



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Office Hours: 7:00 am-5:30 pm, Monday-Thursday
Closed Fridays & Holidays

MIDSTATE CONNECTION

Operation Round Up®

MEC members can support worth-while projects throughout the co-op's service area by rounding up their monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar. Every penny donated is used to support charitable causes and nonprofit community services and programs.

Are you in Operation Round Up®? If not, call 541-536-2126 option 3 to sign up. Specific dollar amounts added to your monthly electric bill and one-time donations by cash, check or debit card are welcome.



Co-op Connections® Card



Touchstone Energy® Co-op Connections® Update

The Co-op Connections Card is a money-saving member benefit program that provides valuable local and national discounts. The most widely used benefit of the card, the pharmacy discount, has saved members \$1,008,621 since June 2009.

For more information or if you need a Co-op Connections Card, call 541-536-2126 option 5.

Friends Stay Connected

Like us on
FacebookFollow us on
Twitter

Message from General Manager, Dave Schneider



As our communities continue to live through the hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Midstate Electric Cooperative is here to help where we can and when we can.

We realize some members may be facing financial struggles. We will continue to work with those members with the understanding that they communicate with us. Member service representatives are available at 541-536-2126 option 3. It is imperative accounts become current before cold weather use increases and bills become insurmountable.

Federal and state utility assistance is available through Deschutes County Neighbor Impact at 541-504-2155 and Klamath and Lake County Community Action Services at 541-882-3500. Members must reach out to these agencies for assistance.

Final Environmental Impact Statement Released July 31

The US Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration, and the US Bureau of Reclamation, with input from tribal nations and Northwest states released the Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on July 31. The FEIS provides a comprehensive, final analysis of the four lower Snake River dams (LSRD). It balances the needs of salmon, power supply, and social welfare in the Pacific Northwest.

The report concluded that the best option for fulfilling the multiple objectives of improving salmonid survival, providing a reliable electric grid, and reaching the Northwest's clean energy future is to maintain the four LSRD with adjusted operations.

The FEIS acknowledges the LSRD are a critical source of affordable and

dependable energy for the Northwest. Without the LSRD, the Northwest would be much more susceptible to energy shortages and regional blackouts.

The potential benefit to salmon from dam breaching varies widely according to modeling assumptions, but the socio-economic consequences to communities that rely on hydropower would have been devastating. The FEIS estimates that the cost of replacing the LSRD with other renewable energy sources backed up with batteries would have approached \$800 million per year. That roughly equates to a 25% increase in electricity bills for millions of Northwest residents and businesses.

Escalating electricity bills would create economic chaos at a time when we are already reeling from a global pandemic, a homelessness crisis, and an affordable housing shortage.

Salmon and steelhead recovery is a critical area of focus in the FEIS, calling for continued significant investments in habitat restoration as part of a holistic approach to helping salmonids.

The EIS release coincides with the release of a NOAA Fisheries' Biological Opinion, which examined the proposed hydroelectric operations under the EIS Preferred Alternative. It found that the recommended operations are consistent with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Hopefully the FEIS and its in-depth decision-making process brings closure for all stakeholders involved and a firmer conviction around the critical role of the hydropower system, which provides the Northwest with the most affordable carbon-free, renewable energy in the nation.

THE BENEFITS OF **HYDRO POWER>>**

As a member of MEC, you are experiencing the benefits of hydropower. MEC purchases 100% of its power from the Bonneville Power Administration, which markets wholesale hydroelectric power produced by the Columbia Snake River System.

The Columbia Snake River System supplies a constant source of energy. Since the rivers flow continually, hydroelectric dams can generate electricity constantly. Hydropower offers several economic and environmental benefits:

Hydropower is renewable. Each year, rain and snow replenish the supply. It is the nation's most abundant source of renewable energy.

Hydropower is efficient. Hydropower plants at dams convert about 90 percent of the energy in falling water into electrical energy. By comparison, fossil-fueled plants lose more than half of the energy content of their fuel as waste heat and gases.

Hydropower is clean. Hydropower produces no emissions. There are no gases or waste

products that contribute to air pollution. Northwest hydropower offsets greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 10 million cars.

Hydropower is secure. Water from our rivers is largely a domestic resource that is not subject to disruptions from foreign suppliers, cost fluctuations in power markets, international political crises, or transportation outages.

Hydropower is flexible. By adjusting the amount of water flowing through the dams, hydropower can be increased or decreased to meet changes in demand for power.

Hydropower allows for the growth of other renewable resources. Hydropower is a great back-up resource for wind and solar power. It can be ramped up to meet demand when the wind is not blowing and dialed down at times of high winds.

Hydropower is affordable. The fuel source, water, is free, which keeps operating costs low and protects against cost fluctuations. Over the years, the dams have consistently provided some of the nation's most affordable electricity.

Payment Options

MEC offers a number of payment options for our members' convenience:

 **Pay Online Using SmartHub (standard billing) and MyUsage (prepay)** - Pay with a credit card or debit card. Account information can be accessed.

 **Electronic Funds Transfer** - Automatically pay your bill from your checking or savings account.

 **Electronic Billing** - Receive bill notifications by email and choose several options for payment.

 **Payments by Phone** - Call 541-536-2126 option 2 to pay by phone with a credit or debit card. The system prompts for an account number and provides instructions for paying.

 **Automatic Credit Card Payment** - Allows monthly electric bill payments to be automatically charged to a credit or debit card.

 **In Person** - At the headquarters facility during office hours.

 **Drive-up Payment Depository** - Located in the parking area at the headquarters facility, 16755 Finley Butte Rd, La Pine, OR.

 **24 Hour Payment Station** - Installed at the entrance of the headquarters facility. The system prompts for an account number to make payments or view bills and payment history. Payments can be made by cash, credit or debit card.

 **Drop Boxes** - Located inside Washington Federal Bank in Gilchrist, La Pine and Lakeview and also at Sagewood Grocery in Christmas Valley. Payments can be made with cash, check or money order at these locations.

 **By Mail** - Using the self-addressed envelope enclosed with the bill.

 **VISA, Master Card or Discover Cards** are accepted at MEC.

A Prompt Payment Discount is available to all members who pay their electric bill in full within 10 days of the billing date. By doing so, a 1.5% credit is applied on the next month's bill.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

**When you Dig
DIG SAFELY**

Call the Oregon One-Call Center 811

- Wait for the site to be marked.
- Respect the marks.
- Dig with care.

State law requires 2 business days' notice if you dig deeper than 12 inches.

[811 does not work in all areas, so you may need to call 800-332-2344.]



**The Center
of Member
Engagement**

Manage your electric account 24/7 by accessing SmartHub at www.mse.coop.

With SmartHub, you can:

- Pay your bill online
- Monitor energy use
- View billing history
- Receive notifications via email or text message
- Report outages and track outage restoration progress
- Check MECs news feed

