

Commissioner's Corner

Tides of Change for the Water Industry

Like never before, change is happening more rapidly each year. Technology can be a catalyst that pushes faster, more effective and seamless results. We have come to expect more from everything in life. The water industry is not immune to these massive changes that are bold and, most times, expensive.

The water industry is at a crossroads of maintaining operation and management practices while adopting more advanced solutions. There are many driving forces that are pushing the water industry into new territory: financial demands, aging assets and the need for new and expanded infrastructure represent significant challenges and opportunities.

Amidst our rapidly changing world, how does any organization remain stable?

The answer is to welcome change to be part of the organization. At Thurston PUD, we have experienced so much change, we are definitely not the water utility we were three years ago. We encourage innovation that supports our foundational goals of supplying safe, clean, and reliable drinking water.

Thurston PUD leans on major tech companies to supply our cloud services, analytic and mapping capabilities, customer account information and cybersecurity. Long gone are the days of paper and pens; our team relies on software and technology to give customers updated information on their accounts, collaborate and information share with key government agencies, store historic data to inform asset management plans, and gather analytics on water usage. We are approached by many tech companies that push software, hardware and gadgets on us, and it's our job to wisely invest in technology that is effective, efficient, and appropriate for our water utility.

Our advancements are not only in the office, we use technology to detect leaks without so much as digging a hole. In 2018, we also invested in a Vac-Truck, a smart investment that saves pipes and allows us to do work in one day that would have taken three. *(Continued on page 4)*



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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Capital Improvements vs. Repairs — What’s the Difference?

Knowing the difference between capital improvements and repairs helps our team decide how to fund projects and understand how it will impact future plans. There are a number of factors that go into helping the District understand how to classify projects.

For Thurston PUD, capital improvements can be defined as improving the condition or value of an asset beyond its original state at the time of purchase. These include permanent structural changes or restoration that enhances our infrastructure, increases its useful life or adapts it for new use. Examples of capital improvements can be replacing the roof on a pumphouse, installing fencing around a reservoir, and replacing aging booster or well pumps.

Repairs can be defined as improvements that keep property in efficient operating condition, restore infrastructure to its previous condition and/or protect infrastructure through routine maintenance. Examples of repairs can be replacing broken mainlines, broken meters, or fixing a field technician’s vehicle.

Repair work is inevitable in any profession and life in general, but with a proactive approach through the investment in capital improvements, repair work can be reduced. Although the PUD has a standard to run equipment and components to the end of their useful life, those items are still classified as capital improvements because they have been identified and forecasted within the Asset Management Plan.

Below are some capital improvement projects the PUD has recently completed.

Water System	Project	Work Completed	Final Cost
Crescent Park	Water System Pump Upgrade and Replacement Project	A 20-year-old 15 horse power pump was replaced with a new pump, motor, and chlorine pump. This replacement will provide constant pressure with the benefit of reduced wear and lower energy costs.	\$19,000.00
Crowder	Water System Upgrade Project	A well pump, motor, and chlorine pump were replaced for improved efficiency and functionality. The project also included an electrical upgrade to bring the system up to current code.	\$10,500.00
141st Ave KPN	Water System Pressure Tank Replacement Project	Three pressure tanks were replaced at the water system.	\$ 1,150.00
Frog Hollow 1 Frog Hollow 2 Frog Hollow 3	Water System Meter Upgrade Project	Service meters were replaced in order to read water usage in a quicker, safer, and more accurate manner.	\$ 1,000.00
Berry #6	Water System Upgrade	A well pump and a motor were replaced to ensure efficient and	\$ 4,900.00
336th #2	Water System Pressure Tank Project	The PUD replaced three pressure tanks.	\$ 1,950.00
336th #1	Water System Pressure Tank Project	Three pressure tanks were replaced.	\$ 1,400.00
Prairie Villa	Water System Upgrade	A well pump and motor were replaced to ensure efficient and	\$ 4,820.00
Eight (8) Project Total - Total Spent			\$44,720.00

Enroll in the Equal Payment Plan Today!

The Equal Payment Plan (EPP) is a free, stable payment plan. You can find comfort in knowing what to expect each month because 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 it works

Your monthly bill will be based on your average usage from the past 12 months. On your EPP anniversary date, we will recalculate your next year's payment. Your bill will only change if your usage amount changes. This may result in the PUD crediting your account or you may owe money 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 first determine your average monthly bill.

What if I use more or less water than I paid for?

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

Who is eligible?

The Equal Payment Plan program is open to Thurston PUD 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.

When can I sign up?

Enrollment is open February 1, 2020.

When is the last day to sign up? When will it begin?

Open enrollment closes March 31, 2020. You will see your first EPP payment on your May bill.

How to sign up

Go online to www.ThurstonPUD.org and fill out an application to enroll.

- You can email your completed application to PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org
- You can print and fax your application to (360) 357-1172.
- You can print and mail your application to us at 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.
- You can also request an application, and we will print and mail one to you.

For more rules and details, visit www.ThurstonPUD.org or call us at (360) 357-8783.

Employee Spotlight: Michael Keadle



Michael Keadle,
Laborer

Michael was hired as a Laborer last November. Before working for the PUD, he spent several years working as a carpenter. Michael is an honors graduate from Tacoma Community College, majoring in Natural Resources Science with minors in Forestry and Geospatial Analysis; he is only a few courses away from completing his Bachelor's degree. In his personal time, Michael enjoys working on home improvement projects and hiking. He is also a father to a five-year old, and he's getting married this fall.

Michael recognizes that providing safe and clean drinking water is an incredible responsibility. He states, "I am privileged to serve my community and neighboring areas through employment with Thurston PUD." We look forward to working with Michael for many years to come!

New Feature on Your Bill: Gallons!

On this month's bill you will see a new feature that will make it easier to understand your water usage. Bills will now include your water usage in cubic feet *and* gallons.

This change comes after a request from the Utility Rate Advisory Committee (URAC) that believed people would understand their water usage if we provided it in common formatting.

"We wanted to do it because people didn't understand cubic feet, let alone hundred cubic feet," said URAC President Gerry Smith. "We felt people could relate more to gallons. Everyone knows what a gallon of milk looks like. The idea was the people identify more with gallons than cubic feet."

The new bill feature is one of five recommendations made by the URAC, a committee comprised of PUD customers. More details about your bill can be found on the PUD's website www.ThurstonPUD.org. URAC applications are currently being accepted and can be found on the website too.

Thurston PUD
 1230 Ruddlell Road SE. Office hours: 8:00 - 4:30
 Lacey, WA 98503 Monday thru Friday
 (360) 357-8783

ACCOUNT INFORMATION
 ACCOUNT: XXXXX-XXX
 SERVICE ADDRESS: 1234 WATER WAY
 SERVICE PERIOD: 11/1/2019 To 11/30/2019
 BILLING DATE: 11/30/2019
 DUE DATE: 12/15/2019

METER READING INFORMATION

Serial No	Date	Previous Reading		Current Reading		Usage (CF)	Usage (GL)
		Reading	Date	Reading	Date		
XXXXX	10/1/2019	30014	11/4/2019	31259	1,245	9,313	

NOTE: 1 CUBIC FT (CF) = 7.48 GALLONS (GAL)

CURRENT CHARGES

RESIDENTIAL BASE 3/4*	27.71
RESIDENTIAL CONSUMPTION	39.22
CAPITAL SURCHARGE	6.70

NOTES FROM OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT
 Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners has recently adopted the 2020 Budget, Rates, Fees and Charges. For information please call PUD Customer Service (360) 357-8783 or visit www.thurstonpud.org

CUSTOMER
 1234 WATER WAY
 FICTIONVILLE, WA 98510

This is your meter information – this section includes your monthly usage in cubic feet (CF) and gallons (GL). Check out the note at the bottom of this section – this shows the conversion rate from cubic feet to gallons.

Tides of Change for the Water Industry (Continued from page 1)

With great change comes continual attention to the details of our work and the how, when and why we are conducting it. We want to make sure we are effectively and appropriately using rate and capital surcharge monies.

As you know we have a monthly capital surcharge that is set aside to use only on capital improvement projects. On page 2, you will see how in November and December of last year, we invested over \$44,000 in water systems.

There are many ways to view change. Our positive and welcoming perspective helps us continue to provide you with safe, clean, reliable drinking water.