

BOARD CHAIR AND CEO MESSAGE



President and CEO
Timothy J. Burke



Board Chair
Amanda E. Bogner, P.E.

For Omaha Public Power District, as it was for much of the world, 2020 was about Powering Through. It is something we have all had to do at home and at work as a pandemic changed the world around us. As phrases like “masking up” and “physical distancing” have become the norm, our employees are taking the necessary precautions to make sure they show up to work healthy.

That’s because our employees know how vital our product is to our customers. Having reliable electricity keeps their world functioning as close to normal as possible. Within OPPD, just like people everywhere, new daily tasks like temperature checks and COVID-19 assessments are now the norm. With so many working from home, including half of our workforce, and so many students learning remotely, electricity has never been more valuable. That’s why our energy production employees, line technicians, and system operators are taking their health so seriously. Our communities need us. Despite all of the new challenges, including changes to and new guidelines for our working environments, 2020 was the safest year in OPPD’s history.

We know that so many small businesses and industries were hit incredibly hard by COVID-19. The coronavirus also exposed vulnerabilities of minorities and women in our local workforce. Civil unrest around the country, including the streets outside OPPD’s downtown Omaha headquarters, highlighted the need for all of us to do more. That’s why we worked with partners inside OPPD and around our community on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives. From our work with CEOs for CODE (Commitment to Opportunity, Diversity and Equity), nearly 150 Omaha business founders, leaders and CEOs produced a powerful “We Will” statement in June that commits them and their organizations to stand united against racism. We held leader huddles on racism and a corporate town hall on racism sponsored by the OPPD African American Network employee resource group. In recent years, we have hosted meetings for employees that encourage creating inclusive work environments, something we have worked hard to achieve.

In 2017, we started our Legacy i3 initiative that targets juniors and seniors in high school from diverse backgrounds. Through the program, they have a chance to work at OPPD while learning from employee ambassadors about careers in the energy field. They also gain skills they will need later to compete for jobs in the workforce. To date, three of these students have become full-time OPPD employees, with more to follow.

OPPD worked with other agencies to help secure and distribute CARES Act funds for energy assistance to those customers struggling with their utility bills due to the coronavirus.

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, OPPD has moved forward with its Power with Purpose and Pathways to Decarbonization initiatives including its plans to build two backup natural gas generating facilities to support 400 to 600 megawatts of utility-scale solar coming to the generation mix.

2020 marked the first full year of OPPD’s community solar program, with the facility producing more than 9.2 million kilowatt hours of energy for 880 customers. And the interest is not waning. Nearly 500 customers remain on the program’s waiting list.

Our decommissioning work at our Fort Calhoun Nuclear Station continues safely, on time and on budget. The last of the plant’s spent fuel was moved to onsite dry cask storage in May.

And through it all, OPPD’s communications professionals have worked to keep the rest of the company informed about everything they need to know as the work shifted last spring and work guidelines changed. From a dedicated resource page on our intranet website to emails and a weekly newsletter sent to each employee’s home, employees remained connected to their jobs and to each other.

Across 13 counties in Nebraska, our employees do their part to help our customers thrive, and that hasn’t changed. While seemingly everything else changed in 2020, the work of OPPD’s employees and the promise of affordable, reliable and environmentally sensitive energy services remain constant.

Timothy J. Burke
President and CEO

Amanda E. Bogner, P.E.
Chair of the Board