



**Public Utility District No. 1
of Thurston County**

**May 2013
Newsletter**



Commissioner's Corner

By Chris Stearns, Commissioner, District 3

2012 Annual Revenue Shortfall – A Frugal Year

In the early summer last year, we found that our budgeted revenues were lower than we projected as we monitored them. It was a cold summer and that means revenues are lower because people use less water; good for water conservation, but hard on cash flow. We carefully watched our revenues and cut back on spending to help keep costs low. One of our most important priorities is always to look for ways to cut spending and for smarter ways to do things and to find efficiencies. Some of the ways we saved money and became more efficient are:

- We purchase our vehicles from the approved State vendor.
- We switched to the State contract for fueling which saves 15 or so cents a gallon on gas and is actually more convenient with many fuel station locations in our service areas. This also provides better time management. Field staff doesn't have to wait in line for fuel.
- We use the State surplus auctions to sell vehicles which have provided better use of our employee's time and have resulted in the PUD receiving above fair market value for vehicles.
- We changed telephone long distance service to the State contract which has resulted in cheaper rates and no service charges.
- The PUD implemented a system to go through state contract for all vehicle maintenance (tires, parts, glass, towing, and service maintenance). The PUD has begun introducing hybrid vehicles into our fleet to reduce fuel expenses.
- Going completely automated with the payroll process; we became paperless.
- We conducted an analysis of health care costs, the employee share of health care costs and co-pays.

The management team has frequent conversations with staff to ensure we always strive to be a frugal and efficient business enterprise that does comparison shopping for the best bargains, minimizes waste, secures multiple bids on key items, and is as efficient and fiscally conservative as possible. We take the need to be cost sensitive, efficient and effective seriously and were able to live on a significantly lower revenue base than was budgeted. We have successfully secured low interest funding for key projects to make significant improvements on many of our aging water systems. We try to be good stewards of the resources we are entrusted to manage for your Public Utility District.

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ATTENTION – MAIL DELIVERY

There have been some issues with mail delivery. Customers have reported bills not arriving at their homes before the 10th of the month. We are working hard to get to the source of the problem.

Our billing statements are presorted and mailed first class on the last working day of the month. If you do not receive your water bill the first week of the month, please contact our office. A mail tracing function has been added to all of our mailings allowing us to trace your statement and track down where the delivery problem occurred.

Thank you for your assistance.

2013 Water Quality Reports

All Group A (water systems over 15 connections) Water Quality Reports (Consumer Confidence Reports) for 2012 will be available in July 2013 on our website. On your June bill, you'll find a direct URL address, that looks something like this <http://www.thurstonpud.org/docs/wuear/210-Aust12.pdf>, and that will lead you right to the report. You'll have two other methods of receiving the report:

1. On our website at www.thurstonpud.org under the Water Systems, click on "Consumer Confidence Reports", and 2. Call the office and request a hard copy be mailed to you. The Water Quality Reports will be on the web site all year and are only replaced with the next year's reports when they are completed.

Outdoor Conservation Tips

- * Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.
- * Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and drive-ways.
- * Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.
- * Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.
- * We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes and hoses for leaks.

Call Em' All

We have recently started using a call service to make the majority of our customer service phone calls. We are able to send a prerecorded message out to those customers for whom we have a valid phone number listed on their account. We are using this service for calls such as outages, updates and disconnect reminder calls. Please make sure we have a valid daytime contact number on your account so we can contact you if necessary.



Employee Spotlight:



**Brad
Chatwood**

Brad started with Thurston PUD as a Field Technician I in July of 2012. He comes to us from the City of Yelm Public Works Department. Before Yelm, he was employed by the City of Lacey, giving him over 10 years of experience in the public works field.

He was born and raised in Thurston County and graduated from Yelm High School in 1996. In his off-time, he enjoys camping, fishing, golfing, and spending time with his family and friends. He and his fiancé own a home in Rainier and plan to get married next August. He is also a big Seahawks fan. Go Hawks!

We're on the Web

www.thurstonpud.org