



Public Utility District No. 1  
of Thurston County

January 2016  
NEWSLETTER



## Commissioner's Corner

By Russell E. Olsen, District 2

### **Thurston PUD Explores Telecommunications and Broadband Service Line of Business**

During 2014 and 2015, the PUD has been exploring a new line of business in telecommunications and broadband service. Public utility districts are authorized to provide wholesale broadband and telecommunications services. We submitted two requests to the Washington State Department of Commerce to try and get funding to conduct a feasibility study in Thurston County but did not receive funding.

The PUD's Board of Commissioners decided to hire Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet), a broadband and telecommunications organization formed by public utility districts, to help us evaluate opportunities in this field. **No monies from water operations or the water utility were used to fund these projects.** The PUD's Board authorized me to work with the elected officials from the cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater to evaluate the costs and opportunities for broadband and telecommunications. The cities picked five projects and NoaNet worked with the PUD and the cities to evaluate the services needed, the costs and the potential revenue sources from these five projects. These projects scoped out what would be needed to provide specialized services for projects the cities were interested in evaluating. The projects included an analysis of broadband capability in the City of Tumwater's Brewery District and access to high speed broadband telecommunications at the Mottman Industrial area. The City of Lacey's project was an analysis of the Hawks Prairie area for optimal telecommunications and broadband capability in this large area. The City of Olympia selected two projects, a review of broadband capability in the Madison Neighborhood and high speed broadband and telecommunications in the downtown area from Percival Landing to the Heritage Fountain area.

While none of these projects are moving forward at this time, the projects are engineered and ready to develop should funding sources become available. If the projects move forward, the PUD could enter a new line of business service to support the citizens of Thurston County. The report is on the front page of our web site if you are interested in seeing it: <http://www.thurstonpud.org/docs/Final-NoaNet-Report.pdf>. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at [rolsen@thurstonpud.org](mailto:rolsen@thurstonpud.org).

921 Lakeridge Way SW, Suite 301, Olympia, Washington 98502-6081  
Toll Free (866) 357-8783 • Fax (360) 357-1172 • [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org)

# 2015 List of Accomplishments

## I. New Systems and Water Conservation Rebates

1. **Acquisition of New Water Systems.** In 2015, the PUD acquired one new water system totaling 52 active connections: the Skookumchuck Maintenance water system. In 2016, permanent chlorination will be installed and the customers will be metered. The PUD was able to obtain a \$30,000 grant from the State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water for a feasibility study and a low interest Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan for \$196,294, with 50% loan forgiveness. Adding more systems helps spread the fixed costs of the PUD over more connections providing a better economy of scale, and helps keep costs lower for all of our customers.
2. **Water Conservation:** 16 each \$50 Toilet Rebates were provided to customers in 2015.

## II. Projects/Extraordinary Maintenance

1. **Sanitary Survey:** A sanitary survey of the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system was completed.
  2. **Consolidation of the Lew's 81<sup>st</sup>, Woods and Jenni Water Systems:** This project was completed in January 2016. It included a new reservoir and booster pump station, plus the mainline to connect the three systems.
  3. **Consolidation of the Sword and Platt Water Systems:** This project will merge two small water systems into a larger water system and will provide better and more reliable water service for the customers. Construction preparation for the project began in 2015. An update is on our web site, listed under the Projects section.
  4. **Webster Hill:** This water system, with 18 connections joined the PUD in 2014. The PUD was able to obtain \$200,000 in grant funding to install permanent chlorination and replace the water mains. The project was completed in 2015.
  5. **Well Pump Replacements:** Well pumps were replaced at the Hawk Acres, Pleasant Valley, Valley Meadows, Garden Acres, Aust, and Tilley Road water systems.
  6. **Installation of Variable Speed Drives on Well Pumps:** Hawk Acres and Pleasant Valley.
  7. **Treatment Upgrades and Treatment Maintenance:** Tracy #1 & Enslow #2 water system treatment was replaced and treatment maintenance to improve system operations was completed at the Brockway #1, Eastridge #2 and Nisqually Highlands water systems.
  8. **Electrical System Work:** Crowder, Nisqually Vista, Nisqually Highlands and Prairie Villa.
  9. **Chlorine Pump Replacement:** Smith Prairie.
  10. **Pressure Tanks Replaced:** LCUC 7, Crowder and Loma Vista.
  11. **Pumphouse Repairs:** New metal roofs were installed on the 77<sup>th</sup>, 336<sup>th</sup> 1 & 2, 366<sup>th</sup>, and Fuller water systems. The Christenson Muck #1 and Ivan pumphouses were wrapped with metal to extend the life of pumphouses. The Tracy #1, #2 and #3 water system pumphouses were painted.
  13. **Well Cleaning:** The Granite 1 & 2, Trinity Muck 1, and Roy water system wells were cleaned.
  14. **Leak and Service Line Repair:** Leaks and service lines were repaired at the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place, Webster Hill, Elk Heights, Valley Meadows, and Crescent Park water systems.
  15. **Emergencies:** Declarations of emergency repairs, which waive competitive bidding requirements, were made at the Evergreen Vista water system; the well pumps were replaced and the electrical system was upgraded. At the Hawk Acres water system, a power surge fried the new variable frequency device and the generator.
- Miscellaneous Maintenance:** Brush was removed at the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place Reservoir site. A failed check valve in the Travis Jack reservoir was replaced. The fire hydrant hit by a car at the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place water system was replaced.

# NOTES FROM OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

## Payments

We can accept the following forms of payment: cash (in office), checks or money orders (in office, online, and over the phone), and Visa or MasterCard payments. Please feel free to make a payment online at [www.thurstonpud.org](http://www.thurstonpud.org) by clicking the 'Pay Bill Online' link at the top of the webpage. You may also call our office during normal business hours, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, to make a payment as well. The PUD doesn't charge any additional fees or charges for payments made online, over the phone, or in office.



If you can't visit the office during normal business hours, a secured drop box is located in our office parking lot (for checks or money orders only).

## Online Accounts

***If you have an online account, please ensure that your e-mail address has been verified.*** If your e-mail hasn't been verified, click on the 'My Profile' tab once you've logged into the website. There will be a section under the 'My Profile' tab that looks like the image directly below. Click on the link and the system will send an e-mail to verify your e-mail address.

### Verify E-Mail Address

Your e-mail is not verified. You will not be able to select e-billing for accounts, or set up recurring payments. [Click Here](#) if you would like to verify your e-mail address.

Whether you're verifying your e-mail address, changing your password, or receiving e-statements for monthly charges, any e-mails you receive will be coming from our payment portal website, specifically [noreply@merchanttransact.com](mailto:noreply@merchanttransact.com).

*Please be sure to add this e-mail address to your e-mail 'safe sender list' to ensure accurate delivery.*

## Contact Information

The PUD sometimes uses automated messages to inform customers of emergencies or outages in their area. We also provide courtesy calls to those customers listed for disconnection due to nonpayment. Automated messages can be forwarded to a maximum of two phone numbers for one customer account. Please call or e-mail our office to update the contact information on your account. The PUD isn't liable for any damages sustained if the customer didn't receive emergency/outage notification due to invalid contact information.



Please also be sure to provide an e-mail to our office. The payment portal system and our customer account system (where we store your telephone numbers, mailing address, usage information, etc.) are two separate systems – our customer account system doesn't automatically update with the information you provide to the payment portal system.

If you have any questions, please call our office at (866) 357-8783. Thank you!



## Cold Weather Tips



### Inside plumbing

- **Insulate pipes in unheated areas** such as the crawl space, attic, garage or basement. Use insulating tape or molded pipe sleeve and wrap it over the entire length of exposed pipe. Cover all valves, pipe-fittings, etc. with insulating tape or fiberglass. (Check your hardware store for supplies).
- **Shut-off and drain your water system** if you are leaving home for several days. (Turn-off the water heater before draining the system). Leaving your furnace on a low setting while you're gone helps, but may not prevent freezing. Turn-off the main shut-off valve, then go through the house and turn on all faucets, sinks, tubs, showers, etc., and flush the toilets. Go back to the valve and remove the plug so that it can drain completely. Follow-up by re-tightening the valve and turning-off the open faucets.
- **Open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms.** Water lines supplying the kitchen or bathrooms are frequently located in outside walls. Any air leaks in siding or insulation can cause these pipes to freeze. Leaving the cupboard doors open when the temperature is below freezing allows pipes behind the cupboards to get more heat.
- **Let the water run if the temperature dips below freezing.** (A stream slightly smaller than a pencil width should be sufficient). Faucets farthest from the street should be the ones left running. Using cold water will save on your gas or electric bill.

### Outside plumbing

- **Caulk around pipes where they enter the house.** Close all foundation vents. (Open foundation vents are probably the greatest cause of frozen or split water lines). Cut wood or styrofoam blocks to fit vent openings, then slide them into the vents. (Styrofoam is available at hardware stores or from insulation suppliers.) Open the vents again in the spring to prevent dry rot.
- **Protect outside pipes and faucets.** In some homes, the outside faucet has a separate shut-off in the basement. If you have a separate valve for outside faucets, shut it off. Then go outside and turn on all the faucets to drain water in the lines. Leave the outside faucets on while you go back and check your outside shut-off valve for a small brass plug or cap on the valve. Turn this plug far enough that water drains from the valve. Then, tighten the plug back and turn-off all the outside faucets.
- **Wrap outside faucets or hose bibs.** Do this if you don't have a separate valve to turn-off outside faucets. (Remember to disconnect garden hoses). Use newspaper or rags covered with plastic, fiberglass or molded foam insulating covers to wrap the faucet. (Molded foam insulating covers are available at plumbing and hardware stores).
- **Drain in-ground sprinkler systems.** Check manufacturer's instructions for the best way to do this.



### **Employee Spotlight: Colby Dixon**

Colby Dixon joined Thurston PUD in April 2015 as the Accountant. She previously worked for a general contractor in their accounting department. Colby is glad to be back in Washington after a brief stint in Georgia with her husband who is currently on active duty in the US Army. In her free time, she enjoys reading, cooking, working out, and spending time with her family and friends.

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