



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to the customers we serve.

June 2018

Commissioner's Corner

Planning for the Future, Committed to Customer Service

By Linda Oosterman, District 1



I have served as a PUD Commissioner for the past five and half years. I am proud of the PUD and its ability to serve its customers. The number of water systems and employees has more than doubled resulting in more customer service, and the development of the capacity to support our own infrastructure needs. These water system mergers have moved the PUD to adopt more standardized operations and streamlined business practices. During my time as a PUD Commissioner, I've been able to steer my focus towards improved customer service, implementing an equitable and sustainable budget, and plan for our future infrastructural needs through the development of an integrated comprehensive financial plan and an asset

management plan. The asset management plan will ensure we have the available monies at the right time to replace the infrastructure in your water system when it needs to be replaced.

It is very important to me that all customers are heard and that responses to their concerns are handled in a swift, competent manner. Since we are a public-owned utility, it's important to me to consider our customer's understanding of rates, fees and charges. So, it's a balancing process to approve a budget that is concerned with costs, while remaining cognizant that our water systems are operational and well-maintained. We will be addressing the quality of water in systems that have iron, manganese and odor issues. A comprehensive flushing system has been implemented.

The job of an elected PUD Commissioner is not just to set rates; we've also been doing a lot of work to adjust to tremendous changes. The PUD Commissioners are encouraging customers to apply to serve on the Utility Rates Advisory Committee (URAC) to advise the PUD Commissioners on rates, fees and charges. We had only six customers apply and have nine positions on the URAC; I encourage you to apply to serve.

We have developed a Strategic Plan that is customer-centric and aims to explore our customers' needs and the changes they've recently experienced. We developed a well-informed asset management plan that plots out infrastructural needs 20 years ahead, and helps us responsibly budget. We are also establishing foundational structures around governance and business processes.

Because clean drinking water is critical, infrastructure remains at the forefront of my priorities. I have dedicated my entire life to serving others, and my time here at the PUD has given me another avenue to continue my life's work.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you and your communities.

About Commissioner Linda Oosterman

Linda Oosterman has served as PUD Commissioner since 2012. She received her undergraduate degree in Organization Management and earned her Master's in Systems Theory and Family Therapy from the University of Wisconsin. She holds an Elected Official Certification in Water Utility Management. She has served as a manager of the county-wide Crisis Response Programs in eastern and western Washington. She was also the Director and an instructor of the Human Services Program at Grays Harbor College. As PUD Commissioner, Linda focuses on Emergency Management Planning, Prevention and Intervention. She enjoys traveling and supports science and engineering that advances water conservation, drinking water management, and sustainable practices.

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Water Meters Help Limit Water Use

The Washington State Water Use Efficiency Rule requires Thurston PUD to install service meters on residential connections. If you are a flat-rate customer, Thurston PUD will install a water meter on your service line and you will be converted to a metered rate. Having a meter on your water connection can have several positive outcomes:

- **Lower Water Use.** Metered customers tend to be more aware of how much water they are using because they pay for the water they use. Meters allow customers to manage their household use.
- **Save Money.** Some customers use less water than the cost of flat rates. Other customers have second homes that they use a few times year and would be happy to only pay for the amount of water they use, rather than a flat rate.
- **More Efficient Water System Management.** Meters help us have a good understanding of the water system needs. By knowing how much customers are using and during what time of year, we know how to invest in and serve the water system—especially during dry seasons and emergencies.
- **Leak Detection.** Using a meter is one of the easiest ways customers can detect a leak.



In the coming months, we plan to meter all the unmetered water connections and move flat rate customers to tiered rates based on water usage. We plan to send letters and give notice before our crew installs meters.

If you have any questions please call us (360) 357-8783 or email us PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org

Ask a PUD Employee

Life can be confusing, your water service doesn't have to be.

Why Does my Skin Feel 'Slick' After I Wash?

This month's questions will be answered by Derek Genre, a Field Technician and Thurston PUD's Water Treatment Specialist.

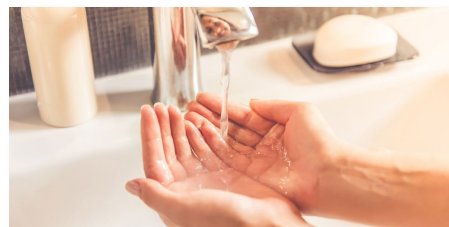
If your skin feels silky or "slick" after washing or showering, there are two possible reasons:

- The water you're using is soft.
- The pH of the water is high.

For the water systems that we operate and maintain, soft water is the most common reason people call us about their skin feeling "slick" after washing. Soft water has had calcium, iron, manganese and magnesium removed. Usually water is softened to reduce minerals, a process called ionic exchange. Hard water can give the appearance of a "squeaky" clean feel, but in actuality, what you're feeling is mineral residue. With soft water, after you wash your hands, the slick feeling is your own body oil.

One of the most environmentally-friendly things you can do in your home is to soften the water. It takes less soap to wash your clothes—typically about half the amount. Your appliances will last longer because there are no minerals left in the water that can reduce the efficiency of your water heater, dishwasher, and washing machine. With the minerals gone, your clothes will be cleaner, softer, brighter, and whiter.

However, all water softeners are not created equal, so be cautious of claims of salt-free water softening. Typically, those add chemicals to your water to give the illusion of soft water. Those softeners can contain chemicals like polyphosphate which coats and suspends minerals. Minerals are not actually removed, but are unable to stick to clothes, appliances and other household fixtures.



Join the Utility Rates Advisory Committee

We are still looking for members of the Utility Rates Advisory Committee (URAC). The committee will consist of up to nine members who are PUD customers. The URAC will learn about the PUD and how rates, fees, and charges are set, and will advise the PUD Commissioners on rates, fees, and charges.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the URAC, download and fill out an application from www.ThurstonPUD.org. Call us if you would like us to mail you an application. You can email completed applications to relemens@thurstonpud.org or mail them to:

Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road
Lacey, WA 98503



If you have any question, please call Senior Communications Specialist Ruth Clemens at (360) 357-8783.

Managing Your Online Account is Easy

Visit the Thurston PUD website, www.ThurstonPUD.org, and click **Pay Bill Online** to make a payment on your water service bill.

You'll **never pay a service fee** when you make your payment at www.ThurstonPUD.org. Below are some other tips to help you save money and time.



You can access and pay your PUD bill online at **www.ThurstonPUD.org**. Call a Customer Service Representative at 360-357-8783 to set up an account for you.



Get a \$5.00 one-time credit when you enroll in Auto-Debit and paperless billing. After you've enrolled, give our customer service representatives a call.



We accept Visa, MasterCard and Electronic Check.



Securely view and manage your online account 24/7 from anywhere.



Check your monthly water usage to see just how much water is getting used in your household.




Need help? Call us at (866) 357-8783 or email us at PUDCustomerService@thurstonPUD.org

Water Conservation Tips for Kids

Water conservation isn't just for adults. Even kids can help conserve water and take part in lowering your water bill! Here are some practical tips that are easy as **A-B-C**.

 <p>Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save up to 4 gallons a minute. That's about 200 gallons a week for a family of four.</p>	<p>Be a leak detective! Check all hoses, connectors and faucets for leaks. See a leak you can't fix? Tell an adult.</p> 	<p>When it's your turn to load the dishwasher, only run it when it's full. You can help save up to 1,000 gallons a month.</p> 
<p>If you accidentally drop ice cubes, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.</p> 	 <p>When playing in the pool, keep the water in the pool by not splashing too much...but a little splashing is ok.</p>	<p>Your turn to clean the patio, sidewalk, driveway or deck? Use a broom instead of a hose.</p> 
<p>Wash your family pet in an area of your lawn that needs water.</p> 	 <p>Whether you're at home or if you're staying in a hotel on vacation with the family, reuse your towels.</p>	<p>Did you know a full bathtub can use up to 70 gallons of water? Take a quick shower instead.</p> 

 **Adults: Don't let your summer bill surprise you. Understand your water rates. Thurston PUD charges tiered water rates which means as your usage increases, the cost increases. Let water conservation be a family effort!**

Employee Spotlight: Sandy Furth, Customer Service Representative

Sandy took a leap of faith by switching career paths when she joined the PUD in October 2018. As a Customer Service Representative, Sandy is responsible for providing assistance with customer accounts and answering questions customers may have regarding water service.

A former Preschool Director and Teacher, Sandy misses working with children, but the career switch to the water industry has given her new ways to help others. Undoubtedly, her time working with small children has helped Sandy bring a positive spirit and creativity to our developing Customer Service Team. She helps develop new ways to help our growing customer base. "I enjoy working with my amazing PUD team and helping customers," she said.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, working outside in her garden, and spending time with her family and friends.

