



Thurston PUD Newsletter

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

January 2019

Commissioner's Corner

The New Year Brings New Advisory Committee

By Commissioner Russell E. Olsen, District 2



A new year can spark changes like the pursuit of new goals, a re-envisioning of the future, the examination and realignment of a mission, or redefining success. As the new President of the Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners, I want to start off the new year by demonstrating the Commission's commitment to PUD customers.

In November 2018, we met with the Utility Rate Advisory Committee (URAC) candidates and were very pleased with the diverse pool of individuals who expressed interest. The first official meeting is scheduled for January. The URAC members come from throughout PUD-owned water systems

including Tanglewilde-Thompson Place, Deerfield Park, Countrywood and Deschutes Village--to name a few.

The URAC is comprised of PUD customer volunteers who will learn about PUD operations and its rate-making process. They will use the information they receive to act as advisors to the Commissioners on rates, fees and charges.

Once a month, URAC members will attend learning sessions that are designed to give each of them comprehensive knowledge of what goes into funding and operating a water utility. Some of the learning sessions will include understanding the PUD's Strategic Plan and performance measures, rate making authority, water system overviews, and tours of some of our water systems. We will also invite a rate analyst to deliver a session that will give them considerations as they move forward with their recommendations.

As Commissioner, I am excited for the opportunity to educate and empower customers and include them in the ratemaking process. We welcome transparency in our work and look forward to building strong, long-lasting relationships with this new committee. As President of the Board of PUD Commissioners, I look forward to furthering the mission of the PUD and ensuring customers still receive safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water service.

About Commissioner Russell E. Olsen

Russell "Russ" E. Olsen is the Director of the Washington State Pollution Liability Insurance Agency. His past 13 years of public service have been focused on balancing the needs of economic development while protecting valuable natural resources. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Martin's University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Seattle University. A proud Thurston County local, Russ was raised in the Thompson Place neighborhood in Lacey, where he attended Olympic View Elementary. He is also a graduate of North Thurston High School. He is married to his wife, Rebecca, and they have a son.

Russ has extensive knowledge and experience in strategic planning, policy and budget development, implementation and assessment.

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman






District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

In this Issue

-  First Look at the 2019 Budget
Page 2
-  Ask a PUD Employee: What is Flushing?
Page 2
-  The Value of Water: Investing in Pipes and People
Page 3
-  PUD Employee Spotlight: Meet Dan Lovell
Page 4
-  Learn How You Can Help Other PUD Customers
Page 4

Winter storms are here! Remember to update your contact information by calling us today!

Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road SE
Lacey, Washington 98503
(360) 357-8783
Toll Free (866) 357-8783
Fax (360) 357-1172
www.ThurstonPUD.org

First Look at the 2019 Thurston PUD Budget

In October 2018, the PUD Commissioners passed the 2019 Budget that results in no scheduled increase to the Capital Surcharge and upholds the PUD's commitment to infrastructure investment. The PUD set a goal of transitioning all of its customers to uniform rates that is consistent with District's spending plan and supports the strategic priorities of the Commission which include:

- Provide sustained, efficient utility services to our customers
- Prioritize capital needs
- Emergency Management Response
- Leak loss reduction
- Investment in employees and assets

The 2019 budget includes important expenditures that include replacing two vehicles, rebuilding several pump houses and large projects like system-wide isolation valve maintenance and the consolidation of the Platt and Sward water systems. We will continue upgrading treatment systems and replacing critical equipment, as well as a focus on electrical control upgrades.

To view the entire 2019 Operating and Capital Budget visit www.ThurstonPUD.org.

Ask a PUD Employee: What is Flushing and Why is it Done?

This month's question is answered by Field Technician Anthony Dahmen. Anthony has worked for the PUD for over 2 years and is part of our Field Operations Team which regularly flushes water lines.

Flushing a water line is the act of periodically sending a surge of water through a pipe which scours the pipe to remove minerals and other naturally-occurring deposits. It is one of the many preventative maintenance activities the PUD uses that can improve water quality. This process removes sediment from the water mainlines which can be especially helpful for water systems that pull water from aquifers with minerals like iron and manganese which can build up in pipes over time. Flushing frequency varies from system to system, and mostly depends on the composition of the earth minerals found in that area. All water is different.

After a water outage, we routinely flush the mainlines to "refresh" the water and remove any air, sediment, or minerals that may have accumulated since the last time the system was flushed. After service is restored, water will still need to be flushed from the pipes that run from the mainline to the home. Customers may experience higher than normal amount of sediment or air in their water. Water may even be discolored. If this occurs, we advise that customers flush by running water from an outdoor faucet/hose bib. For indoor flushing, we recommend using a bathtub faucet to flush as sediment can get trapped and clog sink faucet screens. You can call the office to receive a flushing credit.

Helpful tip: If you go out of town and there is no water use at your home for a week or more, when you return, it's a good idea to run your faucets for a minute or more before using water. You can use the water you ran on the plants around your home.

Winter Storm Emergency Checklist

Be prepared to take of yourself and those around you for **at least three days**. Build a portable emergency kit that you can take with you in case you need to evacuate. **Winter storms are here! Remember to update your contact information by calling us today!**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water—one gallon, per person, per day | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-perishable food | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone with car and portable chargers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermal emergency blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contact card | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antiseptic towelettes, garbage bags (personal sanitation) | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance cards/policy numbers/contact info |

The Value of Water Series: Investing in Pipes and People

The drinking water utility industry has one of the most diverse workforces that requires the expertise of employees from different backgrounds including engineering, construction, finance, customer service, and policy development. Each *Value of Water* article has focused on aging water infrastructure, but it's important to note that more than 30 percent of the nation's water workers are eligible to retire in the next five to 10 years, a phenomenon called the "Silver Tsunami." It's probably fair to say that most industries will feel the pressure of recruiting, training and retaining the next generation of employees to fill critical roles.

There are Water Utility degree programs offered at a small number of colleges and universities, but they are rare. Many water utilities depend on preparing their teams with hands-on approaches like on-the-job training. "Our field technicians are not standing and taking notes--they actually have a shovel in hand," said Thurston PUD Director of Field Operations Jim Campbell. "Our team is committed to mentorship."



"Our team is committed to mentorship," said Director of Field Operations Jim Campbell.

Without question, field technicians are the PUD's most visible employees. Their jobs involve more than repairing or replacing broken pipes. They build and maintain pumphouses, a job that can include laying concrete foundations, replacing roofs, repairing and installing electrical panels, and building completely new structures. They also repair and replace water treatment systems, conduct important water testing, and maintain continuous understanding of technological advancements in the industry. All the while, the most seasoned employees are mentoring and training their less experienced colleagues. All Thurston PUD field technicians, regardless of how many years of experience they possess, are required to keep current on credentials that range from water distribution management and cross connection control certifications to commercial driver's licenses. Renewing and maintaining our employees' credentials are an important part the PUD's commitment to keeping water safely and reliably running to your home.

When Thurston PUD expanded in 2017 from the acquisition of a private water company, we were able to hire its employees. The PUD gained an experienced staff that were not only well-versed in the water systems, but also understood the importance of keeping the water flowing. "This job is 24-hours a day," said Campbell. "Rain or shine, we work in all types of weather. There are no days off for our guys."

Campbell goes on to explain the unique nature of the Thurston PUD water systems. "Geographically, our systems span over six counties and are in some of the most remote areas which can pose some obstacles." Having an experienced, knowledgeable workforce is key to efficient, effective work. "When there's a water outage, we might have to drive an hour or longer to respond and we *have* to respond," Campbell explains. "With those lengthy distances, we need have the right people on the job who understand the problem, and are equipped with the right tools to deal with it."

Investing in infrastructure is critical, and as of late, has received some of the funding and attention it deserves. An equally important investment is the workforce that supports the infrastructure. Thurston PUD leadership understands the importance of hiring, training and retaining a qualified, experienced workforce. Preparing and developing our young water utility leaders of tomorrow help our upcoming retirees move into the next phase of their lives with an easy mind--after all, they are water customers too.

“Project Help” Fund Keeps the Water on For Struggling Families

Historically, colder months mean lower water bills for PUD customers, but other bills like power bills go up as families try to keep their homes warm. Financial hardships do not discriminate according to seasons. For years, Thurston PUD has offered an assistance fund that helps low-income families keep the water running in their homes. The “Project Help” program allows Thurston PUD customers to contribute by making donations through their PUD bill. Your help is appreciated and all proceeds go to a family that is experiencing financial hardship. You can make a one-time donation or monthly donations.

Simply fill out the authorization form below and mail it back with your bill. If you have questions, please call us at 360-357-8783.

I authorize Thurston PUD to bill my account \$ _____

One-time to be donated to the Project Help Fund

Each month

This authorization shall remain in effect until PUD receives written notification from me to terminate this agreement. I understand that if my account becomes past due, this authorization becomes invalid.

Name _____

Service Address _____

Customer Account Number _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Employee Spotlight: Dan Lovell, Field Technician II

Dan Lovell is one of the most versatile workers the PUD has on its team. He holds licenses in Water Distribution Management, Cross Connection Control, Water Treatment Plant Operation as well as holding trade specific licenses as an electrician and plumber. He’s been in the water industry for 15 years and has 35 years in the commercial, residential and land development sector. “I took the opportunity to work in the water industry because I wanted to focus on an industry that has such a large positive impact on the population,” he said.

Dan has successfully led major projects for the PUD including inspections for the Safe Walk to School project at Tanglewilde-Thompson Place, and the water main and fire hydrant improvement project for the new Washington Tractor building also located in Tanglewilde-Thompson Place. Dan has been an invaluable resource for our large projects, but his first and foremost priority is supporting his team. “The PUD has assembled a great staff of wide-ranging talent that I enjoy working with,” he said. “Enjoying the people I work with and the work I do is what has kept me in this industry.”



Dan Lovell

Field Technician II

Dan’s positive attitude and outlook help keep him young and pursuing fun out of life. Dan and his wife enjoy traveling and spending time with their family, especially recently since they welcomed their first grandchild. At work or at home, Dan puts every effort into all that he does and the quality of his work shows it.