

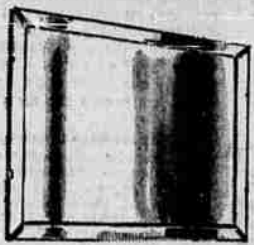
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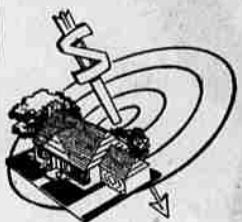
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Operating the Democratic way this customer-owned electric utility cooperative has made an outstanding record of expansion and for customer acceptance—Today, its sound financial position places it well at the top of the list for such utility services in the nation.

BY R. KENNETH EVANS

Two decades ago the American farmers, out where the crops are grown, knew nothing about the economic value and helpfulness of rural electrification. Today, especially in the Pacific Northwest and Oregon, the majority of the farmers have all of the advantages and comfort provided by electrical energy, and the facilities with which to use it. It is quite generally recognized that the electrification of most American farms has come from the impetus created by the public power movement, and the system established by an act of the United States Congress, for the founding of electric cooperatives, such as the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., with the help of federal loans.

The Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., with headquarters in its fine building in Roseburg, has proven to the nation as a whole, the feasibility and practicability of rural electrification under the democratic principles of free enterprise.

Started In A Small Way

From a small beginning in September, 1938, this electric cooperative has grown to a place where it now serves 3,400 electrical consumers over 190-miles of distribution lines, augmented by 30 1/2 miles of transmission lines. Of this number of customers there are 2,125 farms located in Douglas County, and the fringe areas, with each of these farms consuming an average of 500-kilowatt hours of electricity monthly. There are 690 rural-suburban homes consuming an average of 400-kilowatt hours of electrical energy monthly, and 310 town residences enjoying the comfort and utility value every month of an average of 530-kilowatt hours of electricity.

In addition to this outstanding record for rural electrification made by the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., there are 25 industrial and commercial customers, 22 sawmills, and 28 unclassified consumers connected with this electrical system. Also, during the summer months there are 140 irrigation systems in Douglas County having the advantages of automatic pumping of water with an electric connected-load of 1,382 horsepower. The average individual consumption of the customers of the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., is 800-kilowatt hours, monthly.

An Almost Phenomenal Growth
Indicative of the almost phenomenal growth and expansion the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., has made, from the standpoint of distribution of electrical energy, is contained in the fact that this year, 53-million KWH of electricity was purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration, with a peak demand, this month, for 8,300 KWH. Comparing this with the amount purchased in 1952, which was 25,000,000 KWH, it is easy to realize the wonderful acceptance that has been given this cooperative electrical utility, which has been met in a masterful way.

A group of Douglas County far-sighted farmers joined together and formed the West Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., September 9, 1938. H. C. Kelley was the president with Wm. O. Sanderson as vice president. L. M. McCaffery was secretary-treasurer, and the board of directors in addition to these executive officers, was composed of H. L. Richter and Fred Wilson.

A loan was secured from the federal government for \$132-thousand dollars, and with this money a 165-mile distribution system was constructed to serve the region composed of Lookingglass, Tenmile, Reston, and Camas Valley, in Douglas County. The system was energized by the California-Oregon Power company from a sub-station located at Brockway. There were 209 consumers, includ-

ing farmers, rural stores, schools and Grange halls.
Two Cooperatives Were Merged
In 1941 the North Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., was organized and a loan secured for the construction of distribution lines to serve electricity to the region of Umpqua, Tyee, Kellogg, Sutherlin, Oakland, and Yoncalla. The following year, these two electric cooperatives were merged into the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., and the 410 miles of distribution lines owned by the California-Oregon Power company were purchased. Arrangements were made to buy sufficient kilowatt hours of electrical energy from the California-Oregon Power company, through the sub-station at Oakland, to serve 1,131 customers.

Further development of the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., was hampered due to the war, and a shortage of critical materials. However, during the year 1945 most of the distribution system was energized by Bonneville Power, at Drain.

With anticipated wide expansion, the board of directors of the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., was fortunate to secure Harold Backen Jr., as the system's manager, and he took over October 1, 1946.

For several years Harold Backen Jr., was employed by the Montana Power Company in an executive position. In order to widen his education in electronics, he enrolled with the Montana State College, at Bozeman, and completed an electrical engineering course, graduating in 1935.

Harold Backen Jr., was immediately employed by the Anaconda Copper Company, at their smelter in Great Falls, Mont., as junior engineer. He held this position for three years. Backen resigned this position to become affiliated with the Corp of Army Engineers while building Fort Peck dam, where he was employed until 1939. He was, that year, made manager of the Flathead Electric Cooperative, Inc., at Kalispell, Mont.

Harold Backen Jr., was called to active duty with the armed-forces in 1942, and served with the Army air corp in the field of radar and electronics. He was honorably separated in 1946 and holds the present grade of Lt. Colonel in the Air Force reserve.

Expansion Immediately Started
The first year under the new management the Douglas Electric Cooperative's distribution system was extended by the addition of 413 miles, and serving 1,381 consumers. Since that time the distribution system has grown, almost by "leaps and bounds," with every expansion move being a sound and economical one.

In the last two years 70 miles of additional distribution lines have been constructed which were, in the main, short extensions of existing lines to serve new consumers. However, 10-miles of that new construction opened up an unserved area north of Drain, in the Smith River region. Another 8-mile extension was built near Tenmile Lake to extend service to new consumers. This included electrical service to the "Camp Easter Seal," a home for cripple children, near Lakeside.

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