

FOCUSED ON THE ROAD AHEAD



Chris Davis

District 3 | **Incumbent**
Candidate
Member/Owner
since 2018

Education: BA in Mathematics with a minor in Physics and MA in Mathematics Education, University of Washington

Employment: Self-employed - Own and operate two local wedding venues

Candidate statement:

In 1962, my grandpa and great grandpa bought a dairy farm on the Wild Rose Prairie. My parents still own and operate the farm, but the cows have long since gone. I grew up there, but spent the first 11 years of my working career as a high school Math, Physics, and Engineering teacher in Spokane. In 2012, I worked with my family to convert part of the farm into a wedding venue for my sister's wedding. The following year my wife, Aubrey, and I got married there. We started a small business and opened up to the public that fall. Six years and a couple hundred weddings later, I left teaching so that Aubrey and I could build a second wedding venue. We purchased property 12 minutes from where I was born and raised, and we currently live there with our two young children. That is a long way of saying that my family has been Inland members, living on the Wild Rose Prairie, for five generations. I run venues on both my and my parents properties. I am completely reliant on Inland Power and Light for the electricity that runs and heats both my home and my businesses.

Why do you want to serve on the board of trustees?

I have a vested interest in Inland Power's ability to keep transmitting safe, reliable, and affordable power for the next 40 or 50 years. I would like my children to have the same faith in Inland's ability to provide electricity and heat for their homes that I have today. Inland Power and Light is a cooperative that is built and maintained by some of the hardest working and most reliable people that our region has to offer. They work together with the single minded goal to keep the lights on and to do it safely and efficiently; 365 days a year, on nights and weekends, and during the worst storms that our region has to offer. I want to serve on the board to help Inland stay that way.

What strengths would you bring to the board of trustees?

I have served 3 years on the board where I have brought an inquisitive mindset to meetings and conferences. I have developed an understanding of what it takes technically, politically, and fiscally to distribute safe and reliable power to 46,000 members. Academically, I am trained in Mathematics and Physics. I have a passion for engineering and that is why I taught engineering courses as well. Personally, I am also a very long-term thinker. I want to ensure that the Inland Northwest has the most reliable, safest, and most efficient power grid that is scientifically possible. I use my knowledge of Mathematics, Physics, and Engineering to ask questions of the Inland Leadership team about current work plans, and about the long-term ramifications of the decisions they are making today. I am often impressed with their answers. Still, I value the role of the member oversight of the cooperatives; workplan to make sure that it is always improving the reliability and safety of our power system.

The utility industry faces many challenges. Where would you focus your attention?

During my 3 years on the board, 4 major challenges have consumed much of our time and energy. 1) IPL worked for over a year on a wildfire mitigation plan that has been used as a model throughout the state. This is an ongoing process that is constantly being reassessed. 2) This occurred in the midst of a state and federal push to electrify all transportation and heating. 3) Meanwhile, supply chain disruption due to COVID shutdowns, increased demand for infrastructure components nationally, and general inflation has lead to double and even triple digit inflation on some of the equipment that power suppliers require to keep the grid up and running. While wildfires, inflation, government taxes/regulations are all concerns, Inland is doing an outstanding job of addressing all of these issues while maintaining some of the lowest energy rates in the country. My primary focus is on 4) price volatility caused by shutting down power plants, running more water over the dams, intermittent renewable power, taxing of power generators and unprecedented growth to the number of people moving onto Inland Lines. Taking that price volatility and turning it into reliable and affordable product for our members is a task that takes a lot of research and an understanding of the power supply and transmission on the entire West Coast.

What else would you like the membership to know about you as a candidate?

During my first six months on the board, we were charged with the task of hiring a new CEO. We were fortunate to find someone talented, hard working, and values driven. He brings a fresh perspective and optimism, always reminding us to put our energy into building a more reliable grid, rather than dwelling on outside difficulties beyond our control. So we all do what we can. Ultimately, I am just a member of Inland Power and Light that really, really wants my home and business to have safe and reliable power at the best price possible. I try to use my scientific training to make sure that the Inland Leadership team is always working diligently to build and maintain the best power grid that is physically possible. In light of political, financial, and environmental pressures, I do believe that the employees of the Co-op are doing just that. I would like to keep it that way.