

Candidates for West Zone Director At Large

John DeWitt – Essex

I grew up in Vermont and have been passionate about the important role the electric grid plays in our lives and its potential (haha) to shift global energy use ever since a prototype electric car was exhibited at my elementary school in the small town of Bradford over 30 years ago. Today, that shift in energy use is becoming a reality with the increased use of renewable sources of electricity and increased electric utilization through innovative technologies such as heat pumps. Although I do not have specific experience in the energy sector, as a member of the Vermont Electric Coop board I would bring a fresh perspective, an important asset in any successful organization. I would seek to promote policies that support a sustainable electric grid by continued and increased utilization of renewable sources of electricity including solar, with a particular emphasis on battery storage solutions. Innovative technologies such as this can help stabilize the electric grid by distributing electricity produced during the day, to when it is most needed at night and therefore can, most importantly, lower electricity rates for everyone. The support of innovation is not a choice between lower costs for members versus supporting sustainable energy. Innovation utilizing sustainable sources of electricity makes the grid more reliable and more affordable for everyone.



Bonnie Pratt – Cambridge

The energy system is changing significantly and my entrepreneurial background and PhD in energy systems make me uniquely suited to help VEC address these challenges. I earned my MBA from Babson and went on to found multiple start-ups and coach entrepreneurs through the Center for Women and Enterprise, Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, and a private consulting practice. I'm good at assessing risk and opportunity, collaborating with teams, and centering work around a shared vision for the future. This entrepreneurial, action-oriented mindset pairs well with the PhD I earned from UVM which investigated the complex behavior of the power system and key technologies that could accelerate the transition to renewables while keeping rates low and increasing reliability. I now work for a Packetized Energy, a Vermont-based start-up that built one of those key technologies. I work with electric utilities all over the country on a daily basis so I can bring fresh perspectives and ideas to VEC board meetings. I am passionate about promoting energy democracy and energy justice which involve empowering community members to more actively participate in decisions such as the siting of renewable generation facilities. As the energy system faces an increasing number of extreme weather events and sees new infusions of capital tied to the deployment of renewables it will be important to have VEC board leadership familiar with the changing landscape of the energy system. I am excited to bring a mix of professional and academic experience to the board and greatly appreciate your consideration.



Peter Southwick – Grand Isle

The long term goals of VEC provides a view into the relationship with its members. The foremost of those goals is to provide reliable and affordable power. VEC's reliability is enhanced by the focus on vegetation control and its distribution infrastructure. These actions are visible to and appreciated by all members. Meeting the states renewable energy standards and brokering renewable energy credits reduce the cost of energy, in terms favorable to the earth as well as the pocketbook.

As a consumer it is exciting to be part of the energy transformations happening today. That VEC is incenting customers to go electric (e.g. cars, lawn mowers and heat pumps) is a testament to the company's vision in embracing these transformations.

As a board member I can add an expert's point of view in the area of Internet access. The COVID pandemic has shown a bright light on how necessary broadband service is to each and every household. The opportunities exist for VEC to assist in bringing Internet to its customers and as a network architect I can help.

At a personal level, I am a 30 year resident of Grand Isle, my wife and I are empty nesters, our two daughters having left the island for greener pastures. I have instructed skiing at Smuggs for over 40 years and have a sailing passion that is sated on Lake Champlain. I have an Electrical Engineering Degree from Clarkson and have worked in the communications industry since graduation.



Rich Westman – Cambridge

Over the last six years as a VEC Board member, I have had the opportunity to participate in the Coop's improved financial situation and reliability. We are on sound financial track, the number of outages has dropped, the time to restore outages has improved, and we have expanded our supply of smart energy with VEC Co-op community solar projects in Alburgh, Hinesburg, and Grand Isle. I am proud to have contributed to this important work.

This experience has helped me understand the consequences of state and local decisions and my service in state government gives me a unique understanding of the regulatory process. I believe this experience adds value to the Coop as decisions are made.

In our annual member surveys, VEC members reported concerns about "the cost of power" and an interest in "reducing emissions". As a member of the Board I recently voted in support of a resolution for VEC's energy supply to be carbon free in 2023 with minimal cost to members. It's a win for all.

I do believe electric businesses have a role to play in the expansion of broadband. Going forward I hope to participate in seeing that happens in a smart way at the Coop.

It's an exciting time at VEC. With more electric vehicles on the horizon and more renewable energy it is a changing world. VEC is in a good position to succeed. It's an honor to serve you on the Coop Board and hope you will allow me to continue.

