



# Thurston PUD Newsletter

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

September 2021

## Thurston PUD Secures Grant for COVID-19 Affected Customers

***COVID relief grant money is available to customers who have been unable to pay their water bills. There is no repayment, but money is limited, so customers are encouraged fill out our hassle-free application today.***

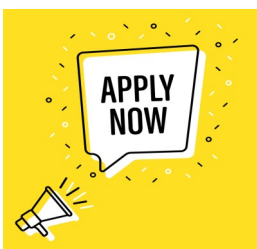
One of our most important goals in the past year was to help our most vulnerable households during these uncertain times. Some customers faced hard realities where dealing with their water bills was not typically at the forefront of their priorities. In response, we created, updated and expanded programs that helps assist people through their hardships.

We were able to secure a grant through the Department of Commerce that will go directly to the unpaid bills of PUD customers who were adversely impacted by COVID-related hardships. Whether you lost your job, had your hours cut back, experienced increased childcare expenses—no matter the reason, you may qualify to have your water bill paid through this grant.



Thurston PUD’s Utility Relief Assistance Program was recently created to support our customers financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. One hundred percent of these funds will be applied directly to unpaid balances on customer accounts resulting from COVID-19-related hardships.

All Thurston PUD customers are eligible for this program. Financial assistance is available for unpaid balances between March 2020 through the current date.



If you have been financially impacted by the pandemic and you have an outstanding past due balance on your account, this program is for you. Funding is limited, so apply soon! Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. Customers can submit an application online at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org), by email, or by mail. No additional documentation is required to apply.

For more information on the Utility Relief Assistance Program or if you’d like to apply, please visit our website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org).

The PUD also has other customer assistance programs available. If you have any questions or would like more information on other customer assistance programs, please contact our Customer Service Team via email at [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org), by phone at (360) 357-8783, or toll-free at (866) 357-8783.

## 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.
-  “What’s Happening at the PUD?”  
Page 2.
-  Public Hearings for the 2022 Budget and Rates in September  
Page 3.
-  Knock, knock! Who’s there? Your kids can enjoy some water related jokes  
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)

## Customer Service Reminders

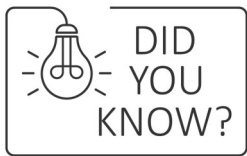
- If you have experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact our Customer Service Team to discuss options available to you. We can be reached by phone at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org). Normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Summer is winding down and cooler, more temperate days are ahead. Even though hot weather (and days of higher water usage) may be behind us, please keep an eye on your water bill. The billing statement you receive in September for August charges may reflect higher consumption for those last few days of extremely hot weather, irrigating gardens or lawns, or filling pools.
- Here's an important reminder: Thurston PUD does not charge surcharges or fees for customer payments. Third-party bill pay sites like Doxo typically require a fee to make a payment, and these vendors send a physical check to apply to your account. Thurston PUD never charges you a fee to pay your bill, and we offer a variety of options to pay. Please visit our website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org) for more information.



## What's Happening at the PUD?

### PUD Closed Monday, September 7, 2021 for Labor Day Holiday

Did you know that our Pacific Northwest neighbor, Oregon, was the first state to pass a law recognizing Labor Day as a holiday? According to the Department of Labor, New York was the first state to introduce a bill, but it was Oregon who passed it into law on February 21, 1887. In 1894, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday. The PUD will be closed for Labor Day, but we 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.**



### Talking Water Matters with Senator T'wina Nobles

Last month, led by Finance and Customer Service Manager TaSeana Tartt, PUD staff delivered a presentation to Senator T'wina Nobles from the 28<sup>th</sup> District. The PUD owns and operates two water systems in her District and we appreciated the opportunity to apprise the Senator of water issues that impact our customers in her District and throughout the PUD's service areas.

### Public Hearings – 2022 Budget

The annual Public Hearings are scheduled for September 14, 2021 and September 21, 2021. At these hearings, the PUD's staff will present the proposed budgets and the proposed rates, fees, charges and surcharges for 2022. PUD staff have been working very hard to find a balance between customer and operational needs. Please review Page 3 for more information on the Public Hearing process and how to participate.

### Employees Returning to the Office - Delayed

The PUD's Senior Leadership Team has been determining a strategy to return employees to the office. The original date of the returning to the office was September 7 after the Labor Day holiday, but with COVID-19 transmission numbers growing statewide, the District's leadership team has opted to delay the reopening date for employees. "Our organization is very small. We have less than 30 employees and each one is critical to keeping the water flowing to our customers. One outbreak amongst our employees could be catastrophic for the District and severely impact water service," said Administrative Services Manager Ruth Clemens who oversees the PUD's COVID-19 response.



## 2022 Budget & Rates

Due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, the Delta variant and our commitment to keeping customers and employees healthy, the Public Hearings for 2022 Budget and Rates will be held via the Zoom video conferencing application.

Date	Tuesday, September 14, 2021	Tuesday, September 21, 2021
Start Time	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
Meeting Type	Public Hearing	Public Hearing
Phone Number	(253) 215-8782	(253) 215-8782
Webinar ID	841 4741 6477	817 5832 8029

PUD staff will deliver a presentation on the 2022 Budget and proposed rates, fees, charges and surcharges during both Public Hearings. Members of the public will have the opportunity to testify on the 2022 Budget and proposed rates, fees, charges, and surcharges. If you cannot attend the Public Hearing, we encourage you to submit written testimony to our office. Please direct any written testimony as follows:

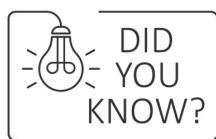
Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners  
1230 Ruddell Road SE  
Lacey, WA 98503  
Fax: (360) 357-1172

Email: [PUDCustomerService@ThurstonPUD.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@ThurstonPUD.org)

*Written testimony must be received no later than Friday, September 17, 2021 to become part of public record.*

Members of the public are welcome to join these meetings from a personal computer or a mobile device. If you wish to attend by telephone only, please use the information listed above to dial into each meeting.

Login information will be published on the PUD's website at [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Customer Service Team toll-free at (866) 357-8783 or via email at [PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org](mailto:PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org).



Thurston PUD usually holds Public Hearings on the annual budget in September of each year. In 2020, the annual Public Hearing was held in July via Zoom video conferencing. This was due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the annual Public Hearings will also be held on Zoom. However, we hope to be able to meet safely in-person with members of the public next year in 2022!

## A Reminder About Social Distancing - Help Us Help You

As your water service provider, the PUD works hard to ensure safe and reliable water services are provided at all times to our customers. Our Field Operations staff continues to maintain your water system and may be in your neighborhood while performing these essential tasks.

In light of the rise of COVID-19 cases throughout the South Puget Sound area, the safety of our community, customers and employees is our top priority, so we ask you to continue giving our staff the space they need to conduct their work. Following social distancing guidelines, we ask that you keep at least six feet of distance between yourself and PUD staff. Please continue to help out our staff by keeping meter boxes and easements clear with easy access. Thank you for your continued cooperation during this time.



## Just for Kids! Water Jokes That Are “Shore” to Make You Laugh!

When are your eyes not eyes?  
*When the cold winter wind makes them water.*

What do you call a wet bear?  
*A drizzly bear.*

Where can you weigh a pie?  
*Somewhere over the rainbow.*  
*(“Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high...”)*

What runs but never walks?  
*Water.*

Why should you be careful when it’s raining cats and dogs?  
*Because you might step on a poodle.*



## 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. 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.

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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: \_\_\_\_\_