Methow Valley with a high-quality fiber network. The improvements this project brings will ensure, despite our remote location, we enjoy state-of-the-art connectivity for years to come.” Jeff Hardy and Maria Converse, Owners, Methownet.

Background information on the application:

- Partnership is between OCEC and Methownet
- Grant award is approximately \$12 million for an approximately \$13.2 million project (max award was \$12 million for this funding opportunity)
- Will result in a fiber backbone between Twisp and Mazama/Lost River for improved reliability and redundancy
- Construction of 183 miles of fiber in existing OCEC rights of way and easements
- 102 miles underground
- 81 miles overhead
- Approximately 2,600 homes/business will be covered for a no-cost fiber installation directly to their home/business
- Specific details of the funding service area will be released in the near future

OCEC will have six months to finalize contracts with the state and give final approval to move forward on the project. Contingent on approval from the OCEC Board, construction will need to be completed by October of 2026.

OCEC and Methownet anticipate additional funding opportunities coming from the federal government via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) where the remainder of the OCEC electric service territory could potentially be awarded funds and developed as well.



OCEC staff on a blustery Earth Day participating in our semi-annual West Chewuch road cleanup.

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