

Commissioner Message

Seeing the Forest Through the Trees - Learning from PUD Employees

By: Linda Oosterman, Thurston PUD Commissioner

Last month marked the two-year anniversary of the official declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought great changes to each of our lives. At Thurston PUD, we completely adjusted the way we did business from the bottom up; we put forth the best work we could; and we did it together. The team weathered some big storms, both literally and figuratively, from snowstorms and floods to maintaining a healthy workforce.

While other organizations saw high resignation numbers, the PUD was able to keep its workforce intact and keep employee retention numbers at a consistent operational level. I believe we were able to retain as many PUD employees as we did because our employees remained unified and understand the mission of providing an essential service. That's not to say we did not lose some employees to The Great Resignation, but we were able to attract and recruit some top talent who make important contributions to their teams and help us further our mission.

The PUD faced other unforeseen issues like supply chain shortages for things like chlorine, computer equipment, ductile iron pipe and radio meters which delayed some projects and compelled us to pay especially close attention to our inventory. Our supplies were impacted by factory issues with our Pacific Northwest neighbors, weather disasters in the Midwest and cargo delays from abroad. These supply issues should remind us that, in one way or another, we are all connected and dependent on each other.

Our PUD team made the best of each tough situation they were presented, and they got through it-- together. Although each employee holds their own views and beliefs, I never saw their differences affect the work they delivered to each of you, nor did I see it affect their relationships with one another. They each exhibited a kindness, patience and understanding toward one another that surpassed ideological differences; it was their mission to serve you that bound them together. I am proud to serve on the Board of Commissioners for Thurston PUD, due in part to the employees who have exhibited great professionalism, resiliency and harmony through adversity and social unrest. During the first week in May, we will honor our team during Drinking Water Week. I hope that you will join me in thanking them for the good work they accomplish day in and day out.



Linda Oosterman,
Commissioner - District 1

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

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What's Happening at the PUD?

PUD Headquarters Open as of April 1, 2022

Last month, the Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners made the decision to reopen to the public on April 1, 2022. Customers are once again welcome to make payments or visit our PUD Headquarters to speak with our Customer Service Team about account issues. Our location and business hours are listed below.

**Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road SE
Lacey, WA 98503**

Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

With reopening to the public, we would also like to welcome everyone back to in-person public meetings. Members of the public can also attend these meetings virtually via the Zoom video-conferencing platform. Directions on attending these meetings virtually are listed under "The Latest" at www.thurstonpud.org. The Board of Commissioners hold public meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at PUD Headquarters. If you cannot attend a public meeting and wish to make public comment to the Board of Commissioners, we encourage you to send written comment to our office using one of the options below.

Mail to: Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners
1230 Ruddell Rd SE
Lacey, WA 98503
Email to: PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org



Face masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves are available at our main office. The PUD is committed to providing a clean, healthy facility for our customers, employees, and community partners. If you have any questions, please call us at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or send us an email to the email address listed above.

Filling a Pool?

Spring has sprung! In order to prepare for higher temperatures and summer fun, customers should get a head start on filling their pools. If you have a pool that you'd like to fill, please keep a few things in mind:

- For your water system, peak demand times may vary, but usually customers are using the most water in the morning (when getting ready for work) and in the evening (when returning from work). We recommend filling your pool *outside of* peak demand times.
- It may take several hours (approximately nine hours) to fill a 5,000-gallon pool with a ½-inch garden hose.
- Filling a 5,000-gallon pool will add approximately 668 cubic feet (cf) to your monthly consumption total which will also increase your consumption charge for the month.

Based on the information above, we suggest filling your pool in increments over a few days during off-peak demand times. This will help prevent possible outages if your water system's well cannot keep up with demand; this could also help prevent certain water quality issues caused by an overworked water system.

Employee Spotlight

We selected our most recent hire at the PUD for this month's Employee Spotlight, Dillon Pflugmacher, the PUD's Laborer. Dillon was hired as a temporary employee in 2021 before coming on as a permanent employee in 2022. Dillon's primary duties include groundskeeping, small repairs, and meter change-outs, all which require him to travel extensively among the PUD's water systems.

Dillon enjoys spending time with his family and going on adventures throughout Washington State, especially Cape Flattery in Clallam County. Join us in welcoming Dillon to the PUD family!



Dillon Pflugmacher,
Laborer

PFAS Substances Under Study for Future Regulation

In recent years, various agencies have begun to study Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in response to growing concerns regarding human exposure. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large family of chemicals in use since the 1950s to make a wide variety of stain-resistant, water-resistant, and non-stick consumer products because of its ability to repel oil and water. Examples of PFAs use include food packaging, clothing, carpet, cleaning products and non-stick pans and can be absorbed and found in our food, air and water. PFAS also have many industrial uses because of their special properties. In Washington State, PFAS have been used in certain types of firefighting foams utilized by the U.S. military, local fire departments, and airports.

Uses of PFAS have changed over time due to health and environmental concerns. Some of the most common PFAS (such as PFOA and PFOS) have been removed from most products because of health and environmental concerns.

How are people exposed to PFAS? People are primarily exposed to PFAS by:

- Using products that contain PFAS, such as stain- and water-proofing sprays, stain-resistant carpeting, water-repellant clothing and leather goods, and cosmetics.
- Eating food that contain PFAS.
- Drinking water containing PFAS.
- Unintentionally swallowing soil or indoor dust that contain PFAS.
- Breathing PFAS in indoor or outdoor air, especially in industrial areas. However, there are no PFAS manufacturers in Washington.

Because people can be exposed to PFAS through their drinking water, the PUD has tested all of its Group A water systems (water systems with 15 or more connections), and provides advocacy on legislation, rule-making information, and advisories related to PFAS. Although PFAS are not yet regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act or other major U.S. environmental laws, the Washington State Board of Health recently completed rulemaking to regulate PFAS in Group A water systems which sets State Action Levels (SALs) for five PFAS.



It is important to note that not all water systems in our area have been exposed to PFAS. The PUD is currently working with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) to identify water systems in areas that may be at a higher risk for PFAS contamination and testing these water systems. Water sampling for PFAS testing is a complicated and delicate process but one that we take very seriously. If your water system has been identified for testing and results show PFAS over the Washington State SAL, we will contact you by mail with additional information on PFAS and the PUD's action plan for necessary monitoring and treatment.

At the PUD, we are committed to providing safe and reliable drinking water and transparent information related to your water to all of you. Through our partnerships with other public health organizations, we look forward to learning more about PFAS with additional research, testing, and planning. For more information on PFAS, including frequently-asked questions and health advice, we encourage you to review the DOH PFAS webpage at www.doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/pfas. If you have a specific question on your water system, please contact the PUD at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is leading the national effort to understand PFAS and reduce PFAS risks to the public. In October 2021, the EPA announced the agency's PFAS Strategic Roadmap which lays out the EPA's approach to addressing PFAS. For more information, please visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/pfas.

Miscellaneous Account Fees & Charges

In the past few months, our Customer Service Team has received several calls from customers regarding miscellaneous fees and charges. On January 1, 2022, the PUD resumed delinquency processes for customer accounts with outstanding balances. This includes applying the following fees and charges to customer accounts when applicable. We encourage you to review the list below to avoid any extra fees that may be charged to your account.

Fee/Charge	Description	Amount
Return Check Charge	Charged when a customer's payment is returned by the bank (due to non-sufficient funds, closed accounts, etc.)	\$ 30.00
Late Payment Fee	Charged when there is an outstanding balance on a customer's account after the 15th of the month	\$ 5.00
Reconnection Fees	Charged to reconnect water service at a customer's property after it has been disconnected	
During Business Hours		\$ 50.00
After Business Hours		\$135.00
Holidays/Weekends		\$210.00
Meter Tampering Charge	Charged in the event of unauthorized use of a customer's water meter (includes lock tampering, and unauthorized disconnection/reconnection)	\$200.00
Non-Compliant Customer Charge	Charged in cases of non-compliance by a customer (parking on meter box, crew unable to read meter for an extended period of time, etc.)	
First Notice		\$ 50.00
Second Notice		\$110.00

PUD fees and charges are reviewed annually during the annual budgeting process. To review Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges for 2022, please visit the PUD website at www.thurstonpud.org/our-rates.htm.

Friendly reminder: payments are due by the 15th of each month. If you have any questions about your account or any of the charges and fees above, please contact our Customer Service Team by phone at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Getting Ready for Better Weather

As we transition from winter to spring, we can look forward to better weather and spending more time outside. Here are some tips for preparing for spring and any work you are planning at your property:

- **Prepare your sprinklers.** To conserve water, make sure your sprinkler heads are in working order and directed towards your lawn. Test your system as early as you can and continue to monitor throughout spring and summer to ensure efficiency.
- **Call before you dig.** Before starting a home project that requires digging, be sure to call 811 as least two business days before starting. This is a free service that helps homeowners and business prevent digging an underground utility line.
- **Keep an eye out for leaks.** If there are any leaks on your property, they may be more visible to you during periods of better weather. Finding and fixing leaks can be easier in the spring and summer months.

For information on conservation, please visit the PUD's website at www.thurstonpud.org/water-systems.htm.