

SAVE THE DATE: **APRIL 21, 2018** FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING



2018 Election Timeline

The 2018 Election is for Board Members from District 2 (Orcas, Armitage, Big Double, Blakely, Fawn, Little Double and Obstruction islands). ALL Co-op Members vote in all elections regardless of their home island.

January 1: Nominations Open

January 30: Nominations by Committee Deadline & List of Candidates Posted

February 23: Nominations by Petitions Deadline

February 26: Complete List of Candidates Posted

March 12-16: Candidate Forums on Orcas, San Juan, Lopez and Shaw

March 29: Election opens; ballots mailed / emailed

April 19: Election closes at 10:00 am PST

April 21: OPALCO Annual Meeting – election results announced

Find out more at www.opalco.com



RATES 2018

When OPALCO members open their bills in January, they will be about \$7 higher. Most of the increase is driven by the 2017 installation of "George" (our new \$15M submarine cable named after George Goff), inflation and BPA rate increases.

This change represents a 5% increase in rates and will be applied equally between the facility charge and the energy usage portion of member bills, for a total of around \$7 more per month (based on the average residential monthly household usage).

"The board continues to study the OPALCO rate structure to deliver its services at a reasonable cost to its members," says board president Vince Daciunias. "And, we went through a rate review process in 2017, with Co-op member participation, to make sure we are as lean on expenses as we can be without compromising reliability and safety."

Each year, the cost of BPA energy steadily increases, and this flows through to your electric bill. OPALCO's investment in local renewable energy will help reduce our dependence on mainland power. And, keeping our energy usage rate for electricity lower than fossil fuels like propane and gasoline means members can save more than a thousand dollars per year on heating and driving costs. Call us to learn how.

OPALCO works closely with its members to ensure that assistance is available if paying their power bill is a financial strain. The Board gave OPALCO's Energy Assist Program a boost for 2018; qualified households can now get a bill credit of \$25 – \$55 every month – more than offsetting the rate increase. Check out Project PAL and Energy Assist programs at www.opalco.com to learn more.

In 2018, OPALCO is scheduled to conduct a cost of service study to ensure our rate structure is evenly distributing costs to co-op members. The last cost of service study was in 2014.

The budget forecast for the next five years projects a similar increase for each of those years as well. While the cost of living in San Juan County continues to rise, utility costs (OPALCO included) show a smaller increase than inflation of other necessary household expenses such as housing and groceries. OPALCO's clean, green mostly-hydro power is still one of the best deals around.

OPALCO does its best to predict energy costs from year to year but weather variations make this a challenge. Members will see a credit on their bill this December since last winter was colder than expected, with higher than expected revenue. As a member-owned non-profit cooperative, OPALCO strives to keep member dollars in member pockets.



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