

Leadership Message

Customer Service Provides Tips and Reminders

By: Mariah Montague, Customer Service Supervisor

With it being a new year, it is the perfect time to provide our customers with a few important reminders from our Customer Service Team! From keeping your contact information up-to-date to reviewing our website, Customer Service offers the information below to help you with any questions you may have about the PUD or your utility account.



- ◆ **Keep your contact information updated with our office.** Do we have your email on file? Do you have a new cell phone number or recently got rid of an old landline? Please call our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783 or email us at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org to update your account. By bringing your account up-to-date, you are ensuring you will receive any water outage information or possible health emergency notifications we may send out.
- ◆ **We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to address water system issues and emergencies.** Reporting an issue after normal business hours or on a weekend? Phone calls are directed to a call center that will notify on-call staff.
- ◆ **Our website has a wealth of information!** Most of the forms you would need can be found on our website under Links & Forms. We also save all our Newsletters on our website dating back to 2012! Feel free to look back at previous Newsletters for specific articles or information. You can also read the agendas and minutes from previous Commission meetings to stay informed on what is happening at the PUD.
- ◆ **We offer a variety of ways to pay your bill, all without added fees.** You can pay online at our website at www.thurstonpud.org. You will be able to review and pay your bill by registering online. We also offer an automated payment option by phone available 24/7—please call us at (360) 357-8783 and select “Option 1” to use the automated system, you just need your account number! Payments can be mailed to Thurston PUD at 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503. Payments can also be made in our office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A drop box is located in the office parking lot for payment drop-off as well.

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

In This Issue

Upcoming Office Closure

Presidents Day

Monday, February 20, 2023

- ◆ **Check out Page 2 for a report of how we have assisted our customers in need.**
- ◆ **Budget, Rates, and Fees for 2023 — Reminder regarding your January bill on Page 3.**
- ◆ **Emergency Preparedness Kit Crossword 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

What's Happening at the PUD?

Financial Assistance Provided to Customers Due To COVID-19

The PUD was able to work with customers who were financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with help from the several grants and community agencies that provided funding for our customer's past due balances.

In total, we have received \$201,579 in financial assistance for our customers related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds came from the agencies or programs listed below:

- ◆ **Utility Relief Assistance Program:** This program was funded by a grant received from the Washington State Department of Commerce. This program was active from September 2021 – February 2022 when funds were exhausted. The grant of \$153,029 provided support to 269 customers in need of assistance.
- ◆ **Washington State Department of Commerce State Plan:** In 2022, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$100 million for public and private water, sewer, garbage, electric and natural gas utilities arrearages. The funding was used by utilities to reduce residential customer arrearages accrued between March 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021. Through this grant funding, 35 customers received assistance in November 2022 for a total of \$23,815.
- ◆ **Community Action Council:** Community agencies have provided \$24,489 for 61 customers from February 2022 to January 2023.
- ◆ **Lewis County:** Lewis County provided assistance in October 2020 for one PUD customer located in that county in the amount of \$246.

We also submitted reimbursement requests to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the equipment, materials, and supplies purchased in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The reimbursement requests total approximately \$20,000, however we do not currently have a timeline of when to expect these funds.

Employee Spotlight

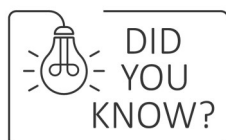
This month's spotlight features Aimee Morgan, the PUD's Payroll Specialist. Aimee attended school to study accounting and after graduating college, she was hired at the Department of Corrections as a Fiscal Analyst to process payroll. Since then, Aimee has worked at the Department of Social and Health Services in Children's Administration, processing accounts payable (AP). She was hired at the PUD in September 2021 and works on the Finance and Accounting Team with two other employees.



Aimee Morgan,
Payroll Specialist

On top of being a huge animal lover, Aimee also loves to sing. She enjoys karaoke and reading fantasy, horror, and romance genres. She also enjoys painting when she can find the time. Aimee's favorite part of working at the PUD is the camaraderie.

Aimee says, "It truly feels like a family working here. Everyone is amazing and really cares about the work. It is rare to find any place that has so many people that care about the work and does a good job." Thank you for your hard work, Aimee!



Thurston PUD employs 28 full-time employees. Our Field Operations Team employs the most staff members with 14 employees, half of our workforce! We all look forward to serving customers and providing clean, safe, and reliable water service to our communities!

What's Happening at the PUD? (Continued from Page 2)

Office Closure

The PUD will be closed on Monday, February 20, 2023 for Presidents Day.

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.



2023 Budget, Rates, and Fees

On November 22, 2022, the PUD Board of Commissioners adopted the 2023 Budget, and Rates, Fees, Charges and Surcharges. These rates went into effect on January 1, 2023.

Our staff reads your water meters monthly during the first three weeks of each month, which means that this month's bill will include usage from December 2022 and January 2023. Our system prorates your consumption totals so that a portion of the consumption amount is charged at last year's rates and a portion will be charged at 2023 rates. Due to the proration, you may see two consumption charges on your billing statement this month to reflect the two rates.

Why do we do this? One of the values we have here at the PUD is transparency. Your bill will provide transparency with the two separate consumption charges so you are aware your consumption was billed at two different rates. This also ensures that you are not overcharged for 2022 consumption at 2023 rates.

The Adopted 2023 Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges can be found online at www.thurstonpud.org under "Rates." If you have any questions about your billing statement, please contact our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

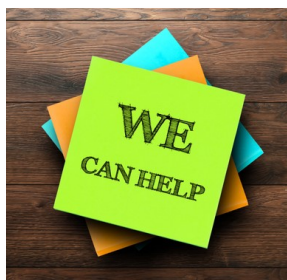
Project Help - Customer Support Program

Do you qualify as income-eligible and need assistance with paying your water bill?

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.

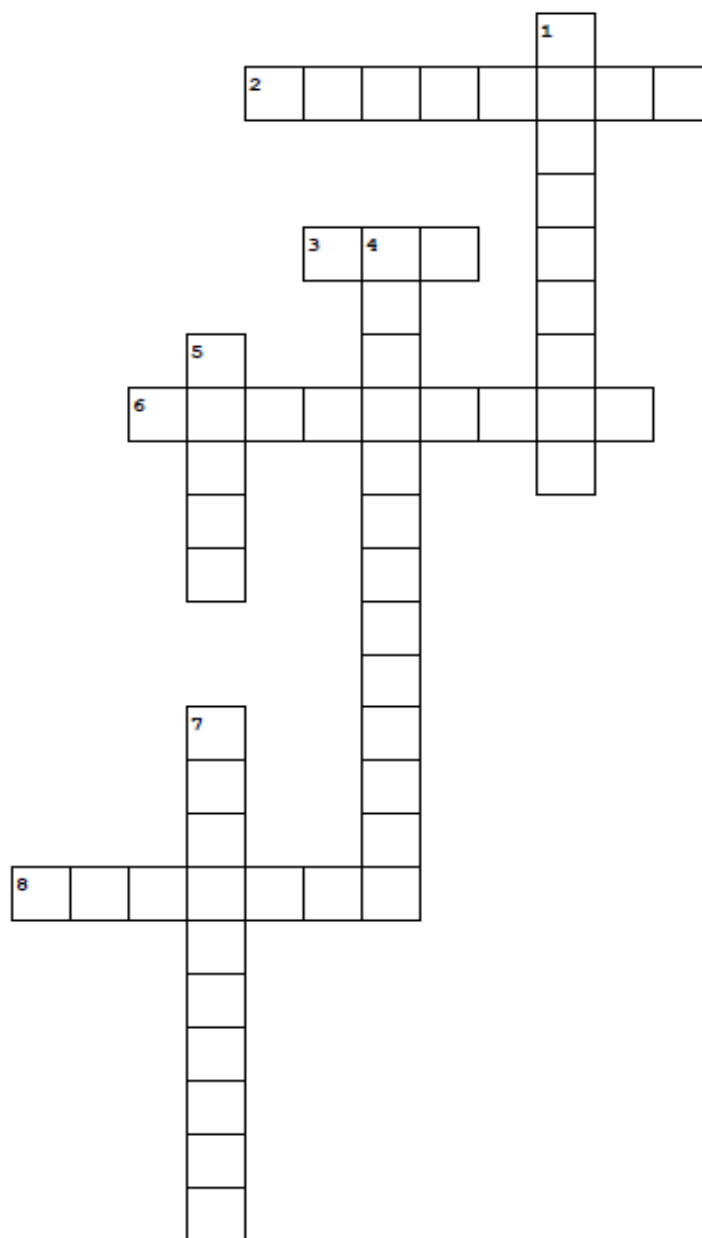


To apply, visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org to complete the Project Help application (available on our website under Links & Forms). If you'd like to request a paper copy of the application, please contact our Customer Service Team via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org or by calling (360) 357-8783 or toll-free (866) 357-8783.

If you're interested in making a one-time or monthly donation, please call us at (866) 357-8783, or email PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Crossword—Emergency Preparedness Kit

Hint! The January Newsletter had an article listing these recommended items for a basic disaster supply kit.



Across

2. A kit to assist with minor injuries.
3. Gallons of water you must have per person per day.
6. Tool to open canned goods.
8. A sound making device that can be used to signal for help.

Down

1. You must have extra of these in case your flashlight dies.
4. Type of food that doesn't go bad.
5. Communicate or send a message using this type of receiver.
7. When the lights go out you can use this to see.

Answers: 1. batteries, 2. firstaid, 3. one, 4. nonperishable, 5. radio, 6. canopener, 7. flashlight, 8. whistle