



Thurston PUD Newsletter

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

October 2020

Leadership Message

Help is Available if You Can't Pay Your Bill

By: TaSeana Tartt, Finance, Accounting & Customer Service Manager

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated millions of Americans who have lost their jobs or seen their paychecks reduced. The PUD was challenged to re-evaluate the way we do business including the way we help our customers. We've created new programs and expanded some so more customers can qualify. We're also fighting to get access to much needed federal CARES Act funding that will allow us to assist some customers with their bills. We want you to know that our Customer Service Team is here to help!



TaSeana Tartt, Finance, Accounting & Customer Service Manager

Governor Inslee issued Proclamation 20-23, requiring utilities to keep customers connected to essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. Utilities are prohibited from disconnecting services for non-payment, refusing to reconnect residential customers and charging late fees. However, the proclamation does not relieve customers of the obligation to pay for utility services. As a publicly-owned utility, we cannot forgive or write-off the unpaid balances, but we can create payment plans and develop resources that may be able provide assistance.

We created a Customer Support Program that includes a Deferment Payment Plan and a customer-driven program called Project Help. Our Deferred Payment allows us to "meet customers where they are" financially and build a repayment program that fits what they can reasonably afford. Extended payment plans are available.

Recently, we expanded our Project Help program to provide financial assistance to customers who have lost their jobs, had their hours cut back or other work-related impacts. The Project Help program is funded by customer donations and 100% of the proceeds go back to customers in need. For more information about our Customer Support Program, please visit our website www.ThurstonPUD.org and/or contact the Customer Service Team.

Lastly, I want you to know that the District is working diligently to try and secure with federal, state, and county CARES Act grant funding customer payment subsidies for PUD customers adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis. in need. In allocating funds, the State did not allocate funding to
(Continued on Page 4.)

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman





District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

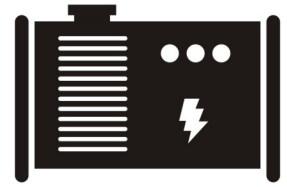
Important Messages

-  PUD offices will remain closed until further notice.
-  Don't miss another water alert! Give us a call to update your contact information!
-  Interested in a generator for your water system? Go to Page 2 for more information.
-  Do you qualify for Project Help? Review Page 4 for more information on this important Customer Support Program.

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

Keeping the Water Running When the Lights Go Out

We are committed to providing safe, clean, and reliable water service to your homes every day. However, power outages can occur and a major event such as a severe winter storm, earthquake or wildfire could disrupt utility services for an extended period. Although most PUD water systems are without backup generator power, we've taken steps to lessen the impacts of power outages by establishing and promoting PUD customers on priority lists for power restoration, joining local county emergency management organizations, entering into mutual aid agreements, and developing an automated system to call customers when a scheduled or PUD emergency water system outage occurs.



The Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners created a Generator Program that helps customers of a water system share the cost of the purchase, design and installation of a backup generator and transfer switch to safely power their water system during an outage.

How the Program Works

Customers can contact Administrative Services Manager Ruth Clemens to express their interest in the program. "If customers on a water system call me and say they are interested in getting a generator, I will send ballots to all the property owners on the water system," said Clemens. The ballot is for property owners to approve or disapprove a surcharge that would pay for the purchase, design and installation of a generator. The ballot requires 66 percent of property owners to vote in favor. "I make sure that everyone understands that approval to move forward requires 66 percent of property owners voting in favor, not 66 percent of the votes tallied. There's a major difference." Clemens added. It's important to note that the PUD Board of Commissioners must approve any and all charges imposed to customers on a water system.

Choosing the Right Generator

Because of the varying water demands throughout the day and the design needs and intricacies of a water system, the District must work with an engineer to design and install a generator. An engineer design ensures that the generator will produce clean and stable power without burning up circuits or our pumps.

Estimated Costs

We have worked with water system design engineers to come up with estimates of what a generator would cost to install. If approved by water system customers and PUD Commissioners, the PUD would pursue a low-interest loan that those water system customers would pay through an additional monthly surcharge on their bills for the life of the loan which typically is 20 years. The surcharge is dependent on how many people are on the water system. Engineering experts estimate, depending on the water system, the design and installation of a generator can cost between \$35,000 and \$50,000.

Below is a table that gives a range of a monthly surcharge based on the number of connections. *The table is for demonstration purposes only. Surcharge amounts are based on final costs.*

No. of Connections	Cost Range/Monthly Surcharge	
	\$35,000	\$50,000
10	\$26.83	\$38.32
60	\$4.47	\$6.39
200	\$1.34	\$1.92
1000	\$0.27	\$0.38

For more information about the Generator Program, contact Ruth Clemens at rclemens@thurstonpud.org or at (360) 357-8783 ext. 106.

Water System Plan and Water Use Efficiency Goal Update

Thurston PUD provides safe and reliable drinking water to approximately 8,000 customers throughout Thurston County and several surrounding counties.

To plan on a long-term basis and meet regulatory requirements, the PUD's Water System Plan (WSP) and Water Conservation Goal is updated every ten years. The PUD has updated the WSP to reflect how the PUD currently meets Washington State Department of Health Drinking Water (DOH) regulations, WAC 246-290.

The PUD's Water System Plan is a critical, robust document that describes in detail how the PUD does business to meet regulatory standards. It describes how we provide clean, safe, reliable water, plan for emergencies, manage our assets, and handle water availability--just to name a few things.

Part of that process is to update the Water Conservation Goal and hold a public meeting for comment on the updated plan and goal. You can find the updated WSP on the PUD's website at www.ThurstonPUD.org.

The public is welcome to provide feedback on these updates. Listed below is information on how to attend a Public Meeting held via Zoom on the updated WSP and Water Conservation Goal.

Date	Monday, October 19, 2020
Start Time	6:30 p.m.
Phone Number	(253) 215-8782
Webinar/Meeting ID	828 9808 7099

Members of the public are welcome to join this meeting from a personal computer or mobile device. If you wish to attend by telephone audio only, please use the information above to dial into each meeting. If you have comments and are not able to attend the meeting, please email us at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org or mail your comments to Thurston PUD, 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

Thurston PUD's Board of Commissioners will review and may approve the Water Conservation Goal at the October 27, 2020 Commission Meeting. Please review the questions below for additional information about the WSP and Water Conservation Goal updates.

What is the updated Water Conservation Goal?

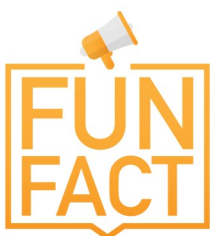
For 2021 through 2030, the proposed goal is: "Reduce and/or maintain the annual average demand per connection, for all Group A systems, to no more than 250 gallons per day."

Why is a Water Conservation Goal required?

Under WAC 246-290-830(4)(a), Thurston PUD is required to set a Water Conservation Goal for the Group A water systems owned by the PUD.

Why is a Water System Plan required?

Thurston PUD is required to update the Water System Plan and have Washington State Department of Health (DOH) approve the update, per WAC 246-290-100.



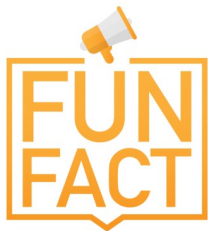
Water helps your body keep your normal temperature, lubricate and cushion your joints, protect your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues, and get rid of waste. Remember to keep hydrated!

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Help is Available if You Can't Pay Your Bill (Continued)

special purpose utility districts like Thurston PUD. We have been instructed to submit CARES Act grant funding requests to counties. We are speaking-up loudly to try and secure funding from counties and from the WA State Department of Commerce on your behalf. For example, Thurston County received \$21 million in CARES Act funding and we have requested \$242,000 from them to provide utility bill subsidies to Thurston PUD customers adversely financially affected by the Pandemic. We are also requesting \$78,000 in CARES Act grant funding from other counties. Over 2,000 customers have not paid the full amount of their utility bills since March and this is adversely affecting District revenues. We are working with customers and seeking financial assistance to support our customers. We will keep you posted.

Please call us if you need help. We will get through this together.



Aging infrastructure in the U.S. causes a water main break every two minutes. Thurston PUD uses the Asset Management Plan (AMP) to effectively forecast, replace and track water system infrastructure to avoid breaks and other emergencies.

Source: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2015

Project Help - Customer Support 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.

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** are economically affected 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: _____