

UEC: Only the fourth general manager in co-op's history

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past achievements of our employees."

Echenrode, 54, started working at UEC in March 2013 and has 25 years of experience with rural electric cooperatives. He previously worked six years as general manager of the Northeast Oklahoma Electric Co-op in Vinita, Oklahoma, serving 38,000 customers.

Echenrode has also worked as an engineering manager at Carroll Electric Co-op in Berryville, Arkansas, and Indian Electric Co-op in Cleveland, Oklahoma.

The UEC Board of Directors chose Echenrode from a pool of 22 candidates and eight finalists from a nationwide search. Board President Jeff Wenzel said Echenrode brings both experience and dedication to the position.

"From the beginning, we were impressed with his work ethic and devotion to the cooperative, and how quickly he learned our system," Wenzel said.

Echenrode becomes only the fourth general manager in UEC history. Eldridge has served in the position since 1990, overseeing rapid growth at the Port of Morrow along with introduction of

power-hungry data centers in both Boardman and Umatilla.

Echenrode takes the reigns at a time when UEC is on the verge of becoming one of the state's "large" utilities, meaning it provides at least 3 percent of all electric sales statewide. That would lead to significant changes in how UEC must obtain power under the state Renewable Portfolio Standard.

UEC currently serves more than 14,000 accounts and about 2,200 miles of power lines from Boardman to the Blue Mountains. The co-op recorded about \$87.25 million in revenue in 2015.

Echenrode has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from The Ohio State University and a master's degree from Oklahoma State University. As engineering manager, he was closely involved in helping UEC accommodate industrial expansion at the ports of Morrow and Umatilla.

Echenrode and his wife, Judy, have been married since 1989. Their son Evan, 20, is a sophomore at Oklahoma State University. Their son Avery, 18, will graduate from high school in Oklahoma and has already been accepted to college by Oregon State University and Portland State University.

GRAZING: Refusing to pay could be a material breach of contract

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effectively end a rancher's ability to release livestock onto public lands. It's similar to a contractor who has previously defaulted on an agreement and is excluded from bidding on government projects, Horngren said.

"The real risk is they'll be unable to graze on the allotment for which they're not paying and it's possible they could be disqualified from acquiring any allotments in the future," he said.

Federal agencies may also come after ranchers to collect payments for unpaid grazing fees, he said.

Ranchers and federal agencies usually resolve minor contract disputes without actually voiding such deals, Horngren said. "Breaches happen on both sides."

Federal officials may not treat one missed payment as a serious issue, but tearing up a contract and refusing to pay at all would probably be considered a material breach, he said.

Members of the armed protest group have cited examples of ranchers refusing to pay grazing fees without consequence, such as Cliven Bundy of Nevada, who continues to graze on public land even though the government claims he owes more than \$1 million to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Federal officials backed off from seizing Bundy's cattle in 2014 after an armed standoff, and his son, Ammon, is currently leading the occupation in Oregon.

Horngren said he'd advise ranchers against relying on that case in their decision-making and instead work through administrative and legal processes if they disagree with restrictions on grazing permits.

"Withholding payment is a risky strategy for a rancher to try to make the point the BLM is not managing the range appropriately," he said.

Rancher Travis Williams said he's considering the protesters' proposal primarily because the money raised by the federal government from grazing fees doesn't benefit Harney County tax revenues.

If he does withhold grazing fees, Williams said he doesn't want to "freeload" and instead would make payments into an escrow account, with the money intended for the county.

Though he doesn't want to jeopardize his ranch, Williams doesn't believe that ranchers "collaborating" with federal agencies has produced needed changes in land management.

Refusing to pay grazing fees would likely be more effective, he said. "That's the only way we're going to get anything done."

Shawn Mace, president of the Harney County Stockgrowers Association, said his

organization does not endorse illegal activity against the federal government, which reflects the view of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Some ranchers may feel a need to stand against the federal government to protect their way of life, but Mace said it's unclear what purpose refusing to pay grazing fees would achieve.

Mace said he prefers to concentrate on his job of ranching.

"Public grazing is vital to the survival of Harney County ranchers," he said. "I don't see this as a real issue. Why would we bite the hand that feeds us?"

CANCER: Almost died of a burst appendix at age 10

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she gently informed her classes.

Senior Chyenne Carey admitted she "started crying a little" as Youngman broke the news around Thanksgiving and assured students that she believed the stage two cancer could be defeated.

"She said I'm fine with this," Carey said. "She told us not to worry."

The teenagers are trying, but it's tough, knowing what they could lose.

"We experienced her last cancer our sophomore year. This time, it's hit us a lot harder," Reilly Heggarty said of himself and the rest of the seniors. "She doesn't make a big deal about it, but we're very concerned for her."

The veteran teacher travels to the Tri-Cities Cancer Center every other Monday for chemotherapy. Radiation will follow. The treatments make her nauseated, dizzy and weak.

A group of students hope to raise money to pay for the uninsured portion of Youngman's expensive treatments and medications and maybe help her realize a dream.

"She's a big fan of Ellen (Degeneres)," said Katie Montchalin, who substitutes for Youngman on treatment

days. "One of her wishes is to meet her. We're making a video to get Ellen's attention."

The video will feature a narrative and shots of students, each holding a sign with one word describing Youngman. The NBC show occasionally honors inspiring teachers.

In addition, Montchalin, also Youngman's niece, set up a Go Get Funding account at gogetfunding.com to raise money. The campaign is titled "Help Mrs. Youngman fight her battle."

The ongoing cancer battle is only Youngman's latest physical challenge.

Youngman's mother, Marie Groshong, said Kathryn's life started in dramatic fashion. The family lived in McKenzie Bridge, in the Oregon Cascades. When Groshong went into labor, a sheriff's deputy transported her the 50 miles to the hospital in Springfield. A construction delay slowed the journey and the vehicle later broke down and had to be towed.

"She was born three minutes after we got to the hospital parking lot," Groshong recalled.

Dean and Marie's girl attacked life, they said. She got good grades, competed

tenaciously in athletics and faced challenges with a dry sense of humor.

At age 10, Kathryn almost died of a burst appendix. At 27, a tangerine-sized lump was removed from behind her breastplate. The powerful chemo treatments for Hodgkin's disease burned Youngman's veins, damaged her hips (which eventually had to be replaced) and made her infertile. Youngman, however, gave birth to twins several years later thanks to in vitro fertilization using eggs given by her sister, Rebecca Barlow, and sperm from Kathryn's husband, Jim.

Youngman's second bout with cancer came in 2013, requiring chemo and radiation treatments to destroy a tumor located in her sinus cavity. A mask covered her head and chest during radiation treatments.

"They screwed the mask to the table. It was claustrophobic," Marie said. "It was hard. She steeled herself for that."

Youngman said she survives by focusing on the positive. A Mother Teresa quote she keeps on her desk sums up her attitude: "Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier." In

her dark moments, she said, "I remind myself that 30 or 40 years ago I wouldn't be alive. I remind myself to be grateful for what I have, rather than resentful for what I don't have."

Youngman said she doesn't fear death.

"I don't want to die. I'm not ready to die," she said. "But if I have to die, I hope to accept it graciously. I know I'm going to a better place. I will leave life with no regrets."

"Her faith has always been absolutely unshakable," said Groshong, admitting that she worries. "She has pain 24/7. I don't know how she does it. I would trade places with her in an instant."

But that isn't an option. Those who love Youngman can only send positive energy and encouragement. As they sit on the sidelines, they are inspired.

"She's a beautiful person, inside and out," said student April Barkhurst. "She turns negatives into positives. She lights up every room."

"She's really inspiring," said Samantha Cross. "She taught me that the toughest things can be a blessing."

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MASCOT: Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde supported the exception

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the ban but still gave the board authority to reject individual native mascots. The board's decision Thursday puts the decision into the hands of tribes.

"Putting this decision back in the hands of the tribes to work on these issues and to move through these exceptions when it makes sense may be the most respectful act we can make as a board," said board Co-Vice Chairman Charles Martinez Jr.

In the past, the board had been resistant to relaxing the ban in light of research that suggested the mascots have a negative effect on native students' self-esteem. Board members' reluctance was

evident Thursday, and some still strongly opposed the change.

Vice Chairman Angela Bowen, an American Indian, said the Legislature has "bullied the board into acting against their consciences."

"Honestly, I am offended at this point that we would be reduced to cartoon characters," Bowen said. "I'm very unhappy about the fact the Legislature has pressured this board to make rules the board obviously in the past has not agreed with."

But support for the exception from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, which represents 27 tribes, tipped the scales on the board.

Board members voted

4-to-2 to pass the exception Thursday with Bowen and Board Member Anthony Veliz opposing the measure.

Board Chairwoman Miranda Summer and Veliz met with the Grand Ronde tribal council Jan. 8 to discuss the issue.

Many of the Indians, warriors, braves and chiefs from history "are worthy of being honored as high school symbols of respect and integrity," said Jack Giffen Jr., vice chairman of the Grand Ronde tribal council.

The Grand Ronde have used discussions with schools that want to keep their native mascots as a vehicle to introduce curriculum on Oregon's tribes to some schools.

Mollala River School

District, for instance, adopted a fourth-grade curriculum created by the tribe.

The development begins to reverse a trend of schools ignoring or poorly describing native history and culture, Giffen said.

The Grand Ronde's position on the exception clashed with that of the Oregon Indian Education Association and some American Indian organizations, such as the National Congress of American Indians, that have focused energy to abolishing native mascots.

Se-ah-dom Edmo, president of Oregon Indian Education Association, said research indicates that native mascots promote discrimination.



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