



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to our customers.

January 2023

Leadership Message

PUD Goals for 2023

By: Chris Stearns, PUD Commissioner and Board Chair

2022 was an eventful year for the PUD, and 2023 already promises its fair share of challenges for the Board of Commissioners and PUD staff. For 2023, I have the honor of serving as Chair of the Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners. I, along with my fellow PUD Commissioners, look forward to continuing to serve your communities by providing clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to you.

As part of the PUD’s work plan, I have listed below several goals and projects we plan to address this year.

- **Sustainability.** Due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events, businesses, individuals, and other organizations were hit with lasting supply chain issues, increased inflation, and staffing shortages. The PUD was certainly no stranger to these issues as well. We will continue to make progress in seeking more water connections in Thurston County to build our organization. We will focus on developing a good succession plan for staffing. We also plan to fill our vacant Field Operations staff positions. Sustainability is one of the Board’s strategic goals, and this year, we hope to discover even more ways to incorporate sustainable and efficient business practices and operational procedures to combat supply scarcity and rising costs.
- **Upcoming Capital Improvement (CI) Projects.** Each year, the Board adopts a Capital Budget to allocate monies for the replacement or improvement of infrastructure such as property, buildings, equipment, and other water system assets. Below you will find a short list of some projects that are planned to take place in 2023. If you would like to review the PUD’s Adopted 2023 Capital Budget, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/our-rates.htm.
 - ◆ Pattison (500) water system – This project includes installing a new well, booster pump stations, and a reservoir. A Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan and grant funding was obtained to complete this project.
 - ◆ Tanglewilde-Thompson Place (600) water system – This multi-phase project, one of the largest in PUD history, includes replacing several miles of mainline pipe. Completing the project report will get us shovel-ready for the 2023 loan cycle. *(Continued on Page 2)*



Commissioner Chris Stearns, District 3

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

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

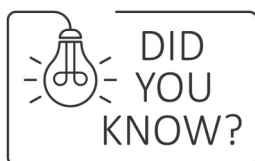
Leadership Message (*Continued from Page 1*)

- ◆ Hawley Hills (686) Consolidation Project – This consolidation project will result in more reliable water service for the residents of Hawley Hills, Deerfield Park 1 & 2 and the Marvin Gardens water systems.
- ◆ Meter replacements – Aging meters are replaced with new meters to ensure accuracy of customer billing and usage data for planning purposes.
- **Emergency Preparedness.** In 2022, PUD staff made significant progress in terms of emergency management and disaster preparedness for PUD facilities and water systems. For 2023, we hope to continue the progress made by improving operational procedures, acquiring supplies, confirming PUD infrastructure is fitted to meet standard requirements, and coordinating with community partners such as the Thurston County Emergency Management Department, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (including FEMA), and other organizations. Below are a few areas we plan to focus on:
 - ◆ In 2023, the PUD will begin deploying water trees to provide water from selected water system reservoirs. Water trees will let customers get water from a hydrant or valve if there is an emergency or disaster so customers can still have access to safe drinking water. We hope to work with customers on our water systems so their communities still have access to water from reservoirs in the event of a large earthquake or disaster.
 - ◆ The PUD was successful in securing a FEMA grant to pay for most of the costs of installation of a generator on the Meadows (690) water system, the District’s third largest water system, and for two (2) trailer-mounted generator systems.
 - ◆ The District hopes to participate in a Pilot Study using the “Shake Alert” system to upgrade the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system so that in the event of a large earthquake, the reservoir will not drain if there is a water main break. If it is successful at this water system, we will expand this protection to several other water systems.
- **Updated Asset Management Plan and Financial Model.** In order to account for increasing costs due to inflation and supply chain issues, PUD staff is in the process of updating the Asset Management Plan (AMP), a document that provides our best estimate on when to replace infrastructure and how much it will cost, and our Financial Model that ties it all together. The AMP is used to plan projects, for budgeting purposes, and in adopting the PUD’s Capital Budget each year. In addition, the revenue shortfall we experienced in 2022 due to decreased water consumption revealed the need to reform the PUD’s financial procedures. PUD staff will be updating the Financial Model to help forecast revenue shortfalls in the future.



Construction on the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place reservoir in 2012.

This list above only represents a portion of the PUD’s goals for 2023. If you have any questions about your specific water system, your account, or any other aspect of the PUD’s service, please contact our Customer Service Team by phone at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or send our team an email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and your families. Happy New Year!



The PUD owns and operates 279 water systems, serving more than 9,770 families, businesses, schools, and parks! Our staff strives to provide the best service to you and your community, and we welcome any feedback you may have regarding your water service. Please contact us at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

What's Happening at the PUD?

2021 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 2022, the SAO completed their annual audit of the PUD's 2021 financial statements. **The SAO did not report any significant deficiencies or material weakness in our financial reporting - a grade of "A" in the language of the auditing world.**



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 and click on "Audited 2021 Financial Statements," listed under *The Latest* on the right side of our main webpage.

First Look at the Adopted 2023 Budget

On November 22, 2022, the PUD Board of Commissioners adopted the 2023 Budget as well as the rates, fees, charges, and surcharges for 2023. In November, PUD staff presented several budget goals to the Board of Commissioners, and we wanted to share a few of these goals below.

- Meet the financial necessities to operate and maintain 279 water systems
- Fund water system replacement projects identified in the PUD's Asset Management Plan (AMP)
- Provide funding for facility and equipment replacements and/or upgrades
- Provide funding for system sustainability at water systems and facilities

If you would like to review the Adopted 2023 Budget, Adopted 2023 Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges, or take a look at the bill impact scenarios that estimates your bill amount based on several levels of consumption, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/our-rates.htm.

Office Closures

The PUD will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day (observed) - Monday, January 2, 2023
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Monday, January 16, 2023
- Presidents Day - Monday, February 20, 2023

If you experience a water service emergency, contact us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783. Calls received outside of normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) are routed to our answering service and on-call staff.

Employee Spotlight

This month's spotlight features Kirk Gietz, a Field Technician on our Field Operations Team. Prior to transferring to the PUD, Kirk spent 11 years working for a private water company and has experience with many different aspects in providing water service, including plumbing, repairing/replacing electrical components and well pumps, and reading water meters. Kirk enjoys travelling across the country, visiting America's National Parks with his wife and Zephyr, his dog.

Kirk's primarily responsible for taking water samples and testing water quality. His advice to customers? "If you have a small leak, this water usage can add up and cost you a lot of money on your water bill. Be sure to check your plumbing fixtures for leaks."



Kirk Gietz, Field Technician

Protect Yourself Against Scams

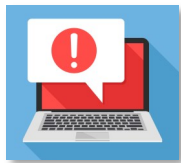
Utility scams are common, though maybe not as common as other types of scams like online shopping scams, banking or credit card scams, and debt collection scams. However, utility scams are still prevalent, and we want to provide you with information to help identify scams and suspicious activity. Please read more below.

How do utility scams work?

Scammers can contact you by phone or email, or they may even visit your home. Scammers usually threaten to disconnect your water service if you do not make immediate payment. Their intent is to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they are telling you.

How can I avoid utility scams?

If you are on the phone with someone claiming to be a Thurston PUD representative and you suspect a scam, please hang up and contact us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783.



Never wire money or pay with a prepaid or reloadable gift card or cryptocurrency to anyone who demands it. Thurston PUD only accepts cash, checks, money orders, and Visa or MasterCard payments. Our employees are prohibited from accepting physical payments from customers while out in the field and will always direct you to contact our Customer Service Team to make a payment.

How can I verify a PUD employee?

PUD employees working in the field drive vehicles with PUD logos on the sides and an identifying number on the back. Our employees may also be wearing clothing with PUD logos and can provide their employee identification upon request.

If you experience any suspicious activity, please call our office immediately to report. For more information on scams, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/scams.htm.

Be Ready for Emergencies! Start a Basic Disaster Supply Kit

Historically, January and February bring difficult weather to the Pacific Northwest. In order to prepare for windstorms or any natural disasters or emergencies, a list of recommended items provided by www.Ready.gov (an official website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) is shown below.

- Water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a several-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



We also suggest 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 pets.

For additional information about disaster/emergency supplies, please visit www.ready.gov/kit.