

Leadership Message

Equal Payment Program Enrollment Open Now

By TaSeana Tartt, Finance & Customer Service Manager

This year marks the second year of open enrollment for the Equal Payment Plan (EPP) at the PUD. This convenient program was created in 2019 after a suggestion by the Utility Rate Advisory Committee (URAC), an advisory group comprised of appointed PUD customers. The program has experienced a lot of positive outcomes over the last two years.

Open enrollment happens once a year and begins August 1, 2021 and closes August 31, 2021.

What is it?

The EPP is a free, stable payment plan. You'll pay roughly the same amount year-round. EPP is not a discount program, but it allows you to better manage your monthly budget by keeping water costs predictable and manageable. That way, you can avoid spikes in your bills caused by seasonal changes in how much water you use. Remember: there's no fee to enroll, and it's easy to manage. It's just another way we can help you better manage your monthly water costs.

How does it work?

Participating customers' monthly bills will be based on their average usage from the past 12 months. On each customer's EPP anniversary date, we recalculate the next year's average payment. Bills will only change if usage amounts changes. This may result in the PUD crediting an account or an amount due to the PUD. ***Paying attention to your water consumption throughout the year is critical with this payment option.*** When you sign up for EPP, we will calculate your average monthly bill.

What if I use more or less water than my monthly average bill?

If your water use differs greatly from your budgeted amount, on your EPP anniversary, we will adjust your future bills accordingly.

Who is eligible?

The Equal Payment Plan program is open to all Thurston PUD customers who have 12 or more months of historic consumption data. If you rent your home, the program enrollment application includes a section for landlord authorization. Please visit www.ThurstonPUD.org for more eligibility requirements.



TaSeana Tartt, Finance & Customer Service Manager

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman





District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

Important Messages

-  PUD offices remain closed until further notice.
-  Are you interested in the Equal Payment Plan program? Learn more by visiting the PUD's website at www.thurstonpud.org.
-  We are making a change to our billing process. Read Page 3 for additional information.
-  Do you have a leak? Review Page 4 to see if you qualify for a leak adjustment.

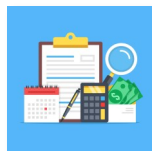
Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road SE
Lacey, Washington 98503
(360) 357-8783
Toll Free: (866) 357-8783
Fax: (360) 357-1172
www.ThurstonPUD.org

(Continued on Page 2)

Equal Payment Program Enrollment Open Now *(Continued from Page 1)*

When can I sign up?

Enrollment opens August 1, 2021.



When is the last day to sign up? When will I know if I have been accepted into the program?

Open enrollment closes August 31, 2021. Applications will be reviewed and decision letters mailed by September 17, 2021. The application decision letter will provide the budgeted amount for consumption charges. The bill you receive in October will reflect the budgeted amount for consumption charges.

How can I sign up?

Applications can be submitted online, or you can submit a paper application as well.

Online Application

Please complete the application online by visiting our website at www.thurstonpud.org - the application link will take you to an online form (via Microsoft Forms).

Paper Application

A PDF application is also available on our website. You are welcome to email your completed application to PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org, fax to (360) 357-1172, or mail it to us at 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503. If you'd prefer to request an application, please contact us at (866) 357-8783 and we will mail the application to you.

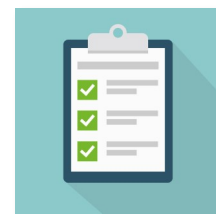
For more information and a list of frequently-asked questions, visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org.

What's Happening at the PUD?

For the past few months, we've highlighted the reoccurring duties and special projects of specific teams here at the PUD. This month, we provide a broad view of projects, tasks, and duties currently managed by each team for a comprehensive perspective.

Administrative Services

Our Administrative Services Team is busy conducting a needs assessment of the broadband and telecommunications infrastructure in Thurston County. For more information on this project, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org and review "The Latest" section.



Customer Service

Customer Service is currently working on auditing customer accounts to ensure accuracy. Soon, this team will process Equal Payment Plan applications as enrollment is now open - see Page 1 for more information.

Field Operations

The Field Operations Teams has its hands full with increased water system maintenance (due to increased usage by customers), investigative calls related to outages and water quality issues, and several capital improvement projects (as projected by the PUD's Asset Management Plan).

Finance & Accounting

Our Finance & Accounting Team has initiated the 2022 Budget and Rates process. Keep an eye out for more information on Public Hearings and information related to the 2022 Budget!

Planning & Compliance

In conjunction with the Field Operations Team, the Planning & Compliance Team is coordinating several major capital improvement projects.

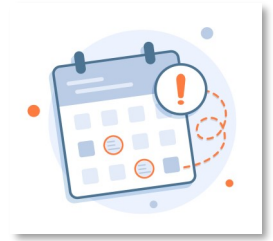
If you have any questions, we are more than happy to speak with you. Call us toll-free at (866) 357-8783 or send us an email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Billing Date Changes - Thank You for Your Feedback!

Based on the feedback received from PUD customers regarding the billing statements they receive by mail, our staff has implemented a change to customer billing procedures. Monthly billing statements will be sent out a few days earlier than previously sent to allow for more review time between the date you receive your statement and your payment due date.

How will this change effect my billing statement?

Our Customer Service Team will begin processing billing statements around the 25th of each month. Billing statements will be sent a few days earlier in the month, beginning with July bills (to be received at the end of July 2021).



Will this change effect my payment due date?

This change will not affect your payment due date. Payments are due on the 15th of each month.

How do I sign up for e-statements?

If you'd like to set up e-statements for your account, please login to your account online by visiting our website at www.thurstonpud.org and clicking on "Pay Bill Online." You can opt -in for e-statements by going to "My Profile" and selecting your account number under "Your Accounts."

Two important things to note:

- 1) Customers can select paper statements only, e-statements only, or elect to receive both paper statements and e-statements.
- 2) We offer a one-time \$5.00 bill credit for customers signed up for e-statements and Auto Pay. For more information, please visit www.thurstonpud.org/credit.htm or contact our Customer Service Team.

If you have any trouble registering for an account online or setting up e-statements, please contact our office toll-free at (866) 357-8783 or by email PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Conservation - Make it Work for You!

Water is a finite resource. Water conservation - using water efficiently and avoiding water waste - is essential to ensuring that we have an adequate water supply today and into the future. Water conservation is not only good for the environment, but it can also save money and energy!

Approximately 70 percent of residential water usage occurs in the home. Here are some tips to help conserve water indoors:

- Turn-off the water while performing routine tasks like brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Take short showers instead of baths. If you keep your showers to under five minutes, you can save up to 1,000 gallons in a month.
- Wash only full loads of laundry or dishes. Be sure to select the appropriate water level and load size option for your appliance.
- Don't use water to defrost frozen foods. Thaw foods in the refrigerator overnight.
- Fix leaks! A leaky toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day.

While most residential water usage occurs inside the home, there are several ways to help conserve on outdoor usage too, especially during the hot summer months. A list of tips is shown below for outdoor water usage:



- Consider using native and drought-tolerant plants in your garden or landscaping.
- Purchase an inexpensive hose timer to avoid over-watering. Soaker hoses are a great option to prevent evaporation.
- If installing weather-based irrigation controls on your irrigation system, be sure to apply for our Smart Irrigation Rebate. More information is listed on our website at www.thurstonpud.org/rebates.htm.

For more information on conservation, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/water-systems.htm.

You May Qualify for a Leak Adjustment

PUD staff regularly audits customer meter reads to find errors or irregularities. Each month, we will identify high, unexplained consumption and notify customers so that a possible leak can be found and repaired. In certain cases, customers are eligible for a leak adjustment to reduce their bill.

In order to qualify for a leak adjustment with the PUD, customers must:

1. Find and repair the leak within 10 business days of receiving leak notification from PUD staff.
2. Notify the PUD's Customer Service Team by phone or by email that the leak has been repaired.

Once we verify that the leak has been repaired, our Customer Service Team will note your account. Once the leak consumption has been billed, a Customer Service Representative will calculate the leak adjustment amount and notify the customer of their new account balance.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Leak adjustments cannot be granted until PUD staff has verified that the leak has been repaired.
- Customer Service staff must bill you for the leak consumption before issuing a leak adjustment. This ensures that our consumption records are accurate for planning purposes.
- The leak adjustment amount is based on your water usage for the prior year. You may still owe a balance on your account after the leak adjustment is applied.
- Customers are eligible to receive one (1) leak adjustment per 12-month period.

If you believe you may have a leak, please contact our Customer Service Team at (866) 357-8783.

Project Help - Customer Support Program

Do you qualify as income-eligible and need assistance with paying your water bill? Have you and your family been affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic? You may qualify to receive a credit towards your utility bill through our Project Help Program. For other available resources, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/customer-support.htm.

To be eligible for assistance you must: (1) be a customer with the PUD, with an active account in your name, (2) have received a past due notice for your water service, and (3) provide documentation that household income is \$40,000 or less or have been financially impacted by COVID-19 and can provide documentation of your employment status. If you are a customer in need, we encourage you to reapply yearly. Contact our Customer Service Team with any questions or concerns about the program's requirements.

To apply, visit our website at www.ThurstonPUD.org to complete the Project Help application (found on the front page of our website). If you'd like to request a paper copy of the application, please call us at (866) 357-8783 to speak with our Customer Service Team.

If you're interested in making a one-time or monthly donation, please call us at (866) 357-8783, email PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org, or return the form below with any payments mailed to our office at Thurston PUD, 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

I authorize Thurston PUD to bill my account \$ _____.

(Check one) One-time only
 Each month

This authorization shall remain in effect until the PUD receives written notification from me to terminate this agreement. I understand that if my account becomes past due, this authorization becomes invalid.

Name: _____ Account No.: _____

Service Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____