



## Javier Fernandez ‘honored and humbled’ to lead OPPD as new CEO

Javier Fernandez, OPPD’s vice president of Finance & CFO said he felt a “calling” to apply for the utility’s top job after President & CEO Tim Burke announced he would retire in July.

“The biggest thing that drove me was a deep sense of responsibility,” he said. “I care about this organization because I know the amazing things we’re already doing, the plans we have. And I want to be part of it. I want to lead.”

OPPD’s board of directors selected Fernandez, 46, for the position, out of five internal candidates, during its May meeting with a unanimous vote.

Fernandez was born and raised in Mexico City, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de

México. He becomes one of only a few Hispanic CEOs now leading large Nebraska companies.

After the vote was cast by the board, Fernandez addressed the board and those tuned into the live feed of the meeting. He thanked Burke for taking a chance and hiring him and for mentoring him.

He then addressed his family – in Spanish – watching from Mexico, thanking them for their love, sacrifice and the education they provided he and his sisters which made it possible for him to be in this position.

Fernandez came to the U.S. 21 years ago to attend graduate school at Yale University, where he earned a master’s degree in business administration. Fernandez also holds a Utility Management Certificate from

Willamette University, and a Utility Executive Certificate from the University of Idaho.

### Finding community

He came to OPPD four years ago from the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Ore. There he served as CFO before he and his wife, Belinda, decided to make a move. With their children nearing school age, they wanted to find an area with good schools and a good environment in which to raise their family.

Fernandez and his wife have four children – 10, 7, 5, and 1 ½. Along with schools and a good neighborhood, proximity to their church was an important part in their move to the Midwest. Fernandez said they have found a great community to belong to, including their OPPD “family.”

“It’s a group of dedicated individuals who genuinely care for one another. It has been a great experience. Professionally, it has also been intellectually challenging. Every day, I get to work on complicated systems and complex issues. And that’s exciting.”

### Leading through history

During his time at OPPD, Fernandez has guided the utility through more than financial matters. He helped lead the utility’s response to historic flooding in 2019, when the utility’s Business Continuity Plan was activated. He did so again during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting his crisis leadership skills on display.

“His extensive experience, passion, and commitment will serve our customers and our communities well,” said Board Chair Amanda Bogner.

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### JULY BOARD MEETINGS

**All-committee meeting:** Tuesday, July 13 (see [oppd.com/BoardMeeting](http://oppd.com/BoardMeeting) for time and how meeting will be conducted).

**Regular board meeting:** Thursday, July 15, **5 p.m.**, online via Webex (see [oppd.com/BoardMeeting](http://oppd.com/BoardMeeting)) and in-person at Legislative Chamber of Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam St., Omaha. Hearing-impaired call 531-226-3208, 72 hours prior to request an interpreter. Agendas posted and meetings viewable on [oppd.com/BoardMeeting](http://oppd.com/BoardMeeting).

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## Fernandez *(From front)*

Fernandez said he's "honored and humbled" to be chosen as OPPD's next leader. Many in the OPPD work force – past and present – are excited to see him build on the work Burke has done during his six years leading the utility.

### Public input

Prior to Fernandez's selection, OPPD conducted a stakeholder outreach effort in which the utility asked employees, customers, and community leaders what they would like to see in OPPD's next CEO. The board asked for that input during its March meeting. They received more than 1,000 comments via [OPPDCommunityConnect.com](http://OPPDCommunityConnect.com) and [OPPD.com](http://OPPD.com).

"They told us they were looking for a credible, proven, forward-thinking leader with excellent communication skills and a passion for the communities OPPD serves," said Craig Moody, board Governance Committee chair.

### Looking forward

Fernandez said his top priorities for OPPD will be to keep employees physically safe, physically healthy, and mentally healthy.

"Make sure that we're caring for our people," he said. "The work our line crews do, it's dangerous, and our plant workers getting out on scaffold-

ing and in boilers is risky – we need to keep a focus on safety."

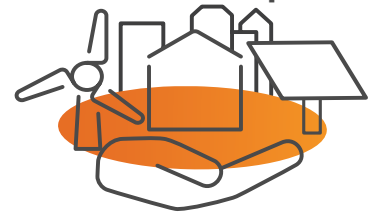
Mental health, he said, has become even more important in light of COVID-19 with about half of OPPD's employees working from home. Some may feel isolation in some situations, so it is important to offer resources to help them deal with that, he said.

Fernandez said he also looks forward to becoming more involved in the communities OPPD serves. Currently, he serves on the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Board of Directors for the bank's Omaha branch. He also serves on the boards of directors for Habitat for Humanity and Bellevue University.

Burke, who became emotional at the board meeting, spoke directly to Fernandez: "You are special. We knew that right away and knew that you matched our core values. You will all see him as an amazing leader and a special person. I know OPPD is in good hands."

"I don't think you ever stop learning about this industry," Fernandez said. "It is so complex. I'm fortunate in that I have an amazing team of senior management leaders and about 1,800 women and men who – day in and day out – give their very best to keep the lights on to serve our customer-owners."

## Power with Purpose



### OPPD looks forward to continuing to work with Saunders County community

The Saunders County Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved a conditional use permit for the Platteview Solar installation.

As part of its Power with Purpose project, OPPD has a contract with Community Energy Inc. to purchase the output of an 81-megawatt solar array to be located south of Yutan, Neb., in eastern Saunders County.

When complete, this facility will be capable of powering about 14,000 average homes. Platteview Solar represents a roughly \$100 million investment in Saunders County.

OPPD has been serving Saunders for decades and looks forward to continuing to work with that community for years to come.

The public can find more updates, offer comments and ask questions about PwP and other projects on our community engagement platform, [OPPDCommunityConnect.com](http://OPPDCommunityConnect.com).

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