

JERRY WHITFIELD (INCUMBENT)



Dr Jerry Whitfield and his wife Carol have lived on Shaw Island since 1999 and Jerry has served on the OPALCO Board since 2014. He has pursued an engineering career in Aerospace as a jet engine specialist at Rolls Royce Aero Engines, at General Electric, and the Boeing Company. He earned a PhD in Aero Acoustics from Cambridge University.

In the early '80's he invented the wood pellet stove and successfully built a manufacturing company around this product, eventually selling it to a Fortune 500 company. He has subsequently pursued his interests in commercial bioenergy developing ideas that generate power with a negative carbon footprint.

A distinguished engineering career and a proven entrepreneurial ability provides Jerry with the skills to serve the OPALCO membership well, and help lead OPALCO through some challenging times ahead.

OPALCO has built a safe, reliable, and economic Rural Electric Cooperative. The challenge is to continue to improve by modernizing the grid for increased reliability, safety, and energy efficiency, to seamlessly incorporate more member generated rooftop solar, and still provide members competitively priced electricity. Jerry has supported continued expansion of the fiber optic grid control backbone and has explained to the membership that the incremental cost on member's electricity bills is minimal.

The greatest challenge is to bring high speed broadband internet to as many homes and businesses who need it at minimal cost to electric ratepayers. Jerry supported the business plan for Island Network and the subsequent purchase of Rock Island on the basis that the technology was good, the demand was high, and the leadership were capable of executing the plan.

Jerry has supported the recommendation for OPALCO to join PNGC as an insurance against higher future power costs beyond OPALCO's current contract in 2028.