



# Thurston PUD Newsletter

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

August 2019

## Leadership Message

### Water Flows Where Knowledge Grows

By Jim Campbell Director of Field Operations



When Thurston PUD expanded in October 2017, it not only ended up expanding by 140 water systems—it doubled its workforce with highly competent field staff professionals that have saved the District tens of thousands of dollars in potentially contracted labor. Keeping them trained and educated is imperative to keeping the water flowing.

With over 16 years of working with my team, I watched them mature and adapt to major and minor changes within water work. Like most industries, the water utility industry is evolving rapidly. We are now responsible for 275 water

systems, and that’s why I believe my team should continually keep informed on the latest training opportunities, industry standards, regulatory reforms, and technological advancements.

In 2018, field technicians have collectively logged over 100 hours of necessary Department of Health and Department of Labor and Industries training. All field technicians hold Water Distribution Manager I certifications or higher. Almost all public drinking water systems are required to have a certified waterworks operator and they must meet state requirements and pass a rigorous exam. Other certified titles that we have on our team are:

**Cross Connection Control Specialist (CCCS):** This specialist inspects backflow preventer installations and can investigate and respond to backflow incidents. A CCCS is key in helping reduce the likelihood of preventable contamination through the cross-connection control program.

**Certified Combination Plumber/Electrician:** This person troubleshoots, repairs and maintains well pumps and booster pumps. During an outage, having this certified position allows us to assess and resolve issues in a more timely manner.

The District sent two field technicians to a 2-day leak detection technology training course that moves the District closer to its goal of minimizing leak loss. In July, six field technicians attended fall protection and rescue training which is critical education to keep them safe as they climb reservoirs that stand over 80 feet high.

As Director of Field Operations, there is a balance to ensuring that I get my team the training they need to remain a safe, highly-skilled and competent workforce, while making certain that their time and your rate paying dollars are spent wisely, effectively and efficiently.

In closing, I’m very appreciative of the hard work my team puts in each day, around the clock. It’s an honor for them to know that they work for you and your families to keep the taps flowing. I can’t stress enough that the majority of our water issues are only resolved when customers communicate that they are having an issue. So, my final dose of appreciation goes to you, the customer. Thanks for your support as we continue to serve you.

### Thurston PUD Commissioners

#### District 1

Linda Oosterman


#### District 2


Russell E. Olsen


#### District 3


Chris Stearns

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# The Value of Water: Understanding the Need in the West



## WHAT WE CAN SAVE

6 trillion gallons of water, wastewater and stormwater is lost each year in the U.S. to faulty, aging, or leaky pipes.

## VALUE OF WATER




- 60% of Americans are in favor of paying more to invest in water infrastructure.
- 23 to 1 = return for U.S. public health from early clean water investments.

## THE COST OF CLEAN

Water is free, keeping it clean, safe, & flowing is not. We must invest in our systems.

- \$4.8 trillion to maintain water & wastewater systems
- \$5.98 trillion to maintain stormwater systems

## PROVIDING WATER ISN'T FREE



People who live in Western states pay an average of **\$5.11 per 1000 gallons** of drinking water, and **\$5.25 per 1000 gallons** of wastewater they use. In some cases, the true value of water can be as high as **\$30 per 1000 gallons!**\*\*

Courtesy of American Water Works Association

## Annual Water System Reports Available Now

If you live on a Group A water system, your Consumer Confidence and Water Use Efficiency Reports are now ready for viewing on the District's website [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org). Department of Health regulations require the District to report these annual reports and provide them to customers. Group A water systems are systems that serve 15 or more connections.

**Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR)** are also known as annual drinking water quality reports. They provide information like the source of your water, the level of contaminants found in the water, the type of disinfection you receive (if any), and the type of testing the District conducted.

The **Water Use Efficiency Report (WUE)** helps us ensure that we have safe and reliable drinking water to meet current and future needs. We do this by setting conservation goals every six years and meeting those goals. The WUE report helps us track important information like unaccounted for water loss. The information we receive from these reports helps inform us about our conservation projects and their effectiveness.

To view the reports, visit [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org) and click on the **Water Systems** link at the top of the page, then click **Annual Water System Reports**.



## Meet the PUD: Rich Holmes, Meter Reader II / Field Technician I



Rich Holmes

Meter Reader II / Field Technician I

Rich Holmes started his career in water utility working in water construction preparing plumbing for new reservoirs, excavating and installing new main lines and services. Today, he is the District's lead Meter Reader who oversees and is responsible for reading 250-400 meters a day. "I'm also the go-to for things involving technology," he said. He acts as an advisor on the use of new field technology like pressure logging equipment, and acoustic leak detection devices and software. "I have a strong technology background so the most important things to me are advancing the technology the PUD uses to make us more efficient and accurate," said Rich. "I like seeing new technologies that come out in regards to water treatment, metering, and water testing."

Rich believes getting accurate reads for your bill is the most critical part of his job, so he asks that you keep your meter box accessible by clearing away any dirt, ground covering or debris. He also asks you to keep vegetation trimmed back.

When he's not working, Rich enjoys riding motorcycle with his wife and listening to his son play music. He also enjoys bowling, golfing, and being outdoors. "I enjoy all that the great Pacific Northwest has to offer us."

If you see Rich Holmes reading meter, feel free to say hello.

## Ask a PUD Employee

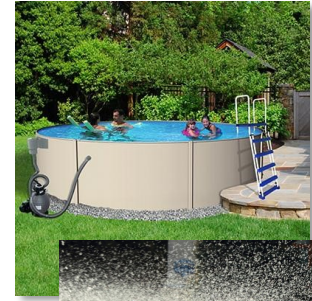
### *Why is my bill so high?*

Sometimes people call us when their water usage goes up significantly and they're at a loss to explain why. Our billing experts can look up your consumption history and talk with you about why your household might be using more water. They can also send you useful information.

Most fluctuations in usage are the result of three factors:

1. **Weather changes:** Weather changes are easy to anticipate. When it's cold and dark in the winter, people aren't watering their lawns as much. And when it's hot and dry in summer, they use more water to water their lawns, and fill their pools.
2. **Lifestyle changes:** Changes in lifestyle are more subtle. A new baby, for example, means more laundry. House guests and holiday celebrations require more cooking, dishes and showers. Purchases of new appliances or home additions— dishwashers, washers, pools, hot tubs, to name a few – add to the load.
3. **Plumbing problems:** Leaking toilets, broken water pipes, and plumbing problems, for example, can increase your water bill in a hurry. It's best not to put off household repairs.

Call our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783 if you have anymore questions.



## Test Your Water Knowledge

1. Water is the only substance found on earth naturally in three forms. True or False Name the three forms
2. At what temperature does water freeze? \_\_\_degrees Fahrenheit, \_\_\_degrees Celsius
3. At what temperature does water vaporize? \_\_\_degrees Fahrenheit, \_\_\_degrees Celsius
4. How long can a person live without food? without water? \_\_\_A day \_\_\_a week \_\_\_a month \_\_\_a year
5. What percentage of the human body is water?
6. What percentage of the Earth's surface is water?

**Answers:** 1. True: solid, liquid and gas 2. 32 degrees Fahrenheit, 0 degrees Celsius 3. 212 degree Fahrenheit, 100 degrees Celsius 4. Food-one month; water-one week 5. 66% 6. 80%

## Keep an Eye On Your Bill

Don't let your summer bill surprise you! During the warmer months, water use increases. Your bill reflects the cost for the water used, which means, the more water you use, the higher the rate. Please visit [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org) and click on **Rates** to better understand what our rate tiers look like and how they affect your increased water usage.