

## Commissioner Message

### Preparing Your Home for Winter

By: Chris Stearns, PUD Commissioner

As the weather gets colder, the PUD has a checklist of things it does to prepare its water systems for winter. From ensuring our field technicians have warm clothes to equipping pumphouses with heaters, our team prepares for the freezing weather by checking off a list of annual items. We've learned that by preparing for winter and freezing weather, we save the District time and money later.

Preparedness works for us, so here's a list of things for you to consider for the winter.



Chris Stearns,  
Commissioner - District 3

- Make sure everyone in your home knows where the main water shut-off valve is located so they can turn off the water in an emergency. Consider marking the valve with an identification tag.
- Check for pipes that pass through unheated spaces or rooms, such as crawlspaces, basements, garages or uninsulated exterior walls. Protect exposed pipes by wrapping them with some sort of insulation.
- Make sure your water meter lid is closed tightly.
- Drain all outdoor garden hoses, roll them up, and store them inside.
- Winterize, turn off and drain your irrigation system.
- If you are going to be away for a few days or more, set your thermostat at least 55 degrees to prevent freezing.
- If the temperature consistently falls below freezing, keep kitchen or other sink cabinets open that are up against exterior walls to let warm air in your home reach the pipes.
- Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is typically lower than the cost of repairing a broken pipe.
- If your pipes do freeze, shut off the water immediately. Don't attempt to thaw a frozen pipe unless the water is off.

Lastly, our County-wide broadband survey ended on November 30 and our team is working with our partner, NoaNet, to compile and analyze the data. The other PUD Commissioners and I will review the information to determine how or if the PUD should move forward. We look forward to reviewing the data.

As a reminder, if you experience a water emergency, our team is on-call 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. Thank you for letting us serve you.

## 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.
- Check out all the important information in the "What's Happening at the PUD?" article on Page 2.
- The PUD has lifted its Pause on Late Fees and Disconnects - more on Page 3.
- Are you a customer with an outstanding balance on your account? Read more about Customer Assistance Programs on Page 4.

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

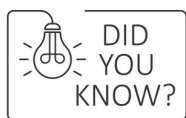
## What's Happening at the PUD?

### Public Meeting Notice: Tanglewilde-Thompson Place Water System Plan Update

The Part B Water System Plan (WSP) for the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system has undergone its regular review and update and has been submitted to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Drinking Water Division. We are hosting a public meeting where the public is welcome to attend and provide feedback on the WSP. The open public meeting will be held on Zoom video conferencing and members of the public are welcome to join this meeting from a personal computer, mobile device or by phone.

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, January 19, 2022
<b>Start Time</b>	6:00 p.m.
<b>Phone Number</b>	(253) 215-8782
<b>Webinar/Meeting ID</b>	878 6855 5305
<b>Zoom URL Address</b>	www.Zoom.us

A link to the draft WSP is listed on the front page of our website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). If you have comments and are not able to attend the meeting, please forward any written comments via email to [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org) or mail to Thurston PUD, 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.



Per WAC 246-290-100, a Group A water system must submit a Water System Plan if it meets certain conditions. Thurston PUD owns and operates 279 water systems, most of which are Group B water systems. However, the PUD maintains an “umbrella” Water System Plan - for more information, please visit the PUD’s website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org/projects.htm](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org/projects.htm).

### Employee Spotlight

We’d like to put the spotlight on the new employees here at the PUD! Over the last few months, the PUD has filled a couple of open positions: a Payroll Specialist and a Field Technician. Look below for more information on these important employees.

Aimee, the new Payroll Specialist, now leads the PUD’s Payroll Section. In addition to payroll processing, she is also learning important accounting tasks like revenue reporting and analysis amongst other vital procedures. Aimee looks forward to learning more about the PUD and its processes.

Tristan, our new Field Technician, has been busy learning the ins and outs of being a member of the Field Operations staff. He is working with other personnel to learn service routes, and he has had practice with reading meters which allows him to learn and experience water systems first-hand.

We are very lucky to have professionals like Aimee and Tristan choose to work at the PUD. If you’d like to join the PUD team, we are recruiting for a few open positions. Please review Page 3 for more information, and keep an eye out on future newsletters for more employee spotlights!

### Upcoming Office Closures

The PUD will be closed on the following days:

- Monday, January 17, 2022 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Monday, February 21, 2022 - Presidents’ Day



The PUD is closed for major holidays, but we are always committed to our customers. Staff is available 24/7 for water emergencies. **If you experience a water emergency, please call us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783 to connect with our answering service and on-call staff.**

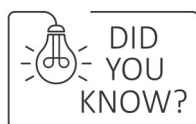
## We're Hiring—Apply Today to Join Our Team!

Are you hardworking and want a secure future with great benefits? We want to meet you! Thurston PUD is hiring for motivated, self-starting individuals to join our team for the positions of:



- Accounting Assistant: \$21.66 - \$27.69 hourly
- Customer Service Representative: \$21.66 - \$27.69 hourly
- Laborer: \$20.78 - \$26.54 hourly

These positions are permanent, full-time and offer a competitive benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, and enrollment in the State of Washington retirement system. We are currently accepting applications and will begin interviewing soon. Applications can be found on the PUD's website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). Completed applications should be sent to [HR@thurstonpud.org](mailto:HR@thurstonpud.org).



According to preliminary reports for November 2021 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the number of utility workers in the U.S. is estimated at approximately 536,000. The PUD employs around 30 people, but we are proud to serve our customers!

## Delinquent Accounts and the Past Dues Process

In September 2021, Governor Inslee's moratorium on utility shut-offs expired. Created in response to the pandemic, the moratorium prohibited utilities from shutting off services to their customers. In response to the September moratorium expiration, the PUD allowed customers until January 2022 to apply for assistance or make alternative arrangements for past due balances. ***On January 1, 2022, the PUD will restart the past dues process for accounts with delinquent balances.*** A projected timeline for the past dues process is listed below:

- **Monday, January 3, 2022:** Disconnection notices will be sent to customers with account balances outstanding for charges prior to the December billing.
- **Saturday, January 15, 2022:** Payment for the December billing is due. However, customers have until Thursday, January 20, 2022 to make a payment before a \$5.00 past due fee is assessed.
- **Friday, January 21, 2022:** Past due notices will be sent to customers with an outstanding account balance.
- **Monday, January 24, 2022:** Payment is due for outstanding account balances reflected on the disconnection notice mailed on January 3, 2022.
- **Tuesday, January 25, 2022:** Water service disconnections will take place beginning January 25, 2022.

Customer accounts that have an active payment plan will not be subject to past due fees and water service disconnection while their payment plan is being fulfilled. If you are interested in any Customer Assistance Programs that the PUD currently offers, please review Page 4 for more information on the Utility Relief Assistance Program (URAP) and Project Help.

Here are some reminders:

- Payments are due on the 15th of each month.
- Past due notices will be sent for outstanding balances around the 20th of each month.
- Delinquent accounts will be charged a past due fee of \$5.00.
- Disconnection notices will be sent around the 1st of each month for delinquent accounts.

**If you are a customer with an outstanding balance, please contact Customer Service as soon as possible to discuss options for your account.** Call us at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or email us at [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org).

## It's Not Too Late to Apply for Grant Funding!



The Utility Relief Assistance Program (URAP) was created in August using grant funds secured from the Department of Commerce to help customers effected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the grant requirements, funding goes directly to customer accounts, but customers must first apply using our simple application process. *To date, approximately \$98,360 in funding has been awarded to PUD customers through this program!*

All Thurston PUD customers with a past due balance are eligible for this program and funding covers unpaid balances from the March 2020 billing statement onward. **Because funding is limited and applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, we encourage any customer who thinks they may qualify for this program to apply at their earliest convenience.**

To apply, visit [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). If you have any questions about the URAP, please contact our Customer Service Team by phone at (360) 357-8783 or via email at [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org).

## Project Help - Customer Support Program

**We are pleased to announce that through Project Help, a total of \$1,650 was distributed to 33 families in 2021! A special thanks to the PUD customers who made donations to the Project Help program this year. We hope to continue helping customers in need in 2022, 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_