Lincoln County Clerk Dana Jenkins swears in Jim Chambers (representing the areas we serve in east and north Lincoln County), Keith Tymchuk (representing coastal Douglas and northern Coos counties), and Paul Davies (representing the Newport area) last month.

Ready to Represent You

Central Lincoln’s customers are represented by five board members, each elected in a November General Election to a four-year term, each representing approximately 11,000 residents of the Central Coast.

For the first time in 18 years, we have two new board members joining the board at the same time. They have much in common—both recently retired from full-time careers, both have two children (one girl; one boy) and four grandchildren, both are nearly life-long Oregonians, and both attended Oregon State University.

Toledo’s former mayor, Jim Chambers, was elected to serve Central Lincoln’s Subdivision 2, representing Depoe Bay, Lincoln Beach, Otter Rock, Siletz, and Toledo: “My goals for Central Lincoln are to continue to strive to provide cost-efficient service to our customers,” he says. “This is a progressive utility, with established goals and five year plans that are reviewed as to progress and needs.” Jim was with Lincoln County’s Public Works Department for 41 years, and shares he was impressed by his interactions with Central Lincoln’s engineers as they sought permits to work on county roads, and with our line crews and tree crews during and after storms.

Paul Davies of Newport will be a familiar face to many Central Lincoln customers – he served as Central Lincoln’s General Manager for 14 years, after working for us in a variety of roles, initially in energy efficiency and conservation. During his 30 years with Central Lincoln, he hadn’t envisioned himself as a board member. But his son followed his dad into a career in the electric utility industry, and their conversations pulled Paul back to Central Lincoln. “Speaking with my son, who works for Central Electric Co-op in Redmond, about BPA power supply contracts piqued my interest in getting involved again in utility business but I didn’t want to work full time,” so he decided to run for Central Lincoln’s board five years after his retiring. What are his concerns as a new board member? “Capital expenditures, rate decisions, and power supply are important conversations to have over the next four years, he says. “Also, legislative decisions made in Salem about constraints with regard to our power supply decisions.” The greater Newport area has about 11,000 residents, comprising Subdivision 1, which Paul now represents.

An immediate task for Central Lincoln’s board is hiring a new general manager to lead the utility. Central Lincoln has had just seven permanent general managers in its 79 years in existence. What will Jim and Paul be looking for in the right finalist? "Leadership style working with employees and customers; budget experience and project supervision; vision, planning and problem solving; and personal development," Jim writes. “Credibility with employees, customers and regional entities; on-the-ground direct contact with customers providing services and dealing with customer concerns; proven record of success over multiple years in the electric utility industry,” Paul adds. “Dealing with and implementing changes in organization and technology.”

What does each new board member do for fun? Jim writes, “I love what the Central Coast has to offer my family. We enjoy boating, fishing, crabbing, clam digging and living in a small community. My hobby, besides my family, is collecting Oregon Centennial tokens (1959).” Paul volunteers with the Newport Police Department. His hobbies include ham radio, playing classical guitar, target practice at a pistol range, and skiing—“I hope to keep skiing until all my grandchildren learn to ski,” he writes.

Welcome, Jim and Paul!
Prepaid: One Surprised Customer’s Story

Several months ago when our Financial Analyst Amanda was asked to personally test Prepaid, a new account payment plan, she was skeptical. Amanda is also a Central Lincoln customer, and she was happy using AutoPay: Her account was automatically paid on its due date each month, and this busy mother of two active boys didn’t have to think about her family’s bill unless she looked at her monthly checking statements. “I thought Prepaid would be a bunch of extra work—and I don’t have time for that!” she laughs.

But Prepaid is also an easy way to pay for electricity. To sign up, customers must have $0 owing on their accounts, and put a minimum of $10 into their account to get started. It’s much like buying gasoline—put gas into one’s car, drive, and then buy more gas when it’s needed.

Amanda is a team player, so she agreed to test Prepaid. She signed up, and set her Prepaid notifications to let her know by email and text when her balance got below $10.

And then Amanda noticed Prepaid offers some interesting and helpful info – based on her usage history, the system estimates how many days her account balance will last – and the projections are impressively accurate. “It will say, ‘Your balance has been depleted.’ And then it will tell me I need to put more funds into my account to prevent being disconnected.”

Being a dedicated beta tester, Amanda decided to let her balance run out so she’d be disconnected. Prepaid notifies customers at 10 a.m. every day if their balance is below their chosen threshold, and when the balance falls to $0, power will be disconnected at 1 p.m. that day. She wanted to be at home when her power went out, and it finally happened one Sunday. “Close to 1 p.m., I had my phone in my hand, ready, and at 1 p.m., boom! my power went off. I opened the SmartHub app, made a payment, and waited to see how long it would take before my power came back on,” she says.

“I couldn’t believe how fast it was! Two minutes! At 1:03 my power was back on. It was cool. I also couldn’t believe how easy it was—it really works great.”

“Now I think Prepaid is just the best thing. I make payments using the SmartHub app, or I can make payments from my computer. I can pay via debit or credit card, my checking account, a check, or cash in person at one of our offices. Talk about easy!”

Customers on Prepaid don’t pay deposits, receive messy paper bills, and aren’t charged late fees, or disconnect fees. And Prepaid offers flexibility: “When our family finances allow, I can pay for a couple months’ worth of electricity or more at once,” Amanda says. “And if there are other demands on our resources, like buying Christmas presents, we can pay just what’s needed for the coming month.”

Prepaid customers can make payments as low as $5 daily if that works best for their budgets.

“I also really like that I don’t get those ‘surprise!’ high bills in the winter. I know how quickly my account balance is getting low, and I budget accordingly. You know, I never thought I would say this, but I love the flexibility and freedom Prepaid offers, and I have no desire to go back to AutoPay.”

To sign up for Prepaid, call us at 1-877-265-3211, and press “4.”