

# Members Can Help Keep Wholesale Power Rates Affordable

**T**he electric utility industry and public power have seen drastic changes the past few years, including wholesale power price increases, shortage of water available for hydropower generation, transmission line congestion and deregulation.

Most recently, the administration's proposal to accelerate debt payments is yet another example of the challenges public power and the electric utility industry face. These changes and proposals directly affect the rates members of Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative (CCEC) pay for electricity.

As a member and owner of CCEC, you have a vested interest in keeping electric rates as affordable as possible, and you have a right to have your voice heard.

Four years ago Power of Community began an effort to educate consumers of electric cooperatives (co-ops) in Oregon about issues affecting electric rates and to activate members who were willing to provide input from the grassroots level. The grassroots network, sponsored by co-ops, including CCEC and the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA), now numbers 7,000 strong across the state.

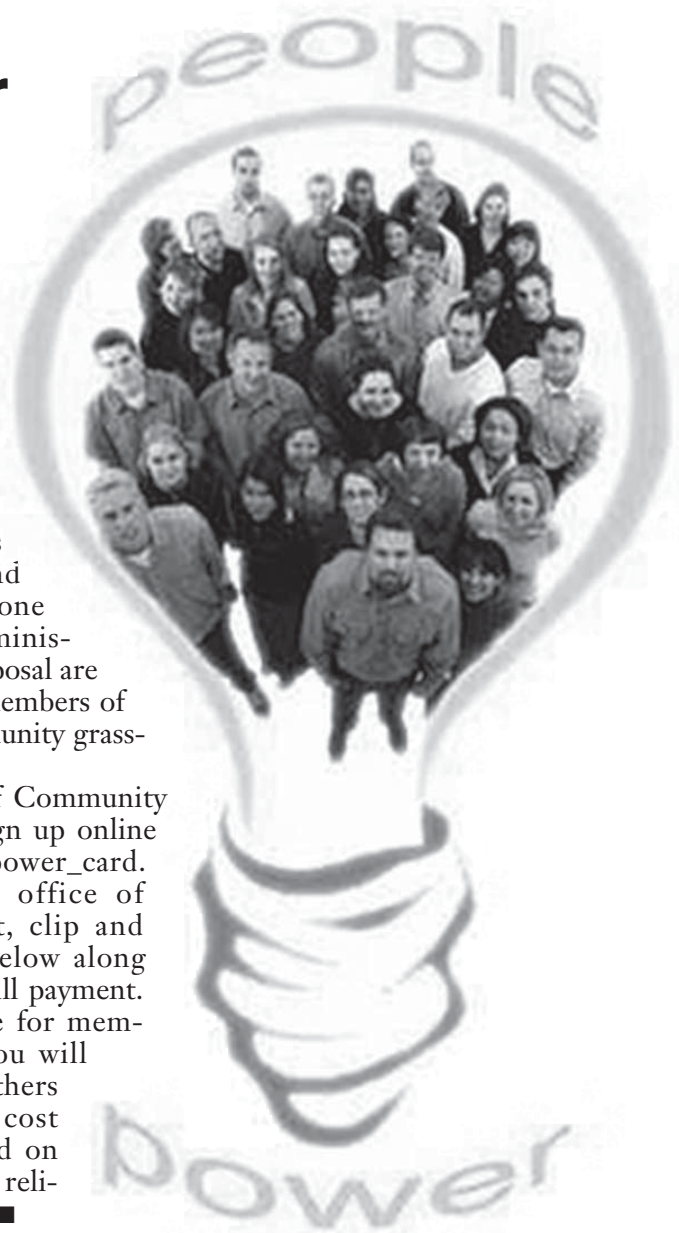
Power of Community members are also members of People Power, a grassroots organization focused primarily on Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) issues. The BPA supplies most of the wholesale power CCEC uses to meet the needs of its membership. As such, our work is far from done—and your involvement in these grassroots movements is more important than ever.

Elected officials are interested in what you—the voter—have to say on issues that are important to you. They respond better to you

than any lobbyist or organized special interest group.

You may be wondering how you learn about the issues and get involved. That is where Power of Community comes in. Information and alerts such as the one relating to the administration's budget proposal are mailed directly to members of the Power of Community grassroots organization.

Joining Power of Community is easy. You may sign up online at [www.oreca.org/power\\_card.htm](http://www.oreca.org/power_card.htm); contact any office of CCEC; or fill-out, clip and mail the coupon below along with your electric bill payment. There is no charge for membership; in fact, you will be working with others to make sure the cost of power purchased on your behalf remains reliable and affordable. ■



Yes, I would like sign up for Power of Community.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Electric Co-op.

\*Return this coupon with your electric bill payment.

# President's Budget Proposal Could Cost You Money

**P**resident Bush's budget for next year includes a proposal that could raise the cost of your electricity in the future.

If implemented, the administration's proposal would direct the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to use certain revenue towards accelerated debt payments to the U.S. Treasury to reduce the federal deficit instead of being used as it has in the past to reduce or stabilize rates in the Pacific Northwest. The proposal could increase wholesale power rates by as much as 10 percent in 2008-2009 alone.

Because Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, Inc. buys almost all of our power from the BPA, you, the owners, would feel the direct impacts of this proposal. It would have the effect of being a new tax on electricity consumers in our region who depend on the clean, renewable power generated by the federal hydropower system.

Northwest ratepayers already make all principle and interest payments due on BPA's debt to the federal Treasury—in full and on time.

On a bipartisan basis, members of the Northwest Congressional delegation already have sounded the alarm by expressing their concern to the administration.

In a joint press release by the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA) and PNGC Power, ORECA's Executive

Director, Sandy Flicker, reiterated the opposition of Oregon's electric cooperatives to the proposal. And, Patrick Reiten, president and CEO of PNGC Power explained the proposal "is nothing more than a tax on consumers who depend on the federal hydro system."

Early February, the co-chairmen of the U.S. House Northwest Energy Caucus sent a letter to Josh Bolten, the Director of the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), calling upon the administration to withdraw the proposal. In their letter, U.S. Reps. Greg Walden (R-Oregon) and Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) urged the OMB to "suspend the pursuit of this ill-conceived plan, which would negatively impact the Northwest economy."

Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) and Senator Gordon Smith (R-Oregon) urged Secretary of Energy Bodman to reconsider the proposal, noting the devastating impacts in a state with unemployment twice the national average. Secretary Bodman said he would meet with the Northwest delegation to discuss the proposal before taking further action.

While it appears the administration has received the message, thanks in large part to swift action by our Congressional delegation in representing the region and electric consumers, more work remains to be done. On February 10, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman told



the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that he would briefly delay—but not cancel—publishing the proposal in the Federal Register in order for him to hear concerns from Northwest senators. Once a notice or proposal is published in the Federal Register, the timetable for enacting the proposal begins.

If you would like to make your objection known, write to:

Steve Wright, Administrator  
BPA  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, OR 97208-3621

The main points to make are:

- The Administration should withdraw the misguided BPA budget proposal.
- It would needlessly raise rates on Northwest citizens.
- BPA's rates are already too high after the nearly 50 percent jump a few years ago.
- Northwest ratepayers pay all the costs of the federal hydropower system and should continue to receive the benefits of that system.

Look for updates in CCEC's communication with the membership and media and through the cooperative grassroots organization, Power of Community. ■