



CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 10, No. 8

Automated Metering Installation is Underway

In April we wrote in this newsletter that Cowlitz PUD's Advanced Metering Infrastructure project (AMI) was on the horizon. We are glad to announce today that AMI installation has begun.

When the AMI installation project is completed in four years, every PUD customer will have a new electric meter that communicates on a real-time basis with computers in the PUD office via a signal over existing power lines. Advanced metering will allow us to read your meter automatically from the PUD office. In the future the system will also provide you the option to monitor your electric usage online and a flexible monthly billing date – set by you.

Advanced metering will help the PUD to manage electric loads and will better pinpoint who is out of power during a power outage. Someday we expect to offer time-of-day rates and voluntary load management options.

Installation plan

The first 100 test meters were installed during June and July and the next stage is to conduct a complete functional AMI test by installing meters at 2,500 homes and businesses in Longview, in August-November.

A letter was sent to the PUD customers who will be the first to receive the new meters. This includes homes and businesses connected to our Columbia Way substation – the Longview industrial area, residential neighborhoods from 16th to 26th (between Industrial Way and Nichols Blvd.), parts of the Broadway addition and Downtown Longview.

Inside This Issue:

- Power Pole Annual Treatment
- What's Happening
- A Message from the General Manager

Once we install and test this first group of meters, we will install another 11,000 meters per year beginning in spring 2008. The new advanced system should be completed and functional in 2011.

All PUD customers will be notified by mail prior to installation of their new meter. It is important to note that:

- Installers will drive clearly marked PUD vehicles and carry photo ID.
- Normal installation hours will be weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Installers will come to the door to inform residents that they are changing the meter. If no one is home, they will complete the work and leave a door hanger. Power will be out briefly while we are changing the meter.
- Commercial customers will be notified in advance to schedule a time to install a new meter.
- For several months we will continue to send a meter reader. Once the system is running smoothly, we will only "spot check" each meter every year or two.

Watch this newsletter and our website for regular updates on this innovative and exciting project.

Longview Go Fourth Parade—2007



Cowlitz PUD employees and family members enjoyed the Longview Go Fourth Parade with thousands of others on Independence Day. Journeyman Lineman Dylan Shulda and his daughter Sofie had a bird's eye view from the PUD electrical safety trailer as it traveled in the parade down Washington Way. The PUD's entry was awarded first place in the parade's Commercial/Motorized division.

Annual treatment plan extends life of PUD power poles

Cowlitz PUD's electric system includes over 20,000 power poles across the county. Each has a normal life span of 40 years, but with proper care and treatment that life can be extended to 60 to 70 years.

The key is a consistent pole testing and treatment program. For over 30 years Cowlitz PUD has designated about 2,000 poles each summer for testing for decay and insect infestation. That means each pole in our system is carefully inspected on a 10-year cycle.

Through this September, Innerpole Investigations will test about 2,200 PUD poles in Kalama, S. Kelso and rural areas south of Castle Rock. If you see Innerpole employees drilling holes in PUD poles, it's okay. That is how they test them. The contractor is looking for decay in the poles and if they find it, they will apply a treatment which can extend the life of the power pole by 20 to 25 years. Their work also helps the PUD identify any poles that need replacement.

While conducting the pole tests, contractors also look for rotted cross arms, rusted guy wires, cracked insulators and any other damage. Any concerns are reported to the PUD so we can perform the necessary maintenance.

Innerpole's work will wrap up late this summer. If you see them at work and have any questions, feel free to call the PUD's Engineering Department.

What's Happening

Need Help Finding Help?

Dial 2-1-1



211 is the easy-to-remember telephone number that connects people in-need to community resources – including food resources, health care, public agencies, legal services, employment resources, counseling, housing, emergency shelter and more.

Dial 2-1-1 (or from a cell phone call 1-877-501-0252). You'll reach a trained information & referral specialist to help meet your needs.

Lower Columbia Woodcarver's Show 2007

September 29-30

Cowlitz Regional Conference Center, Longview

Make your plans now to attend the 23rd annual LC Woodcarver's Show, featuring vendors and over 50 tables of wood carvings by clubs and individuals. Free admission, free parking – Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 10-4. For more information contact Angie Buck at (360) 295-3661 or Kris Hansen at (360) 274-3175 or visit their website at www.angelfire.com/wa3/lcwoodcarvers.

As space is available each month in Connected, Cowlitz PUD may offer a brief listing promoting activities (on a first-come, first-served basis) for public, non-profit groups or events with wide interest in Cowlitz County. Send your request to: whatshappening@cowlitzpud.org.

Did you know?

By running a shorter cycle in your dishwasher you will save seven gallons of water per load. Combine this with the practice of washing only full loads of dishes and a family can save upwards of 2,000 gallons of water a year.

EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Commission Activities



In July the Cowlitz PUD Board of Commissioners:

- **Approved a staff recommendation to award the bid for installation of underground distribution facilities** to the lowest responsive bidder, Five Rivers Construction, Inc.
- **Awarded a bid to Mauell Corporation to remodel the dispatch control room** at the PUD Operations Center.
- **Approved a staff recommendation to hire three meter installers for the automated metering project** and also adopted meter base repair guidelines.
- **Approved the economic incentive plan for Northwest Renewable, LLC** as adopted under the District's Economic Development Policy.
- **Met jointly with the Port of Longview Board of Commissioners to discuss the White Creek Wind Project** and were given a tour of port facilities while blades, towers and other White Creek wind components were being off-loaded.

Upcoming meetings:

- Tuesday, August 14
- Tuesday, August 28
- Tuesday, September 11

PUD Board meetings are open to the public and are held in the PUD Auditorium, 961 12th Avenue in Longview. Meetings start at 2:00 p.m. Please check our website for up-to-the-minute Board agendas, meeting dates and times.

Customer Information Available

Information about Cowlitz PUD's electric rates and customer policies is available in our Annual Customer Report. The report is available on our website or can be sent to you at your request.

From the General Manager's Point-of-View...

In recent years advances in computer hardware and software technologies have changed how we live. Those changes have also impacted the electric utility industry in ways not always visible to customers. That is about to change.



On the front page you read about the roll-out of the PUD's automated metering infrastructure (AMI). We expect it to take about four years to complete the project. I'll use this month's column to give you my take on it.

Since 1940 several generations of Cowlitz PUD Board members and employees have planned, invested customer dollars and worked hard to build an electric system that has served us well. But much of that system is now getting old. The demands for both the quantity and quality of electric service are increasing, and technological advances are necessitating system improvements by Cowlitz PUD and all electric utilities.

I agree with PUD Commissioner Buz Ketcham's recent comments that we are now in the process of building an electric system for our children and grandchildren's generation. AMI is a big part of that. In this system meter readings will be captured by a new automated meter, and then transported down our power lines to be received and managed by computers in our office. In time it will offer a world of new possibilities on how you use, manage and pay for your electricity:

Receiving and monitoring your electric bill – Since we will be able to read your meter instantly, you will have the ability to choose what day of the month you want the meter read and your bill sent out. You will also be able to monitor your electric usage online on a real-time basis. The day will also come when you will have the choice to receive your PUD bill electronically.

Choice in rate designs – AMI will someday offer us the ability to provide you rate choices, which in turn will let you manage your electric use and costs if you choose to. So what does this mean? The electricity we buy costs more in peak-use hours than it does in the off-peak hours. As this technology advances we will be able to charge rates that vary between the peak times and the off hours. That means you could do your laundry and dishes late at night to take advantage of the off-peak times and lower rate periods. This might be particularly valuable to those households with swing and graveyard shift workers.

We will also be able to charge residential customers in a manner similar to how we charge larger customers, i.e. a separate demand and energy charge. By reducing your peak demand you would have the ability to reduce your total bill. We did this in Wahoo, Nebraska, where I was the GM from 1987-1994. There we could control a customer's air conditioner (at their request) for a few minutes when hot Midwest summer days created load problems.

Facilitate new technologies – The day will come when we will regularly see plug-in hybrid cars. These cars are similar to current hybrids but can be plugged in over night to recharge their batteries. If you owned a hybrid car you would definitely be interested in an off-peak rate to charge the car overnight.

These are only some of the possible uses for this new and exciting technology. As I write this the first of the meters are being installed and tested. It will take several years to finish the job, so none of these changes will happen tomorrow. But they are coming. We are excited about it and hope you are too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Skeahan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Brian Skeahan
General Manager

Contact Information

Cowlitz PUD - 961 12th Avenue
PO Box 3007 Longview, WA 98632
(360) 423-2210 - Toll free WA (800) 631-1131
website: www.cowlitzpud.org
Email: customercomments@cowlitzpud.org

CONNECTED is published by Cowlitz County PUD.
COMMISSIONERS: Buz Ketcham, Ned Piper,
and Mark McCrady
GENERAL MANAGER: Brian Skeahan
EDITOR: Dave Andrew