



Board Candidate Biography



DUSTIN HEATH

District 3

Ozark Electric Member for 18 Months

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF OZARK ELECTRIC?

18 Months.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OR IS THERE A PARTICULAR ISSUE THAT MOTIVATES YOU?

I have spent almost 20 years supporting rural cooperatives in both broadband and electric as a consulting engineer. During that career, I have learned a lot about them and how they operate and feel that I could be of value to the coop and its members.

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU POSSESS THAT YOU BELIEVE WILL BE AN ASSET TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

I bring nearly 20 years of experience as a consulting engineer supporting Electric and Telephone cooperatives, with a strong focus on improving the quality of life for rural Americans. My background combines technical expertise, field experience, and executive leadership—all of which would serve as valuable assets to the board.

Early in my career, I spent extensive time in the field conducting engineering assessments and overseeing large-scale broadband construction projects. One notable achievement during this time was designing and engineering a substation for an electric cooperative in rural Montana. These hands-on experiences have given me a deep understanding of infrastructure challenges and opportunities in rural communities.

For the past decade, I have served as Director of Engineering Operations at a nationwide consulting engineering firm. In this role, I lead multidisciplinary teams and guide strategic initiatives that drive innovation and operational excellence. I regularly attend and speak at national, regional, and state industry conferences, including the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) TechAdvantage conference, where I have been featured as a subject matter expert.

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I actively serve on several advisory councils, including Broadband Montana and the National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA), as well as academic advisory boards at the University of North Dakota (Customer Experience) and Montana State University–Northern (Civil Engineering and Electrician programs). I am also the co-creator of a Trades Day Program that introduces high school and college students in rural Montana to careers in broadband, electrical work, and other skilled trades.

My areas of subject matter expertise include Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Computer-Aided Drafting (CAD), Pole Loading Analysis, Make-Ready Engineering, Right-of-Way and Pole Permitting, Outside Plant Engineering and Design, and Emerging Technologies.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE PRIMARY WORK OR ROLE OF THE BOARD?

The primary role of the board is to guide the cooperative and provide oversight from the member owners.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OR TOP PRIORITY AT THE TIME FOR OZARK ELECTRIC?

Navigating rising electricity rates and the education around Demand Billing.

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE INTERACTING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK/INPUT FROM MEMBERS?

Yes, I have no issue talking with folks and their feedback/concerns.

HOW WILL YOU HANDLE PUSHBACK FROM MEMBERS ON DIVISIVE ISSUES OR DECISIONS?

Disagreement isn't a bad thing. I will actively listen to and hear out members who have a different opinion.

IN ONE OR TWO SENTENCES, EXPLAIN THE PROPER ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The proper role is to provide governance and oversight on behalf of its member owners. Its role is to help establish the strategic direction and has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the coop is financially sound.

WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO ULTIMATELY SUPPORT A BOARD DECISION OF WHICH YOU WERE NOT IN FAVOR?

Yes, I would. I want what is best for the coop and its members as I would assume all members of the board want as well.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE BEST WAY TO ADDRESS DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON THE BOARD?

With discussion and debate. Hear each member out and come to a decision.

DO YOU HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO DEVOTE TO THIS POSITION?

Yes, I do. I can adjust any scheduling issues as I am flexible with my full time position.

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST YOU MAY HAVE IN SERVING ON THE BOARD?

I am not aware of any. I represent a consulting engineering firm who specializes in Broadband/Telecommunications. I would recuse myself and firm should the coop look to provide broadband to its members.

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT WITH OZARK ELECTRIC.

I am a member of the coop who has attended the only annual meeting that I could as a member.

IN ONE OR TWO SENTENCES, DESCRIBE YOUR VISION FOR OZARK ELECTRIC.

My vision would be to provide reliable and affordable electricity for all members, and to provide the opportunity for all members to achieve their goals and ambitions.