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THINGS!



*A Homage to Alice Parker
and the League's History*

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- Leonardo da Vinci

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2026 EDITORIAL CALENDAR

JANUARY 2026

Due date for content:
Friday, December 12, 2025
Publish date:
Week of January 19, 2026

JULY 2026

Due date for content:
Friday, June 12, 2026
Publish date:
Week of July 13, 2026

APRIL 2026

Due date for content:
Friday, March 13, 2026
Publish date:
Week of April 13, 2026

OCTOBER 2026

Due date for content:
Friday, September 11, 2026
Publish date:
Week of October 12, 2026

FROM THE HEADWATERS: *Insights from the Chair's Desk*



JON ERICKSON
CHAIRMAN

Building Momentum for the Columbia Basin Project's Next Chapter

As we move into the final months of the year, our shared commitment to the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) continues to inspire action and progress. The League's work remains focused on advancing development, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring a reliable future for water, power, and agriculture across our region.

I invite you to join us at the November 13, 2025 Conference & Annual Meeting at the Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake, WA. The CBDL Conference is a cornerstone event where community leaders, producers, and policymakers come together to share updates, celebrate accomplishments, and chart the path ahead.

If you are not yet a member of the Columbia Basin Development League, now is the perfect time to join. Membership not only strengthens our collective advocacy – it also saves you money on Conference registration. Your support amplifies the League's voice in Olympia and Washington, D.C., helping ensure the CBP remains a top regional and national priority.

Together, we can continue building momentum, driving solutions, and carrying forward the vision of a thriving Columbia Basin for generations to come.

I look forward to see you at the Conference!

*Jon Erickson, Chair
CBDL Board of Trustees*

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT:

Operations Hold Steady While Appropriations Negotiations Continue

By John Culton, Principal | Capitol Path Consulting



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OGWRP ENDURES FEDERAL SHUTDOWN

The ongoing federal government shutdown, which began October 1, 2025, has caused only limited disruption to the core functions of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). Despite the lapse in appropriations and broader federal uncertainty, all critical dam operations, water delivery, hydroelectric generation, and flood control infrastructure continue uninterrupted. Government agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have maintained mission-essential activities, ensuring stable water supply and power reliability for communities and producers throughout the Basin.

Administrative and future-oriented work supporting the CBP is temporarily paused. These include grant processing, WaterSMART program administration, contract approvals, infrastructure modernization planning, and Title XVI water recycling initiatives. While this may delay new project development and upgrades, it poses no immediate threat to the safety or daily functioning of existing water and energy infrastructure.

The greatest operational constraint affects the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides conservation technical assistance and program payments. During the shutdown, nearly 42,256 USDA employees have been furloughed nationally – almost 50% of the agency's workforce – with the NRCS particularly impacted as 95% of its 11,000 employees (over 10,000 staff) are furloughed. As a result, Columbia Basin producers temporarily lose access to NRCS technical planners and cannot receive cost-share reimbursements for conservation practices through federal programs. These delays are inconvenient, but should remain manageable unless the shutdown extends significantly, with agencies preparing to address processing backlogs once appropriations resume.

Overall, the Columbia Basin Project remains resilient in the face of the shutdown. Essential water delivery, power generation, and dam operations continue without interruption, while the primary disruptions are confined to deferred administrative activities, technical assistance, and long-term project planning – not to immediate water or infrastructure needs.

SECOND MINIBUS COULD ADVANCE ENERGY AND WATER PROJECTS—NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE ON FIRST PACKAGE

Representative Tom Cole, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, has voiced strong support for advancing a second “minibus” appropriations package, which would include the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill crucial for the CBP. Cole emphasized that passage of the Bill is necessary to sustain investment in large-scale water infrastructure, hydroelectric generation, and continued funding for the Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers – all central agencies supporting CBP dam operations, flood control, and water delivery. Specifically, the Energy and Water Bill covers federal outlays for facility maintenance, modernization grants, hydropower reliability, and WaterSMART program allocations, shaping the fiscal outlook for water efficiency projects throughout the Basin.

Negotiations on the first three-bill minibus package remain stalled, with House and Senate leaders working through differences in defense, veterans, and legislative branch appropriations. Despite efforts to reconcile funding levels and program priorities, several votes have failed to clear the path for final passage, prolonging the broader impasse that has partly contributed to the current government shutdown. The first minibus is still in conference, with both chambers actively seeking compromises. Cole and other appropriations leaders remain hopeful that resolution on the initial minibus will allow subsequent packages, including energy and water, to move forward and bring relief to priority programs such as those underpinning the CBP. 



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FLOWS & FUTURES

Stay connected with the people, projects, and progress shaping the Basin.



On October 6, 2025 the **East Columbia Basin Irrigation District** held a groundbreaking celebration for the third OGWRP system. The plant is being named for longtime ag leader, ECBID Director, and third-generation farmer **Orman Johnson** who passed away in 2023.



Franklin County Irrigation District No. 1 announces the retirement of Operations Manager **John Burns** after 33 years of dedicated service. The District is also pleased to welcome **Brad Backus** as the new Operations Manager, ensuring a smooth transition and continued excellence in service.

In September, the **J.R. Simplot Co.** announced the changing of its name to the Simplot Co, which is



a new global parent holding company for all Simplot-affiliated companies. As Simplot continues to evolve within the dynamic food and agriculture industries, the restructure allows the organization to align its diverse business operations with long-term strategic planning objectives. Read more at: <https://capitalpress.com/2025/09/15/simplot-changes-company-name-structure/>.



The **Family Farm Alliance** Board of Directors has elected new officers who will guide the organization into 2026. Special congratulations to **Mark Hansen** who has been elected President. Hansen raises irrigated forage crops and cattle in Washington's Kittitas Valley.



John McCourtie has retired from the **East Columbia Basin Irrigation District**. An open house was held in September honoring his 29.5 years of service to the District.



The Washington State Legislature passed a bill in March 2025, requesting that the Washington State Transportation Commission designate the I-90 bridge over the Columbia River near Vantage as the "**Medal of Honor Bridge**". The measure honors Washington's 34 Medal of Honor recipients for their extraordinary bravery and service. The Transportation Commission approved the designation on September 17, 2025, and WSDOT will install signage reflecting the new name as part of the ongoing bridge deck replacement project scheduled through 2028.

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**



has budgeted \$10 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) WaterSMART Initiative (WSI) funding to support farmers within the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) area. For complete details on eligibility and application requirements, visit <https://www.ogwrp-programs.org/post/nrcs-budgets-10-million-to-support-ogwrp-farmers>.

Congratulations to **Shawn O'Brien**, City Engineer for the **City of Ephrata**, on being appointed to CBDL's Board of Trustees! Shawn brings a wealth of technical and leadership experience to the position. We look forward to his contributions in shaping the League's future.



LET'S BUILD BIG THINGS!



Register Here ▲

*A Homage to Alice Parker
and the League's History*

Real Conversations. Real Progress. Real Impact.



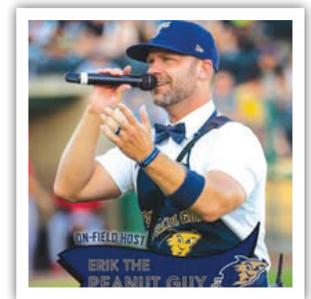
**61ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 13, 2025
BIG BEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MOSES LAKE, WA**

The CBDL Annual Conference unites the people and partners driving the completion of the Columbia Basin Project. Inspired by Alice Parker's vision, this year's theme – "Let's Build Big Things!" – celebrates the League's history of determination and its continued leadership in shaping the Basin's future. Join us for a day of insight, connection, and momentum. Hear the latest on project development, legislative advocacy, water management, and community collaboration – all focused on strengthening the Basin for generations to come. Whether you represent an irrigation district, business, or community organization, you belong in the room where progress happens. Together, we are honoring a legacy and building what is next.

Cornerstones of the Conference

CONFERENCE EMCEE: ERIK THE PEANUT GUY

Bringing energy, humor, and heart to the stage, Erik Mertens will serve as the official emcee of this year's Conference. A lifelong Basin native and passionate advocate for agriculture, Erik connects audiences through laughter and storytelling while celebrating the people who make farming and water development possible. His engaging style and deep regional roots promise to make the Conference both lively and memorable.



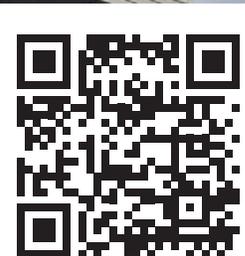
HONORING A LEGACY. INSPIRING THE FUTURE.

CBDL is proud to welcome Alice Parker – a cornerstone of Columbia Basin agriculture and water advocacy – to closing Conference reflections. Since moving to the Basin in 1965, Alice has helped turn sagebrush land into thriving farmland and spent over 30 years serving as the League's Executive Secretary and Board Member. Her tireless leadership has driven progress toward completing the CBP and strengthening regional water policy. Alice remains a steadfast voice for the farming communities that sustain the Basin's economy and legacy. Join us as we honor her lasting impact and shared vision to keep building big things together.



VALUE PRICING

Lock in the Conference's best rate — \$160 for League members, \$190 for nonmembers when you register by October 31, 2025! Not yet a member? [Join the League](#) to save on registration and support the work that keeps the Basin growing. Don't miss your chance to be part of the progress. [Register today!](#)



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Your support helps drive progress, spark collaboration, and strengthen
the shared mission to complete the Columbia Basin Project. Together,
we are honoring a legacy and building big things for the Basin's future.

November 13, 2025: Flow of the Day

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Coffee & Connections: Building Big Ideas Together – Exhibit Hall Open
8:45 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Remarks: “Honoring the Visionaries Who Built the Basin” with Erik the Peanut Guy - On-Field Host for the Tri-City Dust Devils, and Jon Erickson, Chairman - Columbia Basin Development League
9:05 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	“Growing What Feeds Us: State of Agriculture in Washington” with Derek Sandison, Director - WA State Department of Agriculture
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	“Building on Success: Legislative Wins and What’s Next for the Basin” with WA Representative Tom Dent, WA Representative Mary Dye, WA Senator Mark Schoesler, WA Senator Judy Warnick, and Shawn Logan, Mayor - City of Othello
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Networking Break: Conversations that Build Connections – Exhibit Hall Open
10:30 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.	“Reclamation in Action: The Bureau’s Role in Building Big Things” with David Palumbo, Deputy Commissioner - Bureau of Reclamation (invited), Roland Springer, Area Manager - Bureau of Reclamation
10:55 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	“A View From the Canal: An Interactive Panel Discussion” with Marc Maynard, Ephrata Office Manager - Bureau of Reclamation, John O’Callaghan, Manager - South Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Craig Simpson, Manager - East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Roger Sonnichsen, Manager - Columbia Basin Irrigation District
11:20 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	“Powering the Conversation: Northwest RiverPartners Update” with Clark Mather, Executive Director - Northwest RiverPartners”
11:50 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	“Lunch & Networking: Celebrating Builders, Dreamers, & Doers” with Invocation by David Dormier, Vice Chair – Columbia Basin Development League
12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	“Annual Meeting & Trustee Awards: Recognizing Those Who Build the Future” with U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (video), and U.S. Senator Patty Murray (video)
12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	“Tribal Perspectives” with Cody Desautel, Tribe Representative - Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
1:00 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.	“Sustainable Water, Shared Vision: Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition Update” with Ben Lee, Principal Engineer - Landau Associates, Dr. Sasha McLarty, Professor - WSU Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Kristina Ribellia, Executive Director - Columbia Basin Conservation District
1:25 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.	“Project Partners in Progress: Continuing the Legacy of Big Builds” with Roylene Comes at Night, WA State Conservationist – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Harold Crose, Resources Conservationist - Grant County Conservation District, Jon Wyss, State Executive Director - USDA Farm Service Agency
1:50 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	“Office of Columbia River: Innovation in Water Management” with Larry Mattson, Director - Office of Columbia River, Melissa Downes, Policy Lead – Office of Columbia River
2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	“The State of the OGWRP: Turning Vision into Vital Infrastructure” with Jon Erickson, Chairman – Columbia Basin Development League, Kristina Ribellia, Executive Director - Columbia Basin Conservation District, OGWRP Landowners
2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Networking Break: Building Relationships that Last – Exhibit Hall Open
3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	“Cultivating Growth: Washington State Potato Commission Update” with Chris Voigt, Executive Director - WA State Potato Commission
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	“Funding the Future: State and Federal Strategies for Building Big Things” with Tony Bean, Executive Director - Pullman Moscow Regional Airport
3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	“Powering Progress: The 5th Congressional District’s Role in the Basin’s Future” with U.S. Representative Michael Baumgartner, Chelsea Martin, President - Modern Electric Water Company
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	“Reflections in Legacy: Honoring Alice Parker and the Builders of the Basin” with Dan Keppen, Retired Executive Director – Family Farm Alliance (video) and Alice Parker, Clark Kagele, Dale Pomeroy, and others – sharing stories and memories
4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	“Post-Conference Social: Raising a Toast to Big Ideas and Bigger Futures” with great company, good food, and live entertainment

Stand with the Basin: RENEW, SPONSOR &

As renewal season approaches, now is the time to stand with the Columbia Basin Development League and continue building momentum for the Columbia Basin Project. CBDL members stay informed on project developments, contribute to critical advocacy efforts, and join a united network of community leaders, producers, and partners shaping the Basin's future.

Coming soon: Our new single-step sponsorship packages – crafted to make support easy on budgets while offering year-round visibility, exclusive benefits, and meaningful recognition at key CBDL events.

So stay tuned for more information on how to renew your membership and take advantage of these exciting sponsorship opportunities.

We are pleased to spotlight CBDL's 2025 members, along with those sponsors who have supported the League in recent years – a reflection of the strong, ongoing partnership that continues to power progress and advocacy for the Columbia Basin Project.

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