

Commissioner Message

Adaptability and Teamwork Were Paramount in 2020

By: Russell E. Olsen, PUD Commissioner

2020 uniquely tested our ability to adapt and work together and taught us valuable lessons for 2021 and beyond. I am thankful for the District employees who worked hard to ensure that your water service was not impacted during these unprecedented times. They waded through and followed the ever-changing guidelines and protocols to maintain some sort of workplace normalcy.

Our work was met with many changes and uncertainty, but overall employees and customers alike, adapted to meet each challenge head on.

Although the pandemic slowed some projects for the District, our team was able to still launch new projects, continue gaining ground on some critical work, and chalk some projects up as complete.



Russell E. Olsen,
Commissioner - District 2

Customer Service

- We implemented a Remote Bank Deposit system that captures and processes check payments at the push of a button. This removes the manual entry process, improves accuracy, and saves our team dozens of hours a month.
- Last year, we introduced the Equal Payment Plan (EPP), a budget tool requested by our customer-based Utility Rate Advisory Committee. The EPP program gives enrolled customers a set monthly bill by averaging the year's prior consumption.
- Thurston PUD has always tried to work with customers who fall behind on their water bills. In 2020, we created the Customer Support Program in response to the pandemic. The program hosts a multitude of ways we try to work with customers to stay current on their bills.

Finance and Accounting

- Each year we are subjected to audits from the State Auditor's Office.

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Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman


District 2


Russell E. Olsen


District 3


Chris Stearns

Important Messages

 PUD offices will remain closed until further notice.

 Don't miss another water alert! Give us a call to update your contact information!

 Learn more about the extension of the Governor's eviction and disconnection moratorium on Page 3.

 Do you qualify for Project Help? Review Page 4 for more information on this important Customer Support Program.

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This year, we had another clean favorable audit with no findings. With social distancing restrictions, our team adjusted seamlessly to assist auditors remotely in their work.

- Our team introduced a new financial dashboard tool that allows our team to better track, manage and visualize the District's financial health. It also helps our team keep a closer eye through financial analytics in a unified forum.

Planning and Compliance

- For the first time, the PUD staff updated the District's Part A, Umbrella, Water System Plan, in-house. Typically, in the past, we have outsourced this work to professional engineers which has cost the PUD up to \$120,000. Because of our technically competent and experienced workforce, we were able to update the plan and save the District tens of thousands of dollars. Lastly, by completing the update ourselves, we were able to give the Department of Health (DOH) a true snapshot of the work we do, by the people who do it.
- We launched a major project that will consolidate four water systems in Thurston County. Using a grant from DOH, we plan to install a new larger reservoir, booster station and main line that will consolidate Deerfield Park 1, Deerfield Park 2, Hawley Hills and Marvin Gardens into one water system.



Field Operations

- Our field technicians have been intensely focused on repairing leaks throughout the year, especially during the warmer months when surfaced leaks are more easily detected. With a special focus on the Timberline Village water system, our experienced field team applied many methods of leak detection including working in zones and isolating suspicious areas using consumption data from our meter reading team. Efforts are paying off as we've been able to reduce the leak loss from 33 gallons per minute to 9 gallons per minute which saves millions of gallons per month.

In 2021, we have budgeted \$2.8 million in our capital budget to replace water system infrastructure, will continue to provide the best customer service we can, and will strive to provide clean, safe drinking water to you.

Office Closures & Notes from the Customer Service Team

Our office will be closed the following days:

- **Monday, January 18, 2021 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- **Monday, February 15, 2021 - Presidents' Day**

We encourage customers to keep their contact information with our office up-to-date. Contact us to update your phone number, mailing address, and email address so that we can reach you about emergencies, water system maintenance, and account updates.

If you have any questions or concerns about your water bill, water service, or account, please contact our Customer Service Team at (866) 357-8783 or PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org. We wish you a safe and happy 2021!

Past Due Bills & Customer Support

On December 23, 2020, Governor Inslee extended the eviction and disconnection moratorium through April 30, 2021.

What does this mean for PUD customers?

The PUD will not disconnect water services for accounts that are past due through April 2021. Past due fees have not been charged to accounts with past due balances, and these fees will not be charged to accounts through April 30, 2021.

I have a past due balance. What kind of customer support does the PUD provide?

The PUD has several options available to customers with past due balances including Deferred Payment Plan and Project Help programs. The Deferred Payment Plan allows customers to postpone full or partial payments until a later date. Customers can sign up for this plan by contacting our Customer Service Team.

For more information on Project Help, please review the article on Page 4. For more information on other customer support programs, visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/customer-support.htm.

How do I know if I qualify for customer support offered through the PUD?

Please call us at (866) 357-8783 or email us at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org to discuss.

Emergencies - Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

Historically, January and February bring difficult weather to the Pacific Northwest. In order to prepare for windstorms any other emergencies, a list of recommended items provided by Ready.gov is located below.

- Water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery



Ready.gov also suggests supplementing your disaster supply kit to include items based on your personal needs. Suggestions include: face masks and sanitizing/disinfecting products, prescription medications, non-prescription medications such as pain relievers and antacids, prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution, and pet food and extra water for your pet(s).

For additional information about disaster and emergency supplies, please visit www.ready.gov/kit. If you have any questions or concerns about your water service, please contact us at (866) 357-8783.

2019 Audit Report Results



Annually the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) conducts a Financial Statement audit for the PUD, and an Accountability audit is performed every other year. In December, the SAO completed their annual audit of the PUD's 2019 financial statements. ***The SAO did not report any significant deficiencies or material weakness in our financial reporting.***

We look forward to ensuring our financial statements are consistently presented fairly and accurately according to internal policies, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), as well as state and federal laws and regulations.

If you would like to review the complete Audit Report including Financial Statements and supplemental information, visit our website at www.ThurstonPUD.org.

Project Help - Customer Support Program

We are pleased to announce that through Project Help, a total of \$2,610 was distributed to 38 families in 2020! A special thanks to three PUD customers who made large donations this year. We hope to continue helping customers in need in 2021, so please don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions about the Project Help 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 \$ _____.

- 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: _____