



Thurston PUD Newsletter

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

March 2024

Leadership Message

Conservation is Year–Round!

As part of complying with Washington State Department of Health water use efficiency (WUE) standards, the PUD launches conservation goals each year for its water systems. Our WUE goal is that all customers on Group A systems (15 connections or more) will use less than 250 gallons per day.



We offer incentives to our customers to promote conservation and efficiency. In the past, we have offered free irrigation timers, free assessments for irrigation systems, and toilet rebates. We announce our yearly conservation programs near the beginning of summer.

The PUD not only assists customers with conservation; our staff focuses on conservation too. Each year our team compares the data on consumption for customers on each water system and the total amount of water registered at each water system well or pumphouse. The difference in the numbers act as clues to determine where the greatest loss is occurring. Our Field Technicians will then use leak detection equipment to try to locate and repair the leaks. **If you see a leak from the water mains, please let us know!**

Although these consumption audits and repairs can improve our overall water use efficiency, customers can help by reducing their water demands in ways that best suit their lifestyles. Every little bit helps! It's never too soon to begin the conversation on water conservation. Oftentimes, the idea of conservation can be misinterpreted and misrepresented. From the PUD's perspective, conservation is not the abstention of water use, but rather eliminating waste and increasing the efficiency of water use. Conservation not only protects and prolongs the availability of our most precious resource for future generations, but it also reduces the wear and tear on our infrastructure, which in turn can positively impact rates.

According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, a leaking toilet can waste up 250 gallons a day, which is equivalent to flushing your toilet 50 times in one day for no reason at all.

If you're new to the conservation conversation, then we encourage you to explore and test out one or two new ways to conserve water that suits your lifestyle and is within your comfort zone. Even the smallest effort counts! There are many resources that can help you implement water saving changes including the PUD's website - visit our webpage at www.thurstonpud.org/water-systems.htm. You can tackle those indoor projects like purchasing a new, more efficient dishwasher or replacing a leaky toilet.

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman




District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

Important Messages

-  Check out the "All About Our Finance Accounting Team" article on Page 2.
-  Enroll in Auto-Pay and Paperless billing to earn a \$5.00 credit. Page 3.
-  Project Update—Glen Alder and Country Club Estates water systems. Page 4.

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Finance and Accounting Section Spotlight

This month, let's shine the spotlight on the PUD's Finance and Accounting Section. This team plays a very important role as they help ensure the PUD runs smoothly, please continue reading to learn more about this section's role at the PUD.

Who are they?

Our Finance and Accounting Team ensures all PUD resources are used and accounted for appropriately. This includes processing payments to vendors timely and accurately, processing PUD payroll, managing our account balances, and complying with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) so PUD funds are managed responsibly, ethically, and as intended in the approved budget year.

What specific functions and recurring duties does the Finance and Accounting Team cover?

The Finance and Accounting Team cover many different aspects of work related to finance and accounting including day to day accounting tasks, monthly account reconciliations, the annual budget process, annual financial reporting, internal and external audits. Listed below are some examples of the work that the Finance and Accounting Team handles frequently.

- Pays monthly PUD bills such as energy, water system testing, internet, subscriptions, etc.
- Reviews customer consumption and accounts receivable
- Performs a variety of account reconciliations

How many people are employed within the Finance and Accounting Team?

The Finance and Accounting Section is comprised of four (4) employees. This team includes our Assistant General Manager, Julie Parker, Finance and Customer Service Manager, TaSeana Tartt, our Payroll Specialist, Aimee Morgan, and our Accounting Assistant, Ernestine Jim.

While small in size, this team completes large and important tasks everyday to keep the PUD operating. We are lucky to have such a great Finance and Accounting Team!



The Finance and Accounting Team
From left: Ernestine Jim, TaSeana Tartt,
Julie Parker, Aimee Morgan

Employee Spotlight—Ernestine Jim



Ernestine Jim,
Accounting Assistant

The PUD recently hired Ernestine Jim, the new Accounting Assistant. Ernestine grew up in the lower valley of Yakima. Prior to being hired by the PUD, Ernestine worked for the Yakama Nation in several positions over a span of more than 10 years. She is quite the outdoor enthusiast and enjoys taking hikes, going camping, and traveling throughout the Pacific Northwest.

At the PUD, Ernestine has been assigned several duties related to accounts payables, such as processing invoices, mailing payments to vendors used by the PUD, and a range of other accounting tasks.

Since being at the PUD, Ernestine has integrated into the team seamlessly. Ernestine states, "I truly feel honored to work with a great and caring team. The level of dedication, motivation and cooperation thus far have been amazing! Keep up the awesome work!"

Auto-Pay and Paperless Billing Can Earn You a \$5 Credit!

If you enroll in Auto Pay and paperless billing (e-statements) through the PUD's payment processing website, you will be eligible to receive a one-time account credit of \$5.00!

To get started, please review the process below and contact our office when completed. ***You must contact our Customer Service Team after completing enrollment so that our staff can apply the credit to your account.***



1. **Register your account online.** Visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org and click “Pay Bill Online” in the upper left corner. You will be redirected to our payment processing website where you can select “Sign Up” in the middle of the webpage. Enter your account registration information exactly as displayed on your monthly statement and select “Complete Registration”.
2. **Verify your email address.** After you register your online account, you will receive an email at the email address you used to register your online account. That email will have a link, you must click that link to verify your email address.
3. **Add a payment method (checking account, Visa, or MasterCard).** Once your email is verified, you can go to My Profile on your online account to add and save a payment method.
4. **Enroll in Auto Pay.** To enroll in auto pay, you will need to select “Edit” under Accounts and then Actions on the My Profile page of your online account. From there, you can toggle your preferred auto pay method.
5. **Stop paper billing and enroll in paperless billing.** On the same page you enrolled in Auto Pay, you can opt out of receiving paper bills and opt in to receiving e-statements at the top of the webpage.
6. **Contact our Customer Service Team so we can apply the credit to your account.** Email us at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org or call us at (360) 357-8783 to let us know you enrolled in autopay and paperless billing to receive the one-time \$5.00 credit.

What step you start at depends on your situation. Some customers have already registered for an online account and can skip Step 1. Others may not need to add a Payment Method and can skip step 3. Every customer's situation is unique. There are multiple ways to sign up for automatic payments within your account and there are guides available online that will show you the easiest ways to do it. Please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/credit.htm for more information.

If you have any issues with set-up or would simply prefer we set up your account for you, please contact our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

World Water Day—March 22nd



What is World Water Day? It is an annual United Nations observance day held on March 22nd that highlights the importance of fresh water and advocates for the sustainable management of fresh water resources. Every year, World Water Day raises awareness and inspires action to tackle the water and sanitization crisis around the world.

For more information, please visit www.unwater.org.

Project Update—Glen Alder and Country Club Estates Water Systems

Thurston PUD recently completed two large projects at two water systems the District acquired in 2021. The PUD was approached by the customers of both community water systems to join the PUD. The District secured two Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loans to complete necessary upgrades to these water systems with 50 percent loan forgiveness. Customers on these systems are paying for all of their system upgrades through a monthly DWSRF loan surcharge on their bill. Further details on the work completed is listed below:

Country Club Estates 521 water system – Construction completed on January 30, 2024

Work Completed:

- Replacement of approximately 3,250 linear feet of mainline including all components of the distributions system, like, but not limited to, isolation valves, air release valves, blow off valves, service line and meter setters
- Replacement of 43 three quarter inch ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") service meters with radio read meters

Glen Alder 522 water system – Construction completed on December 30, 2023

Work Completed:

- Replacement of approximately 4,200 linear feet of mainline including all components of the distributions system, like, but not limited to, isolation valves, air release valves, blow off valves, service line and meter setters
- Replacement of 15 three quarter inch ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") service meters with radio read meters
- Installed 5 pressure reducing valves where pressure is over 80 psi
- Replacement of and upgrades to the generator

Field Staff At Work—Pipe Freezing

Pipe freezing kits are a nifty tool for our field staff. These kits allow them to create an ice plug in a section of pipe, allowing them to make repairs or modifications without the need to shut off the water supply! Below are some photos of this tool being used in the field by David Gruver, Field Technician II.

