

Electrical privatization comes to JBLM in July

By Cathy Hamilton-Wissmer, Joint Base Lewis-McChord Directorate of Public Works March 4, 2019



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A City Light and Power lineman works on a pole mounted transformer recently. *(Photo Credit: Courtesy Photo)*
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In July, Joint Base Lewis-McChord will privatize all primary electric operations, maintenance, repair, upgrade and improvement of the systems. Primary electric system includes transformers, distribution system, substations. City Light and Power, based out of Colorado, will be the incoming contractor, and this contract will run for 50 years.

JBLM has aging electrical infrastructure. Privatization will benefit JBLM because the primary electrical distribution will be brought up to code, becoming more reliable.

JBLM will be the ninth, and largest, installation to partner with City Light and Power. The other bases include Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md.; Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; March Air Reserve Base, Ca.; Hill Air Force Base, Utah; Fort Riley, Kan.; Fort Campbell, Ky.; Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky.; and the U.S. Military Academy, N.Y.

City Light and Power has a history of partnering successfully with federal government, municipalities, private sector-commercial and

industrial clients.

There is a huge economic benefit because upgrades will not be piecemealed projects, from decaying power poles to upgrading overhead lines on new facilities such as the remodel at the JBLM Main Commissary. By simplifying everything under one umbrella contract, work can be done without delays of additional contracting.

"Another big advantage to privatization is that DPW has a list of projects, and this contract will provide big cost items to be amortized over a 50 year term, paid when project is complete and passes the JBLM quality assurance/quality control," said Royanna Solis, JBLM Environmental Services Division's Utilities branch chief in charge of this contract. "So, if something fails, the contractor is responsible for getting it fixed. Another big benefit is the annual inventory of assets and updated (Geographic Information System) maps for the primary infrastructure".

Certain areas stay with JBLM DPW and will not be included in this contract, such as privatized housing area, Yakima Training Center, airfield lighting at McChord Field and Gray Army Airfield, individualized building emergency backup generators and secondary meters (which includes inside buildings and parking lot lights). Security stays with JBLM.

Energy efficiencies and conservation, renewable energy generation and energy security are front and center in this process. City Light and Power is encouraged to propose upgrades that will increase the overall efficiency of the utility systems.

"Lessons learned on JBLM over the years are used to establish (City Light and Power's) construction standards for the system," Solis said.

When the contract kicks in, service calls will go to the JBLM DPW's service order number -- 253-966-3131, option 2.

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