



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Beartooth Electric Co-op signs with Montana hydropower supplier

Red Lodge, MT – The Beartooth Electric Cooperative (BEC) Board of Trustees voted on June 27, 2017 to approve a contract with Energy Keepers, Inc. to supply BEC power requirements from October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2024. Energy Keepers, Inc. (EKI) is a corporation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes that manages a three-unit, 208 MW hydroelectric plant at the Seliš Ksanka Qíispe project (formerly known as Kerr Dam) on the Flathead River at the outlet of Flathead Lake.

The announcement of the contract is a required notice to member-owners of the co-op, because of the possibility the contract could extend beyond two years. Beartooth’s bylaws were amended in 2013 to require 60-day notice to members of proposals for power contracts exceeding two years.

The contract with EKI includes an option to extend the contract for three additional years, through September 30, 2027. Beartooth Electric may choose to exercise the option within 75 days of the June 27 execution of the contract. If the co-op declines the option to extend the contract, it could still negotiate with EKI for additional years of power supply, which also could increase the term of a new power contract beyond two years.

Either of these potential alternatives—exercising the contract extension option or negotiating further with EKI—could result in a favorable contract with EKI exceeding two years.

“We encourage members to attend a meeting or call a trustee and share their thoughts. The contract allows the pricing to be released after a short waiting period. We can and will disclose the two-year price 60 days after signing, and the five-year price 60 days after we exercise the option, if we do,” said Bill Pascoe, a member of the board and a professional energy consultant. Pascoe is one of a team of power supply experts, including Lower Valley Energy staff, researching options on behalf of the co-op.

Beartooth gets about eight percent of its power from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). The balance (92 percent) comes from contracts with Twin Eagle Resource Management (ending September 30, 2017), Morgan Stanley (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2022) and EKI (beginning October 1, 2022). The EKI contract allows BEC to develop up to 2,000 kW of renewable energy projects.

Beartooth began negotiating for its own power supply on the open market as part of a strategy to part ways with its former wholesale supplier, Southern Montana Electric Generation and Transmission Cooperative, Inc. Since then, the co-op has reduced electric rates four times, including a decrease effective July 1. More information is available at www.beartoothelectric.com.

The next meeting of the Beartooth Electric Co-op Board of Trustees is scheduled for July 25 at noon in Red Lodge.

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