OPALCO

1. What is your vision for energy use in San Juan County as a whole?

San Juan County will become efficiently and nearly-fully electrified for essential uses, such as transportation and heating, as most if our energy sources become greenhouse-gas free. Our co-op will distribute a substantial fraction of our electric power from local renewable resources, enabled by a continuing flow of firm power from mainland hydropower. In so doing, island families will thrive with a modern lifestyle while our environment in protected.

Here's Why:

Islander's can continue to enjoy a safe, healthy, modern and convenient lifestyle, enabled by reliably-available, firm electric power.

What is firm power? Why does it matter? Firm power is the what we buy today from our co-op. When we switch-on a device or appliance, it should perform as expected, smoothly, and without interruption. Like water from a faucet, when we turn it on, we expect a steady flow, not trickles, sputters, or surges. Without firm power, our appliances and devices may perform poorly, or fail unexpectedly. And, our power must be available 24/7.

Driven by the imperatives of our rapidly changing climate, energy sources that are greenhouse-gas emitters are being replaced with renewable resources that are not. Here and elsewhere, our economy and lifestyles will be electrified by combining renewable electric generators (e.g., wind, solar, hydro, tidal) with means to collect, firm, and deliver it to us. Investors are building vast "farms" of utility-scale wind and solar because they are a least-cost, though intermittent, solution. They're intermittent because the flow of power ceases when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine.

Fortunately, our transition to renewables will be made easier by our co-op's access to low-cost hydropower. Hydropower is the natural ally of renewables like wind and solar, helping them power through periods of low energy flow to assure our ability to deliver the firm power that we need and expect.

To become more electrified and more efficient, we'll also see many more electric vehicles in use, many more heat pumps, more chargers in parking lots, more solar collectors on roofs of businesses and homes, and fewer gas-powered vehicles and appliances. And, we'll see a mix of utility-scale and member-owned solar arrays and, potentially, biomass and tidal sources, too.

But, it will become more costly for your co-op to purchase wholesale power at times when it is most in demand (e.g., early morning and evening, especially in winter months). Though utilities will increasingly rely more on intermittent sources, electricity will remain costly to store for more than a few hours without further breakthroughs in technologies.* Fortunately, it seems likely that our co-op may continue to serve a "base" portion of our needs with firm hydropower, though wholesale prices for additional amounts may change quickly as utilities compete for available supplies of such firm power.

Good news is that modern technologies can help. Members will have more options to save money by adapting the timing of their use to the "real-time" cost of power. Major energy uses, like electric vehicle chargers, water heaters, dishwashers, and heat pumps, may be timed to use energy when it is least expensive. Result: savings to the member with little compromise to their comfort and convenience, while also lowering costs for your co-op. Further, our homes will become ever more efficient as the new replaces the old, aided by incentives like our rebates and our co-op's Switch-It-Up program. As energy use is electrified, overall energy demand will become more even from day to day and season to season, keeping down our cost for wholesale power.

Micro-grids, located in areas designated for critical infrastructure, will protect core community services during mainland power outages. A modernized grid will reduce the number of members affected by an outage. In time, a network of local tidal generators, with appropriate storage, will further moderate mainland power purchases. Such will help delay costly cable replacements and help us to locally service electrified ferries, Electrified ferries will be a win for our environment and marine wildlife and an additional source of revenue for our co-op.

2. What is your understanding of OPALCO's plan for its future of energy supply?

Our co-op maintains a necessary dual focus: maintaining, reliable service day-to-day while attending intensely to the upstream events shaping the outlook for reliable and affordable firm mainland power. Our co-op is responding to the evolving outlook through plans for a wide range of local action.

Here's Why:

Since the large hydropower dams were built along the Columbia River and its tributaries, co-ops like ours have long enjoyed "preference" access to this clean, firm, renewable power **at cost**. However, many large utilities in the Northwest and California have not enjoyed this "preference" access. They have instead relied on coal-fired generators and natural gas-powered turbines. Their coal plants, especially, have long been their big mainstays of firm power, though they are major emitters of greenhouse-gases.

Now, Climate Change and responding legislative mandates are quickly changing our energy supply landscape. Deadlines vary with state laws, but coal-fired generators have already began shutting down. The resulting loss of firm power will be large. Good news is that investors are expected to build many additional renewable arrays, especially wind turbines, in land-rich states to our east. However, this puts a premium on hydro for firming intermittent solar and wind, both in the Northwest and in California.

More renewables alone are not enough. More high power transmission links are needed to collect and deliver renewable energy to urban markets. A scramble is expected as utilities compete to line-up resources that assure their continued access to firm power. Highly sought will be our region's energy-storing hydropower, a natural complement to intermittent renewables. As supplies of firm power become fragile, risks rise for shortfalls, rolling blackouts, and spiked prices (e.g., Texas, California)

Your co-op has been tracking these developments closely and now has quite comprehensive plans to help us cope with the coming crises. These plans are

articulated in detail in our "Integrated Resource Plan" (IRP) and, more recently, in our draft Long Range Plan (LRP). The LRP focuses on co-op infrastructure likely to be financed by traditional means. The broader IRP further includes member-generation and efficiency actions. These plans are "paths" to respond locally and appropriately, as conditions change. Each recognizes major uncertainties and contingencies. Both are living documents. They are not wish lists, but are aligned suites of actions to consider as the future unfolds.

For example, our IRP speaks of "grid parity" to guide when a technology might be ready for adoption. Grid parity defines when it would be cheaper to invest in some local energy savings or generation than to continue to purchase such energy at wholesale power rates. So, these plans are unlike some public sector plans where the spending timeline may seem a fixed feature.

Our co-op will rarely be a first adopter of untried technologies. We are, however, a "fast follower". When others have demonstrated that a new technology is practical and effective, we will consider applying it here, especially when risks of inaction are looming.

Our Long Range Plan focuses on our co-op's own infrastructure while paying particular attention to maintaining our financial strength.

Our local grid has sufficient capacity to serve members needs for many years. However, investments are planned that will lengthen the life of the most costly assets (e.g., submarine, transmission, and distribution cables). Other investments will reduce the need to buy power when wholesale rates are highest using technologies that shift the timing of use, with savings shared by members and our co-op.

Tidal power (if found to be environmentally friendly and economic) may become an important local resource, especially in winter when local power needs double and solar output declines to one fifth of its summer peak.

3. Given the intermittency of renewable resources, how important is hydropower in your vision for a future energy supply in the islands?

Hydropower is our mainstay for assuring reliable, affordable, greenhouse-gas-free power for our members, especially as we add local renewable sources to our grid to gird against threats of future mainland outages and price surges. (See answer to question #1)

Here's Why:

We are blessed to have access to the nation's largest resource of hydropower to firm up wind and solar energy in ways that today's batteries cannot. Hydropower is 97% greenhouse-gas-free, making it the preferred "go-to" resource for decarbonizing transportation and heating in the western US.

Our co-op has long had a right protected by law to purchase, at cost, hydropower from large federally-owned dams on the Columbia River and its tributaries. Hydropower, like wind and solar, is renewable and greenhouse-gas free. But unlike wind and solar, hydropower is steady hour by hour and day by day, though its capacity may vary seasonally and annually, following patterns of snowpack and rainfall in the Northwest U.S. and Canada.

Hydropower helps to store energy and firm intermittent wind and solar energy at a much lower cost and with much longer duration than today's batteries. In so doing, hydropower helps to avoid billions of dollars of storage cost otherwise needed to augment and firm solar energy, especially in winter months. For at least the next decade, hydro will likely continue to serve as the affordable "base" to meet our firm power needs, to the extent available.

Wind turbines, of course, do not generate power when the wind is calm, and solar does not generate power at night or fully when the sky is cloudy or solar panels are covered in snow. To solar investors, "that's just nature". To a consumer, perhaps at breakfast or on a winter evening, "that's an outage".

But, pair hydro and wind together and you have a well-synchronized team. Hydropower dams cannot respond minute by minute, but they can plan days

ahead to anticipate changes in weather. So, think not of hydro as a competing alternative to wind and solar, but as a well-matched partner.

But, let's not forget the salmon. Salmon survival, especially the declining population of Chinook favored by our Orca's, is a real and serious issue. Great efforts have been made over many years to help salmon pass over dams. But recently, the accelerating onset of climate change has pitted the generation of firm, renewable, greenhouse-gas—free hydropower against the decline in the surviving cohort of temperature-threatened salmon. Hence, two worthy needs have become at logger-heads, due to Climate Change.

One outcome of this heated debate may be the removal of several dams on the Snake River. An Idaho Congressman anticipates a large block of Federal funding may come to the Northwest to address the energy consequences of climate change. Taking the initiative, he proposes a bold plan to remove several dams and spend a very large amount of such funds in his vicinity.

Though this initiative seems bold and imaginative, it also seems premature. As, yet, no regional consensus is apparent as to how Federal infrastructure funding might best be spent to address climate change for the region as a whole, including the Columbia River. Examples of potential needs include transmission lines to access power beyond the region, as well as environmentally-attuned projects, such accelerating electrification of ferries. Ferry electrification would reduce the noise pollution long known to hinder our local Orcas' ability to hunt, but could also add revenue for our co-op to help cover the cost of operating and upgrading our grid.

4. What role should OPALCO play in the regional power community?

Our power co-op's first responsibility remains to power our homes and businesses, reliably, economically, safely, sustainably, and in an environmentally responsible manner. Our co-op has served this mission successfully since the first submarine power transmission cables connected our islands with the mainland some seven decades ago.

Team OPALCO is a credible voice to help nurture regional consensus on environmentally-friendly ways to meet the needs of an electrified and growing Northwest economy.

Here's Why:

Our co-op has long enjoyed access to steady and affordable power comprised mostly of greenhouse-gas-free renewable hydropower and nuclear power. Moreover, we've enjoyed access to these sources at "system" cost, by law. However, only a fixed amount from the hydro system has been contractually assured, and our islands' power needs have grown along with our population. In 2028, all co-op contracts with our primary source, BPA, will end. BPA's offerings after 2028 have not been solidified. These upheavals will happen just as all utilities are grappling with legislated deadlines for our power sources to become greenhouse-gas free.

Other utilities in the Northwest and California have long depended more on greenhouse-gas emitting coal and gas powered generators. Under recent laws responding to Climate Change, such greenhouse-gas emitting generators will be shutting down. Their replacements will likely be new utility-scale arrays of renewable resources located in states to our east. However, the transmission extensions needed to collect and deliver such power, or import it from elsewhere, are as yet not solidly in the pipeline. Further, consumers need firm power, but wind and solar are inherently intermittent, and the needed firming cannot be efficiently done by today's battery technologies alone.

Many utilities will attempt to tap the Northwest's relatively fixed supply of hydropower to firm up their new renewable sources. California is already

ramping up its purchases of Northwest hydropower. The situation makes likely a scramble for the resources we've long depended upon and that has made us proudly clean and green. Without concerted consensus action among lawmakers, regulators, utilities and planners in the Northwest, the ensuing scramble is likely to be settled by market "shoot-outs", with ensuing shortages and surging prices. Seen this before? Want to see it again, here?

Our co-op is already taking bold steps to reduce our peak needs and increase our local resilience in the face of the forthcoming scramble. By winning grants and voluntary member investment, we've just completed a first utility-scale solar-plus-storage on Decatur island. Now, we've just won another major grant to build a similar micro-grid on San Juan Island to help power core community services during mainland outages. These projects build needed resilience. But, they take time to plan, permit and fund. Our membership has grown eleven-fold since our first submarine cables were installed, and there is no practical option that could make us fully independent with current technologies. As Texas recently discovered, going it alone is not the answer, nor is simply relying on power markets for an adequate and affordable solution.

Substantial new Federal infrastructure funding is now forecast, and we as a region should organize to respond successfully in our collective, long-term, best interests. It is strongly in our interest to help our region reach consensus on what investments and power market arrangements are needed, and to encourage our region to seed and incentivize needed action.

Being able to help means being a stakeholder that is credible yet not a threat to other major stakeholders. Your Team OPALCO, staff and Board together, may offer such a combination.

5. Where will you draw the line between local energy resilience and island aesthetics?

Today, more than 400 member-owned solar arrays contribute about 1% of our kWh consumption. To substantially lessen our dependence on mainland power by about 20%, this cohort could expand to 8,000 or more. However, such large numbers might affect our natural view-scapes or conflict with other land use goals (agriculture, conserved open space). Detailed guidelines are needed that encourage efficient siting of renewables while protecting the natural view-scapes that first drew us to make these islands our home.

Here's Why:

Your co-op has recently completed its first utility-scale solar-plus-storage project recently on Decatur. Another is planned for San Juan Island to help sustain core community services during an outage. Utility-scale arrays generate about 75 times more kilowatt-hours than an average small-scale array.

Also, there are already more than 400 member-owned, grid-connected solar arrays in SJC (See "Member-Generated-Power" on the OPALCO website). In 2020, power contributed by member-owned arrays was more than 1% of the power needs of our co-op, an average of about 6,600 kWh per year each. Might member-owned solar arrays become a key source of needed resilience?

To reach a significant level of resilience, say 20% of what our co-op would typically purchase, the number of member generators would grow some twenty-fold, to more than 8,000. Some would be built on racks, in open space, with tree lines cut-back as needed. Here on Orcas, we have much protected space and also much high and highly-uneven terrain, where array installations could be more difficult.

So, what would be the effect of making space for all those new units? Might that compromise the extraordinary natural view-scapes that first inspired us make these islands our home? Answering such questions is a role for community planning, and one addressed in-depth by other communities. We

should encourage additional solar installations, but also protect our view-scapes and other resources. To seek an appropriate balance, our co-op should:

- encourage formation or repurposing of a county advisory panel to aid development of appropriate guidelines for efficiently siting of member-owned solar generation while protecting island aesthetics. Members from our Solar Stewards Group would seem logical contributors, along with other affected stakeholder representatives.

- remain a continuing source of expertise for the county on critical power infrastructure and the value of renewables and storage of all sizes to meet our future needs.

6. The County Comprehensive Plan cites "energy independence" as a goal. What is your understanding of this goal?

Fortunately, we islanders enjoy significant opportunities to become less dependent on non-sustainable energy sources. And, we do need to become more resilient to potential mainland power shortfalls and price surges. However, attempting to become fully independent is neither practical nor desirable if we are to sustain a modern lifestyle, allow for a slowly growing population, and protect our environment while addressing Climate Change.

Here's Why:

Seventy years ago, our islands were "energy independent", using diesel generators. They supported a population of only 1,200, with power that was turned off at 10 PM. Those diesel generators were replaced by a network of submarine cables that allowed many more to enjoy a modern lifestyle while living among these extraordinary islands. Today, our co-op's membership has grown eleven-fold, to over 13,000 residential and about 2,000 commercial members. Our lifestyle is safer, healthier, and more convenient. Today, we have options that can further reduce our home energy use by about 30%.

Comes now Climate Change and legislated mandates to mitigate its impact. Coal-fired power generators, big emitters of greenhouse gases, are shutting down. They will be replaced by large wind and solar arrays in land-rich states to our east. Renewable resources are greenhouse-gas—free, but are also intermittent. Wind turbines produce no power when winds are calm. Solar arrays produce no power when the sun is not shining. Yet, a modern lifestyle demands firm power. Firming renewable power remains one of the most pressing challenges to assuring us adequate, reliable power at affordable rates. Hydropower is much lower in cost than battery storage for firming solar and wind. It is the ultimate back-up battery, especially during cold, dark winter months. Locally, for at least the next decade, it will be a more affordable solution than solar plus batteries. Also, hydropower is 97% greenhouse-gas free, making it the cleanest source of energy for decarbonizing our region through the electrification of heating and transportation. Please also see answer to question #1.

7. How would you propose to keep member's power bills affordable?

We aim to keep members power bills affordable by (1) continuing to score competitive grants and very low interest loans to help our members adopt technologies that reduce their cost of energy, (2) modernizing our grid with grant-supported utility-scale storage and micro-grids, together with measures to make our grid ever more efficient, and flexible, and (3) taking strategic measures to mitigate rising future wholesale power costs.

Here's Why:

An all-electric home can reduce its average energy use by some 30%. Members can use less energy by switching to heat pumps for space heating, heat pumps for water heating, energy-star washing machines and clothes dryers, better insulation, low-loss windows, and more. Rebates are available for many items. Low cost, on-bill financing is available for many heat pumps and EV chargers. A low-cost "home snapshot assessment" can review your insulation, heating, windows, doors, ventilation, appliances and lighting and prioritize recommendations for improvement. Expected soon will be on-bill financing for residential rooftop solar and related equipment.

Locally, we have begun building utility-scale solar-plus-battery arrays which will help shave wholesale power purchases when they are most costly and to provide resilience during power outages. The first such projects will be funded significantly through grants and/or voluntary member subscriptions, In time, these arrays may be accompanied by tidal generators that help serve our local needs and earn added revenue by recharging electrified ferries. Such added revenue would, in turn, help keep rates affordable and our grid responsive to the growing and changing needs of our members.

Our most recent grant win will us help integrate solar and storage from all sources, be be small-scale, utility-scale, or town-center micro-grids. These measures will enhance local resilience and help keep rates lower than if we depended solely on "market purchases" beyond available hydropower. We are also taking measure to lengthen the life of our most costly assets (e.g., submarine, transmission, and distribution cables).

Going forward, the affordability of power will be as much about when we use electric power as how much we use. Our co-op will begin rolling out advanced power meters, allowing members to buy and sell power between each other via the grid. Applying broadband capabilities developed by our subsidiary, RIC, many residential and commercial members will also have the option to join win-win Demand-Energy-Response programs that promise savings for both the member and our co-op.

Upstream, we should work with strategic partners, such as our partner co-op PNGC, to (a) encourage regional consensus on firm powers needs, (b) define critical energy infrastructure deserving of any available public support, and (c) encourage voluntary regional market mechanisms to help assure the continued availability of firm power to co-ops like ours.

8. What role should OPALCO play in the overall sustainability of our island communities?

Our co-op's role in assuring the sustainability of our island communities is to sustainably supply our members with adequate, affordable, and reliable firm power and broadband in an environmentally responsible manner.

Here's Why:

The biggest challenge for our island communities is to sustain a safe, healthy, and modern lifestyle and enable island families to thrive while protecting our environment and adapting gracefully to our changing climate.

Your co-op is a member-owned, not-for-profit corporation, focused specifically on the business of safely and sustainably providing reliable and economical electric power (and broadband) in an environmentally responsible manner.

Climate Change and responding legislation that aims to eliminate greenhouse-gas emissions will also drive further electrification of our local economy. Our co-op will help by:

- Building utility-scale solar and storage micro-grids that make our communities less dependent on volatile mainland power supplies;

- Winning grants, rebates, and low cost-financing that helps members:

  - reduce their total energy cost for heating and transportation by becoming more energy efficient, and,

  - employ renewable and energy storage solutions that help reduce costly peak energy purchases and mitigate periods of uncertain mainland supply.

These challenging goals require that our co-op remain focused on its mission for both the short and long term. In so doing, our co-op must work closely with policy influencers at all levels while avoiding roles that are inherently public in nature.

9. How aggressive should OPALCO be in pursuing new technologies and energy solutions?

Our co-op's services are essential to sustainable island living. Our co-op has defined long-range options that anticipate future needs, threats, and opportunities. These options reflect a balance between the risks of action and inaction. Broadly, they are conditioned on the outcome of uncertain events. They are prudent when contemplating bold action, rarely becoming the first to adopt new technologies. Overall, they are in keeping with the success and character of our co-op over many years.

Here's Why:

There are risks to NOT being aggressive in pursuing new technologies and energy solutions.

We face heightened risk, within the timeframe of our plans, of shortages of firm power from mainland suppliers. Such shortages may result in rolling black-outs and price shocks, akin to what has occurred in California and Texas. Adding local resilience can help, such as through community and utility-scale solar arrays and storage and perhaps, in time, local tidal generation.

We also pay more to buy power at times when our members typically need it most, usually in early morning and early evening throughout the year, but especially during cold, dark winter months. Conservation and storage technologies help to reduce peak needs by shifting the time when major appliances use power to periods when wholesale prices are lower. Some technologies are utility-scale, while other are for our homes and businesses.

Further, conservation and member renewable generation technologies also help members lower their average power bills while still enjoying our modern electrified lifestyle. A looming concern is the growing risk of shortfalls in mainland supply. Continuity of service during an outage remains a member responsibility, but risks of rolling black-outs and price spikes are rising.

However, such risks might reduced broadly if our co-op aggressively pursues opportunities to improve energy efficiency and augment local renewable generation. If not pursued when reasonably available, our islands could face higher energy costs that might otherwise have been avoided.

2. Our co-op has had a long and successful history of bold action.

Seven decades ago, our co-op joined forces with BPA to forego local diesel generators in favor of a network of submarine cables connecting all major islands with low cost, clean hydropower from the mainland. It enabled our local communities to take hold, thrive and grow eleven-fold.

About two decades ago, our co-op began laying fiber-optic cable whenever convenient, recognizing it would likely become a powerful tool to safely and efficiently manage our 20-island grid. Within the last decade, the completed optic fiber "backbone" captured the promised benefits for managing our grid.

Then, in just the last decade, our co-op extended the benefits of the fiber "backbone" to give islanders affordable options to reliably access broadband. An extraordinary partnership with T-Mobile enabled our subsidiary, RIC, to offer a range of broadband options. Today, RIC has over 6,000 subscribers. RIC's infrastructure also enabled the first practical solution to our county's long-unsatisfied need for reliable first responder communication. Today, it broadly recognized that the once seemingly disparate missions of broadband and power have become nearly inseparable.

In the last several years, our co-op has been highly successful in securing rebates and low-cost financing to help members reduce their energy costs. It secured grants and member subscriptions the enabled the recent completion of our utility-scale solar-plus-storage project on Decatur. And, just recently, it won a major state grant supporting a new micro-grid on SJI that will help provide resilience to core services during a mainland outage.

And, as the COVID crisis afflicted our economy, our co-op took financial steps to weather the crisis, while also enhancing aid to our most-affected members and foregoing any rate increase at the start of the new year.

ROCK ISLAND (RIC)

1. **How important is broadband connectivity to economic development and quality of life in SJC?**

Broadband connectivity is essential to sustained economic health and our quality of life in SJC.

Here's Why:

In the last few years, with the maturing of RIC and its network, SJC has come to enjoy a quality of communications options more typical of far more populous mainland communities.

RIC broadband has brought immediate benefits in quality of life. For example, SJC is about to have its first reliable, secure, county-wide emergency communications service for first responders. This service was made possible by the RIC network and RIC's ability to provide timely, county-wide technical support. Such support for first responders brings peace-of-mind to all islanders, but especially for long-time islanders who might otherwise consider moving to the mainland to assure timely emergency attention.

Reliable RIC broadband has also meant enhanced quality and convenience in staying connected to family and friends, and for assuring that visiting family can also remain connected to mainland concerns while they are here.

Fortuitously, the widened availability of RIC broadband has happened just in time to mitigate the impact of the COVID crisis among our islands. Our islands have long talked of a need to diversify our local economy beyond tourism. Perhaps ironically, the COVID crisis has broadened work-from-home "tele-work" opportunities for islanders using RIC's LTE and Optic Fiber technologies. Further, it has also enabled "distance-learning" from home when the physical classroom experience has not been available.

Part-time islanders, too, can now live and work from their island residence. Our shops and businesses benefit from their more regular and extensive on-island shopping and spending.

Telework for part-time islanders also permits longer stays than, say, weekend visits. Longer stays allow fewer trips on our capacity-constrained ferries and air services. The ability to remain digitally connected will also encourage longer stays by visitors in our hotels, resorts, and county camp-grounds, further reducing the overall burden on roads and ferries.

As telework grows, a growing demand seems likely for local professional services, including services to maintain and upgrade telework-related business equipment and networks. The needs of RIC itself has already established a continuing local demand for skilled workers. A growing telework segment will further enhance local, high-skill job opportunities.

2. What is your vision for providing communication technology throughout SJ County?

Communications and digital connectivity are, like reliable electric power, bright threads running throughout the fabric of a modern and thriving island economy. RIC, as a subsidiary of our co-op, is the appropriate vehicle for SJC to reap the full benefits of up-to-date communications technology.

Here's Why:

Communications and digital connectivity enable friends, families, co-workers, and clients to remain connected. They reduce needless travel and encourage more efficient use of energy. They enable greater safety and security our home and its immediate environment. They enable us to connect quickly and reliably with health services and first responders. They reduce the need for mainland visits to search and shop for goods and services. They allow a greater range of high quality streaming choices for entertainment, health, and awareness of the world beyond our doorstep. And, they allow us to remain personally connected, regardless of whether are at work, at home, or in motion (though not while driving, of course).

At work, these technologies enable us to serve and to compete, and to do so perhaps as effectively as might much larger mainland counterparts. For learning, they open a range of educational experiences and expertise previously only accessible in larger, well-funded mainland systems. Today, digital connectivity is essential for young island families to thrive.

Rock Island, as a subsidiary of our co-op, should remain the competitive provider of choice for communications serving all of these needs, but with the heart and outlook of a co-op utility offering a core community service. This will encompass fiber service having continuously updated state-of-the-art terminal equipment that also supports core community services (e.g., town and county government, medical facilities, fire/EMS, etc.). In parallel, fiber will continue branching to less dense communities beyond, responding to momentum in the rate of adoption as is financially efficient. However, RIC should seek and apply such public funds as may be available, and perhaps further partnerships, to broaden the reach of FTTP throughout our town and rural neighborhoods.

Competitively priced wireless options should remain available, especially for short-term or seasonal users and those with less need for uninterrupted, state-of-the-art, high data-rate service, or for users who cannot reasonably access fiber to the premises (FTTP). These services should continue to draw upon the state-of-the-art technologies and capacities of T-Mobile and our other business partners.

3. What value do you add to assist Rock Island in realizing that vision?

As a two-decades plus islander and island-based software products developer, I am acutely aware of the unfilled promises of previous communications service providers in this county. I understand the needs of island-based businesses for reliable, economical, true broadband service.

As an incumbent Director, I've found my experience in working with young technology businesses and their investors to be invaluable. RIC is now emerging from its start-up years as such a business. Its challenges are not dissimilar to those faced by others. The value I bring is not in being an up-to-date technology expert. Rather, it is valuing what experts offer, in board-team context, be it about technologies, staff, challenges, risks, or outlook.

As one long-versed in the metrics and implications of business success, I appreciate the significance of RIC's business potential, including its contribution to the mission and long-term plans of its parent-owner, our co-op.

Technologies, competitors, and markets can change quickly. The young tech business must adapt, but not chase every change in its environment or outside critique. Timelines may be tweaked, but progress towards major milestones matters, and is to be rewarded. Your RIC is making it happen.

Finally,, as a recent Fiber-to-the-Premises customer, I enjoy "future-proof" broadband technology today. Thanks, RIC.