

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

## Relaying to the Power Grid

[music]

**Keith:** Power, energy, electronics, is always going to be here.

[music]

**Keith:** My name is Keith St Jeor. I work down here at Grand Coulee Dam and I'm a Power Systems Control Craftsman.

[music]

[nat sound]

**Sonny:** It's powered up.

**Sonny:** My name is Sonny Langhurst and I'm a PSCC, which is a glorified name for electronics technician, relay technician.

**Keith:** Basically what our job consists of is working on the equipment so that we can have clean power at our homes. What we do is stabilize the voltage so that when it leaves Grand Coulee Dam and gets to your home, that it's the proper voltage and frequency in which it would operate our video games at home, or our TV, and make sure that we don't blow up the microwave.

**Sonny:** We wear many hats here. Our primary, of course, is compliance with relays, the overcurrent protection of our transmission distribution and generational lines. We also troubleshoot electronic circuitry on the governors, voltage control, power system stabilizers and sometimes we just do some just good electrical troubleshooting.

[music]

**Sonny:** Bureau of Reclamation is really about water management, and in the water management system we just happen to make power. The power that's generated at Grand Coulee goes to the grid, and our power goes all up and down the West Coast.

[sprinklers]

**Keith:** The Columbia Basin, all of their crops are irrigated from what we pump out of Lake Roosevelt into Banks Lake. And we have 12 generator pumps that are specifically used for controlling the level of water and reservoir of Banks Lake. It's wonderful to know that we're helping the farmers grow their crops, and we're helping the person in the kitchen cook those crops on their electric stove. So it's very exciting to know that you are a large part of making that happen.

[water flowing]

Grand Coulee Dam is one of the largest hydropower plant facilities you're going to work at. When you go to your training... Grand Coulee Dam is what they refer to. Grand Coulee Dam is what they want their equipment in.

Grand Coulee Dam is who they want to come talk to.

[music]

We have a wide variety of people that make up our craft. Myself, I'm an electronics technician. I went to Eastern Washington University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science. We have several employees that are engineers and a couple that were operators.

**Sonny:** We have electricians, like myself. We have people that went to school to become engineers and they decided that they'd rather have more hands-on. We have people in the military that are exposed to protective relay and electronics.

**Keith:** This is a very secure job, and it's not going away. Education wise say hey, this might be something you want to look into, a technical school or somebody that was in computer science degree or in electronics.

**Sonny:** We would love to recruit people out of their 20s, out of school. We have apprenticeship programs, training programs.

**Keith:** Your opportunity to get on-the-job training pretty much starts immediately. And if you have the ability to learn, you have the ability to learn what you've got to do here at Grand Coulee Dam.