

2022 OPALCO Candidate Questionnaire

Dr. Jerry Whitfield, District 4.

OPALCO

1. “Safe, reliable and affordable” are the most important characteristics of OPALCO’s electric service to its members. These are fundamental requirements for all rural electric cooperatives. Renewable and low carbon energy characteristics are important for mitigating climate change and will become legal requirements in the future. However, they may impact safety, reliability, and affordability.
2. If Tier 1 BPA power is insufficient to meet the Coop’s winter load (which it does today), Tier 2 (market rate) BPA power is the next most preferable source for OPALCO. Any new renewable generating source of electricity is likely to be more costly than Tier 2 power from BPA.
3. San Juan county has insufficient incident solar energy, and insufficient land and rooftops to make local solar power a major source of renewable power particularly during winter heating loads and after sundown. There is no conflict with land use.
4. Hydropower is **the** essential source of carbon free, base load electrical energy for the foreseeable future for OPALCO and must be preserved wherever possible.
5. a) Either BPA Tier 2 (market rate) or local tidal generation.
b) Blakely Island east side, and Cattle Pass for tidal generation.
c) More than likely.
d) EPC (Engineering Procurement and Construction) Contractor/Investment group/Power Developer.
6. Progressively increase the Fixed Charge to better reflect the actual ratio of the fixed and variable cost of providing electric power to Coop Members.
7. If the County Comprehensive Plan defines “energy independence” as full independence from mainland sources of electricity, their plan is flawed. The county has insufficient sources of renewable power to satisfy the county’s current needs, let alone future growth.
8. By continuing to provide as much low-cost BPA hydropower as possible through our Northwest buying group PNGC and continuing to encourage energy efficiency and implementing cost effective demand-side measures that become available.

ROCK ISLAND

1. Expanding the availability of affordable fiber internet connections to as many homes and businesses as possible through capital investment. Expanding and improving the Fixed Wireless (LTE) service by supporting the on-going business relationship with T-Mobile.
2. Providing greater internet access to all OPALCO members is essential for modern living and economic wellbeing in the San Juan Islands. Increasing Rock Island’s market share will improve their competitiveness in providing this essential service.
3. Rock Island should continue to seek public infrastructure financial support and grants to expand the “fiber backbone” throughout the county. Users should expect to pay some “last mile” connection costs.
4. Seeking affordable capital to continue building out the fiber network and ensuring that Rock Island continues to provide a very high-quality service.