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New grid connection rules: build the solar and EV line now

One issue taken to one decision. Escalated from the Edge Scan, week of October 26, 2026 (item #3).

Prepared for Brightfold Electric, a fictional five-truck electrical contractor in Red Deer, Alberta. October 28, 2026.

+35%
EV charger installs in Red Deer, year over year

16%
of Brightfold's jobs are EV chargers today

~3 weeks
extra lead time per install if crews are not certified

> **Bottom line:** The utility's new connection rules will favour contractors with certified crews. Brightfold should certify two crews and launch a packaged solar and EV install line before the rules take effect, rather than partner or wait.

Background

EV charger and panel-upgrade work is the growth lane named in Brightfold's Strategic Landscape Assessment. Charger installs in Red Deer are up about 35% year over year, panel-upgrade requests about 22%, and the east-side subdivisions (Timberlands, Clearview Ridge and Laredo) are where that demand sits. The assessment's 60-day plan already packages a fixed-price panel and charger offer.

The local utility is consulting on new connection rules for small solar systems and EV chargers. Under the draft, installs must be signed off by a crew that holds the utility's new connection certification, or wait for a utility inspection slot. Consultation closes November 20; the draft says the rules take effect March 1, 2027.

The issue

Uncertified contractors would wait for inspections, adding about three weeks to each charger or solar job. That delay lands on the line Brightfold is building its growth around, and on its main promise to customers: fastest to a safe, permitted job. Corvane Electric, the largest rival at 14 trucks, has the scale to certify early. Quillmark Home Electric, a two-person EV and solar shop, already markets "utility-ready" installs. If Brightfold waits, it competes on the one lane it chose to lead in with a three-week handicap.

The cost is modest against the work at stake. Certification runs about $2,400 per electrician plus two days off the tools, and two crews means four people. Brightfold's charger work is roughly 135 jobs a year (16% of ~850); holding even half of the forecast growth is worth more than the certification cost in the first quarter.

Options

Option	What it means	Gains	Costs and risks
A. Certify and build the line	Certify two crews by February; launch a packaged solar + EV install offer on the east side	Keeps "fastest to permitted job" true; first-mover in the growth lane; sign-off in house	~$9,600 plus 8 crew-days off the tools in a tight labour market; trained staff become poaching targets
B. Partner	Subcontract sign-off to a certified shop (e.g. Quillmark) for solar and charger jobs	No upfront cost; fast to start	Margin shared on every job; hands customers to a direct rival; Brightfold does not own the capability
C. Wait	Hold until final rules are published, then decide	No spend now; avoids certifying to a draft that could change	Training seats fill up before March 1; three-week delay on every job from day one; rivals take the east-side market

Recommendation

Choose Option A. Certify two crews (four electricians) by February 15 and launch the packaged solar and EV install line on March 1, the day the rules take effect. Fold it into the 60-day step that already packages the panel and charger offer. Submit a short consultation response by November 20 asking for a transition period for installs booked before March 1. Protect the trained staff with a certification retention bonus, as the plan's hiring step already warns that crews are the limit on growth.

Option B is the fallback if training seats are not available by January. Option C is not recommended: the draft is unlikely to soften on certification, and the cost of being late is higher than the cost of training.

Decision needed

From Brightfold's owner, by November 6: approve about $9,600 for certification, name the four electricians, and approve the consultation response. Once approved, the actions go into the Execute plan as a new milestone, and the Edge Monitor tracks it each month (*grid rules: crews certified*) against the March 1 start.

Sample only. Brightfold Electric, its rivals, the utility rules and every figure in this Brief are fictional and illustrative, not reported fact.