



# CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 13, No. 10

## School is in Session, So Good Time for a PUD History Lesson

Every so often we think it's important to remind our customers exactly what it means to be a part of a Public Utility District or PUD. As a customer you are one of the owners of the business, so it makes sense to know more about the business in which you are investing every month.

A PUD is a community-owned, locally regulated utility created by a vote of the people under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 54. It is not part of county government.

RCW 54 went into effect in 1931, following the passage of Initiative No. 1. The successful initiative was mostly the result of the hard work of Washington State Grange members, who collected more than 60,000 signatures – twice the number necessary – seeking the authority for rural communities to form their own publicly-owned utilities.

The Grange fought the battle because it was tired and frustrated by the unwillingness of the private utilities to provide electricity to farms and rural areas.

The new law authorized PUDs to provide electric, water and wastewater service. In 2000 the law was amended to also allow PUDs to offer wholesale broadband telecommunications service.

Cowlitz PUD was created in 1936 in a countywide vote of the people. We started distributing electricity in 1940. There are currently 28 Washington PUDs – 23 provide electricity, 19 provide water or wastewater services and 13 provide local access to broadband telecommunications services.

### Inside This Issue:

- September Board Report
- Take Advantage of Great Rebates
- Protect Your Valuable Electronics

PUDs in Washington serve nearly one-third of the state's residents. PUDs provide electricity to more than 909,000 households, including 48,300 in Cowlitz County. In Washington, only the PUDs in Snohomish and Clark County have more electric customers than Cowlitz PUD.

### The role of PUD Commissioners

PUDs are governed by a nonpartisan, locally-elected board of commissioners. Commissioners are responsible for setting rates and for overseeing the operation of the PUDs.

Our board meets twice monthly in open session, on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m. Members of the public can observe and participate in the decision-making process. We encourage you to attend.

PUD commissioners are elected to serve six-year terms. One of our board positions is on the ballot this November. Commissioner salaries are set by state law, based on the size of the utility.

Please access [www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org) to find out more or learn about the variety of services we offer. And of course you can always stop by or give us a call. That's your right as one of the owners of Cowlitz PUD.

**YOU CAN PAY YOUR PUD BILL ONLINE**

[www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org)

Debit or credit card (Visa/MasterCard)

## Great Rebates Right Now on Energy Efficient Appliances

The Washington State Cash for Appliances Program is now offering rebates on several Energy STAR® rated appliances, in addition to what Cowlitz PUD offers under its EnergySHARE Plus program. If you are in the market to replace or upgrade, now is the time.

Appliance	PUD Rebate	State Rebate	Total Rebate
Refrigerators	\$25	\$75	\$100
Clothes Washers	\$70	\$150	\$220
Dishwashers	n/a	\$75	\$75
Ductless Heat Pump	\$1,500	\$750	\$2,250

More detailed information: [www.CashForAppliancesWA.com](http://www.CashForAppliancesWA.com),  
[www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org)

These rebates are available on a first-come, first served basis, so don't delay. Contact the PUD's conservation department at (360) 577-7514 or (800) 631-1131 with any questions.

## Cowlitz PUD's Fuel Mix

Fuel type	PUD mix
Coal	6.3%
Hydro (Water)	82.9%
Natural Gas	2.5%
Nuclear	7.8%
Other*	.5%

\*Includes biomass, natural gas, petroleum and waste incineration.

*About 91 percent of our power resources are purchased from BPA, which markets hydroelectric power, as well as nuclear power produced at the Columbia Generating Station near Richland. When these hydro and nuclear resources are in low supply, BPA makes market power purchases to meet customer power demands, which includes coal and natural gas resources.*

## Your electric heating system might be ready for an upgrade and we can help you pay for it!\*

### Install a ductless heating and cooling system!

- Save Energy & Money
- Have a More Comfortable Home
- Low-Cost Easy Installation
- Comes Standard with Air Conditioning
- Limited Time \$1,500 Cowlitz PUD Rebate

For a limited time the PUD is offering a \$1,500 rebate. Some systems may also qualify for an additional federal tax credit up to \$1,500 and a \$750 Washington State Cash for Appliances program! – ask your contractor and/or tax professional for details.

Find out if you qualify by calling our Energy Conservation Department at (360) 577-7514 or (800) 631-1131.



\*If you have baseboard, ceiling cable or wall heaters, you may qualify for a limited time \$1,500 PUD rebate on a ductless heating and cooling system!

To learn more visit: [www.CowlitzPUD.org](http://www.CowlitzPUD.org) or [www.GoingDuctless.com](http://www.GoingDuctless.com)

More than 5,000 ductless heating and cooling systems have been installed in the Pacific Northwest from some of the following manufacturers:



## What's Happening

### Caregiver Workshop

Hosted by SW Washington Agency on Aging and Disability (SWAAD)  
PUD Auditorium, 961 12th in Longview  
Thursday, November 18 – Noon to 4:00 p.m.



The Caregiver Workshop is designed to support spouses, adult children and friends providing care for an adult loved one. Experts will offer practical tips, including Medicare rules and regulations, how to save your back when transferring, assistive devices, equipment, clothes that make care giving easier and home services. Participants will be able to network with other caregivers.

Call (360) 577-4929 to register or find out more. The registration fee is \$5 (includes lunch). Scholarships are available to those who qualify.

SWAAD promotes independence, choice, well-being, and dignity for persons aged 60 and over, adults with disabilities and their families through a comprehensive, coordinated system of home and community-based services.

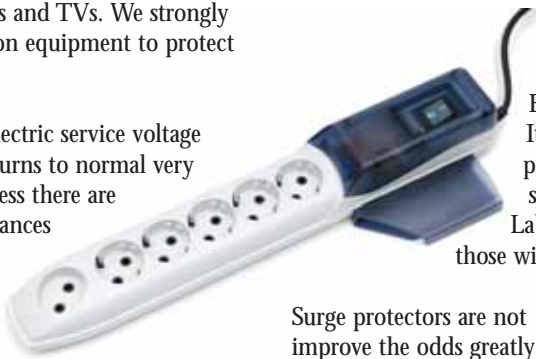
*Each month Cowlitz PUD offers this space to a non-profit group in Cowlitz County as an avenue to promote its activities (on a first-come, first-served basis). Send your request to: [whatshappening@cowlitzpud.org](mailto:whatshappening@cowlitzpud.org).*

## — Surge Protection Equipment: It's Your Best Bet to Prevent Costly Damage —

Nearly everyone has sensitive electronic equipment that's expensive to replace, like computers and TVs. We strongly recommend you use surge protection equipment to protect you from power surge risks.

Power surges result when normal electric service voltage spikes (rises suddenly) and then returns to normal very quickly. Inside your home or business there are many causes, including larger appliances switching on and off. In addition, faulty wiring, loose connections, or poor grounding can cause harmful spikes in voltage.

A power surge can also result from a power outage. Power outages are unpredictable and are caused by many factors,



including bad weather, downed trees, animals, lightning, PUD equipment failure or auto accidents.

Be prepared for the unpredictable. It's as simple as picking out the surge protector that fits your needs. We suggest one with an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label – specifically those with UL 1449 specifications.

Surge protectors are not 100 percent effective, but they improve the odds greatly of saving your costly equipment in the case of a surge.

## Commission Activities

September 2010 highlights:

- **Approved a bid from JH Kelly of Longview for \$729,241** for the civil construction portion of the rebuild of the PUD's 7th Avenue Substation in Longview, which is part of the PUD's long term infrastructure improvement plan. JH Kelly's bid was the lowest of nine submitted and was 14 percent under the engineer's estimate. Once the civil work is complete, PUD's substation wiremen will begin the electrical work. Construction will begin in October and should be completed in February 2011.
- **All three board members attended the BPA public meeting** in Castle Rock on August 30 to learn more about the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project and to discuss the project with PUD customers.

Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

- Tuesday, October 26
- Tuesday, November 9
- Tuesday, November 23

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

**ONLINE:** [www.cowlitzpud.org/surge\\_protection.php](http://www.cowlitzpud.org/surge_protection.php)

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

I'm switching gears this month from my normal column on the electric industry to share my thoughts on the continued difficult economy and what we can do about it locally.



Cowlitz PUD is a member of the Cowlitz Economic Development Council (EDC), and I will be the next chairman of the executive committee. Electrical infrastructure, system reliability and electric rates are key pieces to anyone's economic development puzzle, so we take our role in the EDC quite seriously.

Although improved from 2009, the national economic rebound that we hoped to see over the summer was weak, and the prospects for 2011 don't look particularly bright either. In Cowlitz County unemployment continues to be higher than the average for the state and nation as a whole.

In the midst of the economic downturn the PUD has joined with its fellow EDC members to take stock of the economic development efforts in Cowlitz County. The EDC's goal is to honestly assess what has worked for us and what is not working. To do this the EDC brought in a nationally respected consulting firm to assess the local situation from top to bottom and to provide specific recommendations for our future.

The firm spent hours meeting with local business and industry leaders, as well as public sector officials. They toured and reviewed development sites and infrastructure and familiarized themselves with the variety of factors that go into the costs of doing business in Cowlitz County. I spent a few hours with them talking about the future of the electric industry in the region.

The results were unveiled to the community in September. Their findings provided a good dose of honest reality – not necessarily surprising, but still a little hard to hear. Here's what I took from it:

- Expect a slow growth in jobs to continue, particularly in the manufacturing and natural resource based sectors (just where our local economy is so dependent).
- Development sites in the county are not sufficiently “shovel ready.”
- This area is not competitive with other states when it comes to the kinds of local and state incentives available to lure new companies to Cowlitz County or to encourage existing companies to grow.
- We've been too focused on recruiting larger manufacturers.

The study tells us we should make it a greater priority to support growth and expansion of our existing businesses. We have leaned toward recruiting of larger manufacturers, and have done so by trying to toss a broad net. We need to be more narrowly focused on specific forms of manufacturing that are growing and would fit well with our existing economy. We also must seek non-manufacturing businesses in growing product areas.

While we clearly have some work to do, there is optimism. Proximity to Portland, our location on I-5 and the Columbia River, good rail service, strong K-12 school systems, and higher education and vocational training opportunities with Lower Columbia College and WSU-Vancouver are all advantages that can be built upon.

One study won't turn the economy around and frankly it can't all fall on local, state or federal government. To be successful here in Cowlitz County our existing businesses and government must work together to acknowledge our challenges, better understand the opportunities our future economy holds and prepare ourselves to take advantage of those opportunities as best we can.

To read the complete study I would encourage you to go online to [cowlitzedc.com](http://cowlitzedc.com).



Brian Skeahan  
General Manager

## Contact Information

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