



# ORCAS POWER & LIGHT COOPERATIVE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Co-op Members Re-Elect OPALCO Directors: Bogert, Lett and Myhr

The sun stayed out for the 335 people who attended the 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of Orcas Power & Light Cooperative (OPALCO) on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> on the ferry. More than one hundred people traveled by chartered vessels from Friday Harbor to catch the ferry at Orcas Landing, joined by members and their guests from Orcas, Shaw, Lopez and the outer islands. Voter turn out was robust with 1,285 ballots cast – second only to last year’s record breaking 1,349 votes.

Incumbents Jim Lett and Bob Myhr were re-elected for District 3 (Lopez, Decatur, Center and Charles Islands) and John Bogert was re-elected for District 4 (Shaw, Bell, Canoe and Crane Islands). Each will serve additional three-year terms. Board officers remain the same: Chris Thomerson will continue to serve as President, Dave Hylton as Vice President and John Bogert in the position of Secretary/Treasurer. Retiring director Roger Crosby was honored with a plaque to recognize his twenty-two years of service to the OPALCO board.

OPALCO members were treated to a hearty brunch by Avenue Catering. The new Energy Services Program was unveiled and members took home treasure maps that serve as a guide to the new programs and home energy savings (maps are now available in OPALCO offices). OPALCO staff members were on hand to talk about energy-efficiency and conservation, automated metering and Project PAL. More than 50 members took home door prizes that included local goods, Mariners tickets, gift certificates, power tools, fun gift baskets, camping gear, kitchen tools and gardening sets. Six members who sent in their absentee ballots were drawn for \$50 credits on their next OPALCO bills. The six lucky winners were: Karel Jahns, Donald Adams, Robert & Laurencia Liebmann, Martha Clark & Karen Gilbert, Barbara & James Orcutt and Judy Jackson. Orcas Island member Jennifer Fralick took the mic to express her gratitude and appreciation for “the excellent job that OPALCO linemen and staff do—and the tremendous improvements in system reliability” she’s seen in her more than thirty years on the island.

Representative Jeff Morris applauded OPALCO’s legacy and commitment to energy efficiency and conservation and discussed some of the new energy efficiency standards and measures introduced in the 2010 legislative session. General Manager Randy Cornelius discussed OPALCO’s system improvements including: 22 miles of overhead lines have been converted to underground; the transition to automated metering is at 45% of completion; and OPALCO has trimmed its system losses from 9% in 2007 to 5% in 2009 (every 1% of system loss costs approximately \$70,000). Cornelius talked about the upward trend in power costs with the coming tiered rate structure and encouraged members “to do all that they can with energy efficiency and conservation to curb load growth and minimize market purchases of potentially higher priced Tier II power.” He assured members that “you have the power to help control energy costs through energy efficiency and, as a co-op, we can work together to save energy – and money on our bills.” OPALCO members saved 4,379,530 kWh from 2007-2009 – worth approximately \$332,000.

OPALCO is a member-owned cooperative electrical utility serving more than 11,000 members on 20 islands in San Juan County. OPALCO provides electricity that is 97% greenhouse-gas free and is predominately generated by hydro-electric plants. OPALCO was founded in 1937 to bring electricity to rural islanders.

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