



grow, while drawing new companies to the area.

Long a champion of diversity and inclusion, Burke was praised by many upon his retirement for staying connected with employees companywide through regular “walkarounds,” town hall meetings and weekly video messages.

Fernandez joined OPPD in 2017 as vice president of financial services and chief financial officer. He is known as a kind, thoughtful leader who takes great interest in getting to know people throughout the utility. And like Burke, he is a skilled communicator.

Born and raised in Mexico City, Fernandez earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México. He came to the U.S. 21 years ago to attend graduate school at Yale University, where he earned a master’s in business administration. He also holds a utility management certificate from Willamette University and a utility executive certificate from the University of Idaho.

During his time with 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 has done so again during the COVID-19 pandemic, displaying crisis leadership skills.

Fernandez plans to continue OPPD’s work on such large-scale initiatives as the Power with Purpose utility-scale solar effort, Pathways to Decarbonization and others that began under Burke.

Passing the torch

On July 1, the role of OPPD president and chief executive officer transitioned smoothly from Tim Burke (above, on left) to Javier Fernandez, who became the district’s 13th CEO.

Burke retires after 24 years of service. Having joined OPPD as a vice president in 1997, he oversaw several areas, most customer-related and operationally focused. He was named president and CEO in 2015, and led the utility through a period of growth and transformation.

The OPPD Board of Directors credited Burke with setting OPPD on the right course for the future through his strategic initiative work. The board noted OPPD is financially sound, thanks to process-improvement planning and generation work, and the system is resilient, as evidenced by how the district has handled flooding, a derecho wind storm, the polar vortex and other weather threats.

Under Burke’s leadership, OPPD has been recognized nationally as one of the country’s top economic development utilities. His focus on the customer helped current customers

AUGUST BOARD MEETINGS

All-committee meeting: Tuesday, Aug. 17 (see oppd.com/BoardMeeting for details). **Regular board meeting:** Thursday, Aug. 19, **5 p.m.**, (see oppd.com/BoardMeeting for details) Hearing-impaired call 531-226-3208, 72 hours prior to request an interpreter. Agendas posted and meetings viewable on oppd.com/BoardMeeting.

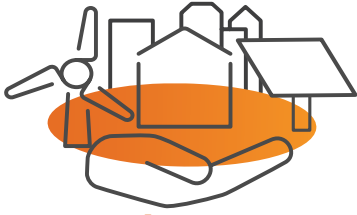
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Power with Purpose



New peaking plants will support addition of utility-scale solar

Through its Power with Purpose (PwP) project, OPPD is adding 400 to 600 megawatts of utility-scale solar and about 600 MW of modern natural gas backup to its generation portfolio.

OPPD is building two natural gas generation peaking plants: Standing Bear Lake Station, near 120th Street and Military Road in Omaha; and Turtle Creek Station, near 168th Street and Fairview Road in Papillion.

As peaking plants, these facilities will run only as needed, per market conditions, estimated at less than 15% of the time.

OPPD has chosen Wärtsilä to provide nine reciprocating internal combustion engines (RICE) to power Standing Bear Lake Station. RICE technology converts natural gas into energy to drive a generator, which produces electricity.

These engines also can run on light

fuel oil, adding fuel source resiliency. And they are capable of running on a 15% hydrogen / natural gas blend in support of future technology advancements, furthering OPPD's decarbonization effort.

For Turtle Creek Station, the district has selected Siemens Energy to provide two simple-cycle combustion turbines. These turbines also will convert natural gas into energy to drive a generator that will produce electricity.

And like RICE, these modern natural gas turbines are designed to also run on light fuel oil, adding fuel resiliency. They also are capable of running on a 30% hydrogen / natural gas blend or biodiesel, in support of future technology advancements.

The units at both plants will offer low emissions that help OPPD meet its targets. Construction of Turtle Creek and Standing Bear Lake stations will be complete and the plants will be energized in 2023. (See more info at OPPDCommunityConnect.com.)



OPPD studying Pathways to Decarbonization

Through its Pathways to Decarbonization study, OPPD is striving for net-zero carbon production by 2050. The district hosted four virtual public workshops this spring on how its energy portfolio might change to meet this goal.

OPPD will host a virtual information session on Wednesday, Aug. 4, from 4 to 6 p.m., during which experts will provide an interim update on modeling OPPD's future energy portfolio. You can register for this session through OPPDCommunityConnect.com.



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