



Public Utility District No. 1  
of Thurston County

# August 2014 Newsletter

## Commissioner's Corner

By Chris Stearns, Commissioner District 3

## Customer Satisfaction Survey: We Appreciate Your Input

**Let Us Know How We Are Doing.** The Commissioners and General Manager of Thurston PUD would appreciate your input and would like to know if you are satisfied with water and services provided by the PUD.

*Three Lucky Customers  
Will Receive a \$50 Credit  
on Their TPUD Account.*

We invite you to take our Customer Satisfaction Survey, it only takes about 5 minutes to complete and the valuable feedback received will help the PUD determine how to serve you better. Please complete the Customer Satisfaction Survey by October 15, 2014. If you provide a e-mail address, or name and phone number, you will be entered into a drawing. Three lucky TPUD customers will receive a one-time \$50.00 credit on their account.



Commissioner Stearns

Complete the TPUD Customer Satisfaction Survey Online:  
[www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org).

If you would prefer to take the survey in paper form, please contact the PUD office at (360) 357-8783, or toll free (866) 357-8783, and we will gladly mail the survey to you.

Your participation is appreciated to help us better serve you!

## Notice of Proposed Budget and Rate Public Hearings

Thurston PUD Commissioners will hold Public Hearings on the proposed 2015 budget, utility rates and capital surcharges. Hearings are scheduled on September 9th and September 23rd, and if needed on October 6th. The Commissioners are planning to adopt the 2015 budget and utility rates and consider capital surcharges on September 23rd following the Public Hearing. Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings. Information regarding the Proposed Budget and rate increases will be posted on our web site, [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org), by Monday, September 1st. Copies can also be obtained by contacting our office at (360) 357-8783; toll free at (866) 357-8783.

### How Can I Ask Questions or Provide My Comments?

You are invited to attend the public hearings or submit written comments:

#### Public Hearing Dates

Tuesday, September 9th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, September 23rd, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, October 6th, 2014 at 5:00 p.m., if needed

#### Public Hearing Location

Public Utility District No. 1 of Thurston County  
921 Lakeridge Way SW, 3rd Floor,  
Olympia, Washington 98502

You also may submit comments in writing to the address below:

PUD Commissioners  
921 Lakeridge Way SW, Suite 301, Olympia, WA 98502  
Or email: [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org)

Written comments received by close of business September 22nd will become part of the public record. The Board will hear, read and discuss your comments. The Board is required to adopt or modify the budget no later than October 6th, 2014, but plans to adopt rates, the budget and capital surcharges for 2015 rates on September 23rd, 2014.

## Asset Management Plan, Cost of Service Study, Rates, & Infrastructure Funding

Over the past two years, the PUD has worked on the development of an Asset Management Plan (AMP) and hired a consulting firm to help us review rates and determine how to best fund capital improvements. The AMP analyzed and reviewed all infrastructure for each of the PUD's 158 water systems and estimated what it will cost to replace or refurbish each component of the water system when replacement is needed. In 2014, the Commissioners invited all customers to attend public meetings to discuss the rate structure and have a discussion on how to fund future infrastructure replacements. Meetings were held on June 11<sup>th</sup> in Pierce County, on June 25<sup>th</sup> in Lewis County and on July 9<sup>th</sup> in Thurston County. A link to the presentations is on the front page of the PUD's web site [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org) (<http://www.thurstonpud.com/pud-news-rate-infrastructure-public-meetings.htm>).

This year, the PUD was able secure additional water rights for the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system to sustain growth for the next 20 years and fully utilize the new well capacity of 900 gallons per minute. The District renegotiated the PUD's wholesale water contract with the City of Olympia. The City agreed to relinquish its right to 57.5% of the general facility charge of \$4,700, since the PUD has its own wells, allowing the PUD to lower the general facility charge (GFC) to \$3,000; a savings for homeowners and developers wishing to build in Tanglewilde-Thompson Place. The City of Olympia also agreed to lower the 3 year notification to terminate the wholesale water contract to 9 months. The PUD will give notice to the City to terminate the wholesale water contract in 2014. Termination of the contract will save the PUD over \$60,000 a year.

The Commissioners plan to make rate and infrastructure funding decisions in September and will hold public hearings. The Public hearing schedule is on the first page of this newsletter. After considering public input on the proposed rate and infrastructure funding recommendations made at the public meetings, the Consultants made recommendations to the Board. The Board will make all decisions concerning rates and charges. The recommendations are:

1. Implement one rate system for all water systems in Thurston County and eliminate the higher rate for Tanglewilde-Thompson Place customers.
2. Eliminate surcharges implemented years ago for the Pederson Place, Cornerstone, and Terry Lane and Crescent Park customers.
3. Maintain and require surcharges on systems that are new to the PUD that need improvements made when they become a PUD system so that existing ratepayers do not subsidize new water systems that become part of the PUD.
4. Maintain the same rate difference for customers that are served outside of Thurston County and do not increase it in the coming year.
5. Rates will be reviewed annually and will fund the PUD's operational and maintenance costs. Strive to keep rate increases below 4% annually.
6. Create a new capital investment program fund account. This fund will be used only for capital replacement and refurbishment projects that are listed in the AMP. Funding for these improvements is recommended from monthly capital surcharges. The proposed capital surcharge for all customers is:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Capital Surcharge</u>
2015	\$1.00
2016	\$2.90
2017	\$4.80
2018	\$6.70
2019	\$8.60
2020	\$10.50

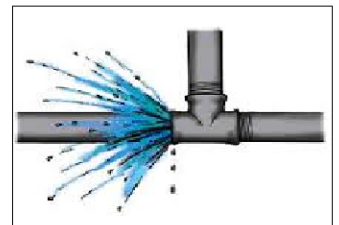
7. Retain the general facility charge at \$3,000 and review it every few years to see if it needs to be changed. After considering public input on the proposed rate and capital surcharge infrastructure funding recommendations made at the Public Hearings, the PUD Board of Commissioners will make decisions concerning rates and charges.

## Water Leaks

As we try to be pro-active on water leaks, one of Thurston PUD's procedures is to review high consumption meter reads on a monthly basis to determine if a customer has a leak. Sometimes it is very hard to determine if there is a leak from just the numbers during the summer months. You may receive a phone call from our office explaining that your usage is high and you may want to check for a leak. Some of this high usage might be from extra watering you have done or you may have accidentally left a hose running over night.

**If you think you might have a leak here is the way to check:**

1. Shut off all the water in and outside of the house.
2. Find your water meter (usually on the front part of one of your property lines).
3. Look at the face of the meter, there will be a triangle or circle that turns if water is running through the meter. If the dial is turning, you have a leak. If you don't see anything moving, take a meter read and wait 10 or 15 minutes and take another meter read.



Once you have determined you have a leak, you can call a plumber or try to find and fix the leak yourself.

## Water Usage: Find Your Gallons Per Day Average

### *Ever Wonder How Much Water Your Household Actually Uses?*

Do you have questions about your water bill? Finding your average gallons per day use can help determine what is reflected in your bill and if your household's usage is below or above average.

In 2013, the annual average usage for all of Thurston PUD's 3,200+ connections was 203 gallons per day per connection. The summer seasonal demand usage average was 307 gallons per day. That's a 28% decrease since 2010.

The EPA national average per person is 100 gallons per day with the average home having 2.5 people. That's a national average of 250 gallons per day. Congratulations to Thurston PUD Customers! Your usage was below the national average in 2013. To find your gallons per day average

you will need a water bill handy and follow this equation:

Under "meter reading," determine the number of days between the previous reading date through the current reading date. (Usually between 27-34 days)

Next, find the usage number under meter reading. This number is shown in cubic feet which will need to be converted to gallons. To convert this number, multiply the usage number by 7.48.

Finally, to get your gallons per day average, divide the usage number by the number of days between readings.

If you have determined that your household's use is about average use, the next steps toward reducing your water usage is managing your bill

better by comparing actual usage with your daily activities. Watch and record your daily usage through your water meter daily. Assess how many times water is used through showering, laundry, dishes, etc. Adjust these daily activities accordingly to reduce your water usage.

Also, consideration for indoor and outdoor water conservation is very important, find more information on conservation statistics and tips through the Washington State Department of Ecology, <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/>.



## High-Efficiency Residential Toilet Rebate Program

**Did You Know?** Toilets are a main source of water use in a household, accounting for nearly 30% of residential indoor water use.

The Thurston PUD is proud to announce that all single-family customers of any Thurston PUD owned water system have the opportunity to significantly reduce water use by replacing old toilets AND to receive a rebate of \$50 per toilet for doing so. Save water and money, it's a win-win for everyone.

Toilets must meet program criteria and be purchased after January 1, 2014. Toilets eligible for rebate must be high-efficiency toilets on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense list.

See the WaterSense list: [www.epa.gov/watersense/products](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/products). Remember to look for the WaterSense Label on product packaging.



*Save  
Water &  
Earn a \$50  
Water Bill  
Credit per  
Toilet*

WaterSense labeled toilets are 20% more efficient than today's standard toilets. **Rebates will be applied as a credit on customer's TPUD**

**account and are limited to two rebates per customer and are offered on a first come-first served basis for a total of 50 rebates during 2014.** Applicants must submit a complete application including proof of purchase with product ID/verification.

Please visit our website: [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org) for more information on Thurston PUD's Toilet Rebate Program and for the rebate program application. Should you have any questions, please call the office at: (360) 357-8783 or toll free (866) 357-8783.



**Take Our Customer Satisfaction Survey Online at [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org)**

Input your e-mail address or name and phone number and you will be entered to win a \$50 water bill credit.

## Outdoor Water Conservation Tips



With all the Hot Summer Weather We Have Been Having, We Would Like to Offer Some Outdoor Water Conservation Tips:

- Water only when needed. Look at the grass, feel the soil, or use a soil moisture meter to determine when to water.
- Set automatic sprinkler systems to provide thorough, but infrequent watering. Pressure-regulating devices should be set to design specifications. Rain shut-off devices can prevent watering in the rain.
- Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs, or turn soaker hoses upside-down so the holes are on the bottom. This will help avoid evaporation.
- Water slowly for better absorption, and never water on a windy day.
- Condition the soil with mulch or compost before planting grass or flowerbeds so that water will soak in rather than run off.
- Fertilize lawns at least twice a year for root stimulation, but do not over-fertilize. Grass with a good root system makes better use of less water and is more drought-tolerant.
- Do not scalp lawns when mowing during hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better. Grass should be cut fairly often, so that only 1/2 to 3/4 inch is trimmed off. A better looking lawn will result.
- Use a watering can or hand water with the hose in small areas of the lawn that need more frequent watering (those near walks or driveways or in especially hot, sunny spots).
- Use water-wise plants. Learn what types of grass, shrubbery, and plants do best in the area and in which parts of the lawn, and then plant accordingly. Choose plants that have low water requirements, that are drought-tolerant, and are adapted to the area of the state where they are to be planted.
- Consider decorating some areas of the lawn with wood chips, rocks, gravel, or other materials now available that require no water at all.
- When washing the car, use a bucket of soapy water and turn on the hose only for rinsing.
- We're more likely to notice leaks indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.

## EPA WaterSense



**What is WaterSense?** WaterSense, a partnership program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water with water-efficient products and services.

### WaterSense Makes it Easy to Find and Select Water Efficient Products

For the WaterSense product search, visit: [www.epa.gov/watersense/product\\_search.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/product_search.html)

#### What it Means - Products bearing the WaterSense Label:

- Perform as well or better than their less efficient counterparts
- Are 20% more water efficient than average products in that category
- Realize water savings on a national level
- Provide measurable water savings results
- Achieve water efficiency through several technology options
- Are effectively differentiated by the WaterSense label
- Obtain independent, third-party certification

#### Look for the Label on the Following Products:

- Sink Faucets & Accessories
- New Homes
- Showerheads
- Toilets
- Urinals
- Weather-based Irrigation Controllers



### Public Utility District No. 1 of Thurston County

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