



Public Utility District No. 1
of Thurston County

May 2017
NEWSLETTER

Commissioner's Corner

By Russell E. Olsen, District 2

Growth Helps Keep Rates Down



As a Commissioner, one of my goals is to provide the best possible service for the lowest possible price. The PUD Commissioners have a goal to keep rates below 4% annually. Since 2005, the PUD has grown by over 900 connections, a growth rate of over 28%. Where it makes sense, and where water systems are in good condition, we will allow water systems to join the PUD. We have a policy that work

that needs to be performed on water systems to bring them up to PUD standards will not be subsidized by the PUD's current rate payers. If a system is not in good shape, and we want to allow the customers to join the PUD, we require the owners of the water system to pay a special capital surcharge to make any necessary upgrades or improvements to their water system in order to join the PUD. Once the costs of the improvements have been made, the special surcharge stops. New customers also pay the capital surcharge all customers pay; currently that surcharge is \$4.80 a month. The more customers that help pay the fixed costs for District operations such as rent, vehicle costs and labor costs the better economy of scale we have. This allows the fixed costs to be spread across more water system connections keeping costs and rates lower for every customer.

Another way we try to keep costs down is by contracting to provide water operations and management services (satellite management agency services (SMA)) to other water systems. Currently, we operate and manage 15 water systems with almost 1,200 customers for other entities. We have a clause in our contract with the systems we manage to for the right of first refusal should they sell their water system. The 2017 budget revenue estimate for SMA services is over \$108,000. These revenues help keep rates down.



Employee Spotlight :

Justin Kadoun

“ My name is Justin Kadoun. I am the current meter reader at Thurston PUD and I have been a team member of Thurston PUD since October of 2016. Some of the things I like about my job is that I get to work outside, I learn something new every day, I am challenged on a daily basis and I get to work with the best staff. I love spending time with my two children and also love to hunt, fish and play the guitar.”



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Decorative Landscaping in Utility Easements and Right of Way Areas

PUD No. 1 of Thurston County may need to perform routine and non-routine maintenance in a utility easement or a right of way area. Decorative landscaping is permitted in the easement areas, with the understanding that any material placed within the boundaries of the easements is subject to damage and replacement of the landscaping is not the responsibility of the District. However, within reason, if Thurston PUD does damage landscaping in the utility easement or right of way area, we will do our best to repair the landscaping to its previous condition. This may not be possible in some cases. Thurston PUD has at least a 3 foot right of way or easement around all water system components, including but not limited to meters, meter boxes, main line valves, and hydrants. Plants or shrubs should be maintained to allow access to all components. If you do not maintain them, the PUD may prune a 3 foot path to allow access. Please do not plant shrubs or trees with deep growing roots in the utility easement or in a right of way area. Over time, these types of plants can damage your service line and the District's water lines and water mains.

We Need Your Help

Quality or Service Issues – Let us know!

Please contact us as soon as possible if you see changes to your normal water service. If you don't tell us, we may not know. If you have a water or a power outage, let us know. Other examples of issues we need to know about are low pressure, high pressure, air in the lines, a change of color in the water or issues related to the smell of the water. These issues can mean that something has changed within your water system, like a leak or failure of a component. The sooner we know about any problems, the sooner we can get them fixed. We can't address your water issues unless we know about them. Contact Customer Service or after hours or on holidays or weekends call the Call Center at (866) 357-8783 or (360) 357-8783. Your call will generate a service order. You can follow-up with Customer Service if your issue does not get resolved in a reasonable time and they can provide you a status. If you need additional help, contact the Operations Administrative Assistant, Carrie Bowen, cbowen@thurstonpud.org, or the Superintendent, Scott Dixon at sdixon@thurstonpud.org. If your problems still do not get resolved in a reasonable amount of time, contact the General Manager, John Weidenfeller at jweidenfeller@thurstonpud.org or at (360) 357-8783, toll free (866) 357-8783.



Hazard Mitigation Initiatives

At the April 25th PUD Commission meeting, four (4) Hazard Mitigation Initiatives (HM) were presented to the Board of Commissioners. Adoption of these measures may allow us to get funding to help resolve water system issues.

HM 1 Hazard Preparedness - Outfit pump houses with generators and the install power transfer switches to maintain service to customers during power outages.

HM 2 Hazard Damage Reduction - Replace the asbestos cement water mains in the Tanglewilde-Thompson Place and Pederson Place water systems to prevent water loss during an earthquake.

HM 3 Hazard Damage Reduction - Create a public education service to offer tips and information to customers for hazard-proofing their homes and for emergency preparedness information.

HM 4 Hazard Damage Reduction - Work with the Elk Heights Homeowner's Association to stabilize the embankment along the road to help prevent landslides that would block access to the water system.

Water Conservation Customer Tool – Garden Hose Timer

- ◆ This year, the PUD is providing our customers garden hose timers. These will help our customers who use garden hoses for watering their lawns and gardens optimize water use.
- ◆ The timers are easy to use and don't take batteries. You attach the timer between the hose bib and the hose, turn the water on and set the timer. At the end of the set time, a valve will close and the water will turn off. These are great for lawn and garden watering.
- ◆ Most water is used during the summer months for outdoor use. If you set a timer, you don't over-water the lawn or garden and can work on other tasks while you are watering your yard. This could help save water and help lower your water bill.
- ◆ The PUD has more information on indoor and outdoor conservation measures and links on our website at www.thurstonpud.org.



Request your timer today at (360) 357-8783 or toll free at (866) 357-8783. We will provide **one timer per customer account**, while supplies last.

New PUD Office – Moving in September 2017

The District has been renting office space since the District became active in 2005. Our annual rent is \$4,200 a month to rent approximately 3,000 square feet of space. In 2009, we saved \$40,000 for a future office and another \$30,000 in 2016. Since 2010, we looked at multiple buildings and we finally found facilities to buy, that we can afford, and that will meet our needs now and in the foreseeable future. No increases in rates were required for us to acquire the new PUD Office facilities.

This year, we found an owner that had two buildings; one is 6,000 square feet and the other is almost 3,000 square feet. Our cost to buy these nice buildings was less than \$100 a square foot. We will move into the 6,000 square foot building and have some room to grow. The public meeting space, the Commissioner Chambers, will be much larger than our current Chamber. We estimate that we can rent the 3,000 square foot building for over \$50,000 a year. The expected payment for our new building, once we rent the space, will be less than we are currently paying for rent.

The new office will be at 1230 Ruddell Road SE in Lacey. We plan to move into the new PUD office in September and will keep you posted on our progress. We were very lucky to find a building in great shape that we got at a bargain price. Once we are moved in, we will invite all of our customers to an Open House.



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