



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# OREGON TRAIL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2021 VOTER GUIDE

(OTEC has not independently verified accuracy of statements included within candidate biographies)

## Position 4-Union County

### G. Austin Bingaman



**Family:** Wife, Jeana; children, Isaac and Clairra

**Occupation:** Farmer in the Grande Ronde Valley. Growing grass seed, peppermint oil, alfalfa hay, grass hay, and small grains. Owner, “White Barn Estate” Event Venue.

**Education:** Imbler High School  
University of Idaho, B.S. Mechanical Engineering  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Credentialed Cooperative Director Program

**Organizations:** Nine years on the OTEC board. President, Wallowa County Grain Growers Board of Directors; President, Orodell Ditch Association; Tri-County Equipment which provides agriculture supplies; John Deere equipment in Union, Wallowa and Baker Counties.

**Issues the Board of Directors will need to deal with:** New technology will bring challenges to the OTEC Board of Directors. These technologies aren’t just computers, they are also new materials for conductors and insulators, or processes for using existing materials. The board will need to decide which technologies can be integrated into our system that will bring the greatest return on investment to our members. OTEC covers a large geographical area, and within this area there are unique communities. Therefore, it is important that the OTEC Board of Directors work to represent all members whether they are located on the end of a dirt road or on a city street.

**Statement to Voters:** It has been a privilege to serve on the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. I feel blessed to live in a beautiful valley, and to be served by a member owned electric cooperative. OTEC was formed to provide electricity to its members in a way that each individual could not provide for themselves, it is the cooperative spirit that makes our communities strong. Making sure that OTEC continues to be strong financially with well maintained infrastructure, while keeping electric rates low will be my goal. I would very much appreciate your vote.



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### Charles Gillis



**Family:** Daughter Rudabeh Shahbazi, son Michael Gillis

**Occupation:** Attorney at law. Formerly: Public Health Nurse Practitioner (1995-2005), Registered Nurse at Grande Ronde Hospital (1990-1995).

**Education:** Grosse Point University School, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI., Western State College of Colorado, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science; Oregon Health Sciences University, Registered Nurse Degree, 1990; Family Nurse Practitioner Degree, 1995; Gonzaga University, Juris Doctorate Degree, 2008

**Public Offices Held:** Board of Property Tax Appeals (2015-present), Unsuccessful candidate for Union County Commissioner (2016), La Grande School District Budget Subcommittee (2015-present).

**Organizations:** La Grande Library board member (Sept. 2017-present) Union County Chamber of Commerce board member (2010-2012), On-call attorney for Legal Aid Society of Oregon (2018-present)

**Issue the Board of Directors will need to deal with:** Upcoming resource inadequacy anticipated in the Pacific N.W. supply adequacy assessment for 2024. Idaho congressman supports breaching lower Snake River dams. Transition to Power Purchase agreements with renewable resources. Possible roof top solar program with net metering.

**Statement to Voters:** I have lived in the Grande Ronde Valley for almost 40 years, arriving here from Western Colorado in 1983. I believe the residents of Union County are facing an enormous change in the way energy is produced, transmitted, and purchased. I want to work with OTEC and its members in transitioning to a new energy future in a fashion that does not lead to a disruption of our way of life. I want to help OTEC drive our energy future instead of being driven by it.



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## Position 5-Baker County

### Wayne Overton



**Family:** Son Ethan Overton and daughter Tawnie Overton

**Occupation:** Self-employed General Contractor specializing in Ag buildings and custom homes. Cattle rancher; Manage family ranch. Auctioneer; part time with JBS Auctions, Homedale, Idaho

**Education:** Dayville High School

**Public Offices Held:** Current OTEC Board member, since 2015; Secretary/Treasurer of the OTEC Board, 2 years; Vice President of the OTEC Board, 2 years; Board of Directors for ORECA Statewide, serving my 2nd year.

**Organizations:** Member of Oregon Cattleman's Association. Auctioneer for Younglife (approximately 14 years) Auctioneer for Ducks Unlimited

**Issues the Board of Directors will need to deal with:** Ever changing state and federal policies impacting BPA. Advancements in solar or battery storage capabilities. Continue fighting rising costs. Fire mitigation.

**Statement to Voters:** Eastern Oregon has been where I spent most of my life. I love Northeast Oregon and everything it has to offer. That is why I am seeking a 3rd term as Board Director for OTEC (Baker County). I believe that a reliable uninterrupted supply of power is vital to our economy and livelihood here in Eastern Oregon. With fossil fuels on the rise again, it is imperative for us here in the Pacific Northwest to continue to fight for one of the greatest hydro power systems in the world, BPA.

Since all of us just went through a very stressful year of uncertainty, both personally and economically, I believe it is very important for us as a co-op to provide stability, by continuing to keep rates as low as possible. I would like to continue to serve as your voice on the board, to be able to communicate a better understanding of how we work for you, the members.

I am especially proud of the work that OTEC has done with our amazing scholarship programs and also teaming up with the Dolly Parton Foundation, providing a pathway for literacy to our youth. Please vote for me, Wayne Overton, Board position 5, Baker County.



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## Position 6-Grant County

### Gary E. Miller



**Family:** Wife, Virginia

**Occupation:** Retired

**Education:** Grant Union High School, John Day.  
Eastern Oregon University, Bachelor of Science.

**Experience:** Retired general manager, Oregon Telephone Corporation (1990-2006). Credential Cooperative Director, board leadership and Gold Director Credential series of courses which provide additional skills and knowledge for cooperative directors.

**Organizations:** National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Blue Mountain Hospital Board of Directors (1985-1990); Chairman of the Board (1986-1990); Grant County Sheriff's Posse, past captain; Grant School District #3, director (1997-2005); John Day Elks Lodge #1824 (1970-present); Past exalter ruler (1985-86); Current Trustee for Oregon State Elks Assn.; Disabled American Veterans' van to Boise and Burns, volunteer driver.

**Statement to Voters:** Having lived in Grant County all my life, I would like to continue to represent the members of OTEC in Grant County position 6. Since my appointment in October 2002, I have enjoyed the time spent on the board, and I feel I can meet the challenge and be a productive participant. Thirty years' experience in the utility business has created the ability to make decisions that are best for the members and the employees of OTECC. One of the largest factors in our economic future will be reliable electricity. We may have to investigate other means of providing that reliability at a reasonable cost. Regulatory and legislative solutions may be necessary to maintain the best service to our members. We are fortunate to be living in the Northwest where hydroelectric power has been a reasonable source for our electricity, but who knows what the future will bring. We must be able to change and adapt with the times. I have been a member/owner of OTECC from its beginning and would be honored to continue to serve as director. I would appreciate your vote to be re-elected to this position.