

## **Summary of SDCEA Board Meeting – August 23, 2023**

All directors were present for the roll call, except Bennetts who arrived at 10:12 a.m. Agenda was approved, with no discussion.

Public comments were received by two members. At one time there were 3 or 4 guests in attendance in person and another 9 or more online.

Sandy Long inquired about preparations for high winds and emergency shutoffs while allowing for emergency responders given the recent fire in Maui. Late in the meeting it was explained that there are one-shot systems where the electrical link stays open (not flowing) until someone goes out and inspects and closes it manually, and this is turned on to act like this during high fire season. With grant funding, there may be an opportunity to have such connections remotely closed instead of requiring a site visit.

Karen Pate asked about whether the Board should consider a cutoff date/time in advance of a meeting for new agenda items (to which Dan Daly said no, given that they only meet once a month). Karen voiced that using SDCEA resources to support a private company's grant work feels like it's overstepping given the Cooperative's 7 core principles and that there is no stated member-derived benefit from a geothermal project at this juncture (to which there was no response). She also inquired about the plans to assist with the education component of resolution. Regarding which Dan Daly directed staff to facilitate such educational opportunities between Mt. Princeton Geothermal, homeowners and members such as Q&A sessions. But there are no specific meetings scheduled at this time. Mark Boyle clarified that one key aspect of the resolution is to help ensure SDCEA gets a seat at the table relating to this and any utility plant in the co-op's service area.

After removing the work order inventory item from the consent agenda, it was approved. The work order inventory was removed because it wasn't clear what was being improved or what to review; it was clarified that it should be reviewed for outliers / unexpected information. Minutes from the previous meeting in July were approved.

SDCEA support of Steffes (Electric Thermal Storage) was agreed should end, given there are now local, private firms to support these HTS systems.

The November SDCEA Board meeting will be further south to broaden engagement, such as at the Fairgrounds. There will be advertising, and likely no Webex option for virtual attendance. Maybe it will serve a dual function, such as a coffee with the co-op event.

CFC voting members were identified and confirmed.

The Board requested that investigation and information be provided about the opportunity for grant(s) to support burying electric lines, given the discussions at last night's meeting regarding tree cutting in BV and the possibility of it costing \$50M to bury it all. There may be a possibility of grant funding to help offset some of the burying costs. Also need to evaluate what/how many trees need to be clipped or cut. Additional points made include: it still might be cost effective to cut the trees, as it may be cost prohibitive to bury lines.

Charlie Abel gave an extensive report on Tri-State activities.

- United Power and Tri-State are in a court battle over how much United Power should pay for an exit fee. United Power is 20% of Tri-State overall usage. General view is that Tri-State would like to see mediation in this case. The lower amount paid by United Power to exit will mean more debt spread across remaining co-ops like SDCEA.
- United Power intends to exit on May 1, 2024 but they have not given Tri-State information on how they will now get their power. Tri-State needs this information for their planning.
- Tri-State is implementing a new computer system (\$50M project).
- Tri-State is working on their Letter of Intent (LOI) for the New ERA funds. (Background – The New ERA program from the Inflation Reduction Act is a \$9.7B funding pool for rural electric co-op investment.) LOI's are due September 15. Tri-State's application will be for over \$1B. How they plan to request/use ERA funding will be shared soon, as much as can be shared without compromising confidentiality.
- Tri-State is currently working with the PUC on updating their 2020 ERP (Electric Resource Plan). The New ERA application will need to be coordinated with the ERP. Tri-State will reduce their Greenhouse Gases 100% by 2040 with ERA money (assume this is Colorado only). With the current solar projects in-service by the end of 2024, Tri-State will be close to the maximum amount of solar they can use. Tri-State is proposing a new natural gas plant to replace the 24/7 base load of their retired coal plants. The hard question is where to locate the plant. Colorado has emission targets while Wyoming does not. Transmission lines will also be a problem.

Dan gave an update on Western United. Year-over-year sales have declined. Might get 7% back. Supply chain issues improving. Meeting and election tomorrow; Dan expects to remain as Western United Board Chair for another year since he is unopposed.

There were discussions about Tri-State's beneficial electrification programs promotional materials and resource sharing with SDCEA, including a new Distributed Energy Resource Management System (DERMS) that allows control of load behind members meters to manage peak loads, saving money by managing/limiting peak load use for members who have given such authorization. An example is batteries. This is different than the study that's being done about the system itself that was discussed last month.

On August 30, there will be a webinar hosted by Colorado Energy Office and CREA on Net Metering. Gary Kelly will forward the information to the Board.

Mark Boyle asked Gary Kelly about the LOI for the New Era Program which is due on September 15. They are working on it and had an offer from a solar battery developer to help with it. There was some discussion about areas with load deficiencies especially the Querida and Kettle areas. SDCEA has 40 acres in Custer County that would be good for a microgrid but they would need to work with Tri-State.

The recent Co-op Coffee was a big success with 30-40 people attending. It was a good opportunity for staff to get to know members and address questions.