

MORE THAN JUST CHECKING THE BOX: DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

BY CHRISTMAS WHARTON COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



CHRISTMAS WHARTON

When I started at the cooperative five years ago, one of the first experiences I had was the monthly board meeting with the nine directors serving on our Grand Valley Power board. I used to work at an investor-owned utility, but the cooperative business model was not completely foreign to me. Even so, it was different from anything I had ever experienced before. An IOU is typically owned by stockholders who may or may not be served by the actual utility. The IOU's focus is a return on investment or profit that benefits the stockholders. Cooperatives, such as GVP, are businesses that provide a service at cost. The co-op's mission is to provide its members safe, reliable and affordable power, not to make a profit. From the first board meeting, I walked away knowing the directors at the table are an integral part of the business. The health of the cooperative is a priority.

It reminds me of a notable speech given by Martin Luther King, Jr., who stated, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" His inspiring words urged Americans to take actions that benefited the greater good. In

essence, he was saying our country thrives when we all contribute our talents.

On a local level, I think the same can be said about our co-op, specifically in regard to our board. GVP directors are community-focused individuals with a variety of skill sets. Our board is made up of farmers and ranchers, retired educators, current business owners and former business managers. Each has a wide variety of interests, with many serving on other boards or committees around the county and the state. Their deeply woven citizenship to western Colorado and our community is embedded in every meeting. We rely on their many talents and experiences to help us make informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Our directors live right here in the co-op's service area, and we consider them the eyes and ears of the community because they provide their perspective on important community issues.

We recognize it takes many people with different skills to create a well-rounded board that can represent the full spectrum of our membership. That's why it's good to have a diverse board — it is good to have folks with unique perspectives, experience,

expertise and views. When elections come up each year, it's important for the co-op to have local members of our community who can apply their unique talents to benefit all our friends and neighbors. But above all else, our cooperative board needs folks who love our community and want to see it thrive now and into the future.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SERVE ON THE BOARD?

Serving on GVP's board means you're making a difference locally, using your individual talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that, in turn, benefit the larger community. The director position is not one where you "check the box." In fact, that was one of the first things I noticed with our directors — they are highly engaged. Training and education about our industry is important to each of them. While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the community



it serves. On a granular level, GVP board members typically provide direction and guidance on:

- Budgets and capital expenditures
- Co-op goals and strategic objectives
- GVP's community and charitable contributions
- Infrastructure investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- Renewable investments, power supply and energy mix
- GVP's role and involvement in economic development

The energy industry is undergoing a major transition. Between legislative and

statewide policies pursuing clean energy resources or technology advancements such as electric vehicles or beneficial electrification, GVP directors face big decisions. Our board has an opportunity to help chart a course for the future, keeping your power affordable, sustainable and safe. Their sound decision making advances our cooperative and provides the services you seek.

While you don't need to be an expert in electricity or business to run for the board of directors, you do need to have a passion for the community and a willingness to actively serve and learn. GVP's board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized

training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

Ultimately, our board is the community pulse for the co-op and helps keep us on the right track. Being a director is an important role, and one that our members democratically elect each year. To learn more about GVP's director election process and 2022 details, please visit gvp.org/director-elections.

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Our resources help answer all your questions about EVs.




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Find the EV that's perfect for you and your lifestyle.



ELECTRIC VEHICLE RATE

A Time-of-Use rate designed to help EV owners save.



CO-OP HOLIDAY OFFICE SCHEDULE

CLOSED

Memorial Day (Monday, May 30)

Lest We Forget

CO-OP CALENDAR

May 7 - Kite Day (Sherwood Park)

May 8 - Mother's Day

May 18 - GVP Board Meeting

June 3 - Director Petitions Due

Scholarship

AWARD WINNERS



Grand Valley Power is proud to provide local students the opportunity to power their educational endeavors. Since 1996, the cooperative has given back over \$258,000 to students continuing their education.



ALEXIS GRUNDY
Plateau Valley High School



OLIVIA SHEAR
Palisade High School



JEWELI WILTSE
Plateau Valley High School



RILEY POPE
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ASHLYN WILKERSON
Plateau Valley High School



SARAH COOK
Palisade High School



SOPHIA FEGHALI
Palisade High School



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WESTERN COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ELECTRIC LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP

 One-time \$2,000 award

Apply by June 1, 2022

gvp.org/scholarship-program

Applicants must currently reside in Mesa County at the time of application.

BITTERSWEET DAY AT THE CO-OP

BY CHRISTMAS WHARTON COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

It's a bittersweet time when we say farewell to one of our own. Gary Billiet, Grand Valley Power's purchasing, materials and compliance manager, is retiring after being at the co-op for three years. Although Gary has been with GVP for a short time, working at an electric cooperative is not new to him. Gary once worked at a neighboring Colorado cooperative, Mountain Parks Electric, for 20 years prior to moving to the Western Slope. Living in the Grand Lake area, Gary worked at MPE as a program manager for electric thermal storage and then in the engineering department for 14 years. When a position opened for a warehouse supervisor, Gary jumped at the opportunity, where he remained until he was offered a position at GVP. "My wife and I were ready to move from the snow and harsh winters. We had a retreat in Grand Junction, and it was perfect timing for us," Gary said.

Now, moving into retirement, Gary looks forward to spending his summer prepping a

new property near the Gunnison/Montrose area with his wife, Diane. "Our property is in a heavily wooded area that's in a higher elevation, so we'll be able to get out of the hot summer weather and work on it through the summer. I look forward to taking out the ATVs and spending time traveling around the U.S. as well. We plan on visiting Lake Powell, the Black Hills area and some national parks," Gary said.

April 1 was Gary's last day at GVP, but we will benefit for a long time from his time at the co-op. Gary implemented a barcode inventory management system which increased the efficiency of necessary inventory tracking. He also finished a large project in 2021, rebuilding and reconstructing GVP's truck access road and gate.

"I've enjoyed my time here at GVP working with our dedicated employees and board. I'm glad to have been a part of it. I just only wish I would have known about GVP sooner. We really do have a

great group of employees here," Gary said. For now, we'll say farewell and not goodbye, Gary. Thank you for your dedication to our community, members and employees. We wish you well in all your retirement endeavors.



Grand Valley Power's Purchasing, Materials and Compliance Manager Gary Billiet retired on April 1 after three years at the co-op. Prior to his time at GVP, Gary worked at electric cooperatives for 23 years. Happy retirement, Gary!

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6-7 PM

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SCAN AND REGISTER

Director Petitions Due June 3

There are three director seats up for election at Grand Valley Power's annual meeting in August. Nominating petitions are currently available and can be obtained by calling the office at 970-242-0040. Signed petitions must be returned no later than close of business on June 3, 2022.

Election procedures for the board of directors are governed by Colorado statute. The cooperative's bylaws and election policy comply with statutory requirements. These bylaws and policies can be found on GVP's website at gvp.org/director-elections. Upon request, these written documents can be picked up at GVP's headquarters or mailed to you.

MEMBER PARTICIPATION REQUESTED

As a cooperative member, each GVP eligible account holder or spouse has the right to vote for up to three directors to be elected. Members have only one ballot per election, regardless of the number of accounts or meters with GVP. Ballots will be mailed during the month of July. Members can return these ballots by mail, or they can be placed in the secure ballot box in our office lobby. At this time, the annual meeting is scheduled to be in person at Colorado Mesa University on Thursday, August 4, 2022. Additional updates on the annual meeting will be provided in future *Colorado Country Life* issues.