



ORCAS POWER & LIGHT COOPERATIVE

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OPALCO MAKES IMPROVEMENTS TO OLGA SUBSTATION

The OPALCO engineering department and line crew have made significant improvements to the Olga Substation and the lines out to Deer Point and Obstruction Pass on Orcas Island. Residents in those areas have been very patient with temporary planned outages while the work was in progress and, as a result, now can depend on a more reliable and more sophisticated system.

The Olga substation was built in 1971 and was in need of major upgrades. New switches were installed so that the crew can now take the substation off-line to do maintenance work without taking a power outage. Substation Technician Dan Watters explained, “This phase of the project improves the workability and safety for the crew in the substation. Members on this end of the island should notice even better reliability.”

Crews have been at work since September to replace bad poles, upgrade the existing single phase line to three-phase and re-insulate transmission equipment to 69kV for a future tie to a higher voltage submarine cable. Crews also replaced guy wires and anchors and converted the overhead lines to underground serving the Lieberhaven area.

According to OPALCO Engineering Manager Mark Tilstra, “The Olga Sub renovation is a part of a five-year construction plan to continually improve and update our system. In the next phase of this project, we’ll be working on Decatur and Blakely and will eventually install an additional 69kV submarine cable. This will increase our capacity and give us the ability to move power from either direction when necessary.”

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 95% 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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