



CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 10, No. 9

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month

It's hard to believe, but the first big storms of the fall are just weeks away. Recent history shows that we can expect wind storms to hit Cowlitz County shortly after fall arrives in October or November. Those first big storms often cause wide-spread power outages.

As part of National Emergency Preparedness Month we encourage all PUD customers to be ready just in case the lights go out. The Cowlitz County Department of Emergency Management offers a variety of preparedness tips at www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/dem or call (360) 577-3130. You can also reference the electrical safety section at www.cowlitzpud.org.

Basic power outage preparation tips:

- Have an emergency preparedness kit that contains flashlights with extra batteries and a battery-powered radio. Know where it is so you can find it in the dark.
- Have a corded telephone available. Cordless phones do not work when the power is out.
- If you have an electric garage door opener, know how to open the door without power.

You can call the PUD around the clock at 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131 to report an outage. If you receive repeated busy signals, there is a good chance your neighbors have already notified us. We call out our service crews at the onset of a power outage.

If the power goes out:

- Unplug electronics — like computers, TVs, DVDs — and do not turn on again until lights have returned to normal brightness.

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- Turn down thermostat(s) and turn off the water heater circuit breaker to help reduce initial electric demand when power is restored.
- Do not open refrigerators or freezers.
- If you use a generator, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Place it outside for proper ventilation while running. Never use barbecues or propane heaters indoors.
- Leave a porch light switched on, as well as a light inside your home to let PUD repair crews and you know when service is restored.

Now is the time to get ready, before the first big storm hits. Most importantly stay away from downed lines and never touch objects that are in contact with downed lines. Teach children to assume that any downed utility line carries electricity and is dangerous. Safety is our first concern.

PUD Office Closed October 8

Cowlitz PUD will be closed for regular business on Monday, October 8. We will use that day for employee training and special projects – much like an in-service day for teachers. We chose the second Monday in October since it is a federal holiday (Columbus Day) and many government offices and banks are closed.

Our 24-hour dispatch center will be open to take calls if you have a power outage or other electrical emergency to report. If you would like to pay your bill that day, remember most PUD pay stations will be open. Those businesses are listed on the back of your PUD bill.

Apply Now for Low-Income Senior Discount

The sign-up period for Cowlitz PUD's Low-Income Senior Rate Discount (SDR) is underway. The application period ends November 30.

Here is how you qualify:

- You must be 65 or older and have been signed up for service as a residential electric customer for at least the past 12 months.
- Senior Discount Rate 1 (SDR-1) offers a 10 percent rate discount to customers with a gross annual

household income of \$13,690 to \$20,535.

- Senior Discount Rate 2 (SDR-2) offers a 20 percent rate discount to customers with a gross annual household income of under \$13,690.
- To start the application process, contact CAP at (360) 425-3430 for an appointment to determine if you meet the age and income requirements.

All customers who believe they meet the program requirements are encouraged to apply.

Customers already enrolled in the SDR program must re-apply annually. Four hundred qualified seniors are currently enrolled in the program, which is funded through PUD electric rates.

What's Happening

Solar Homes on Display October 6

The 2007 National Solar Tour for Cowlitz and Clark counties, co-sponsored by Cowlitz PUD, is set for Saturday, October 6.



Organized by Solar Washington, this year's tour will feature Green Buildings including solar electric, passive solar design, solar hot water, and energy efficiency technologies installed in homes. There will be buildings that exhibit net metering, off-grid systems, and homes utilizing many other resource conservation measures. Some sites will also feature alternative fuel and electric vehicles.

Up to five solar homes will be on display in Kalama and Woodland, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on October 6, including 180 and 191 Hawks View Road, Woodland. For more information about the solar tour go to www.cowlitzpud.org. You can also contact Grant Sawyer at Cowlitz PUD at (360) 577-7511 or (800) 631-1131.

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: whathappening@cowlitzpud.org.

Cowlitz PUD's Fuel Mix

Cowlitz PUD and all other electric utilities in the state report their sources of wholesale electricity to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) each April. From that information CTED develops a utility-by-utility fuel mix breakdown. State law calls for utilities to provide this information to customers twice a year.

The chart on the top lists Cowlitz PUD's fuel sources for 2006, while the table on the bottom lists the breakdown for all utilities in Washington:

Fuel type	PUD mix
Coal	2.2%
Hydro (Water)	86.8%
Nuclear	10.0%
Other*	1.0%

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

Fuel type	State mix
Coal	17.0%
Hydro (Water)	69.0%
Natural Gas	8.0%
Nuclear	5.0%
Other*	1.0%

*Includes biomass, petroleum, waste incineration and wind.

Fair Bingo, Relay for Life Highlight August for PUD Employees



Nearly 100 PUD employees and family members participated in two major community service events in August – County Fair Bingo and Relay for Life. For the second year the PUD manned the Cowlitz County Fair bingo tent (shown above) and raised nearly \$3,500 for the Warm Neighbor Program and American Cancer Society. The following weekend four PUD teams combined to raise over \$16,300 for the Relay for Life, benefiting cancer research. We enjoyed visiting with all our customers who stopped by to say hello at both events and thanks to the entire community for helping support these great causes.

Did you know?

Rather than continually running water while washing your car, use a bucket of water and a quick hose rinse at the end. You'll save 150 gallons each time. Also...when you use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks you'll also save 150 gallons or more each time. And it's good exercise, too!

EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Commission Activities



In August the Cowlitz PUD Board of Commissioners:

- **Participated in the BPA Residential Exchange regional forum with other utilities, industrial customers and other interested parties.** Commissioner Buz Ketcham made a presentation on behalf of the board, staff and customers of Cowlitz PUD.
- **Presented \$1,736 each to CAP for the Warm Neighbor Program and to the American Cancer Society Relay for Life.** The funds were raised by PUD employees at the Cowlitz County Fair Bingo event.
- **Received a presentation from Bratrud Middleton Insurance on property insurance renewal for the next year.**
- **Gave its support to a staff recommendation to not at this time purchase additional power from Klickitat PUD's share of the White Creek Wind Project output.** (Cowlitz PUD's share is 46 percent of the output.)
- **Accepted work performed by Wiseman Utilities Inc. under the 2006 plowing project contract.**

Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

Tuesday, September 11

Tuesday, October 9

Tuesday, September 25

Tuesday, October 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.

YOU CAN PAY YOUR PUD BILL ONLINE

www.cowlitzpud.org

Debit or credit card (Visa/MasterCard)

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

Whether a utility develops and builds its own generation or buys power from someone else, there is a lot of money involved in the business of providing power. And when there is a lot of money at stake, conflict isn't far behind.



Recently I was driving home from a utility meeting in Seattle thinking, "Brian, it seems like half your work life is spent in meetings, fighting over money." Frankly it gets a little discouraging at times. But as I drove on, I reminded myself it's worth it.

The history of the public power was born in conflict. The electric industry began with large, powerful, privately-owned monopolies that flexed their political and economic power. In 1930, citizens in Washington got fed up with the lack of rural service and passed the very first voter-approved initiative (Initiative 1 – The Grange Power Bill). That allowed the formation of publicly-owned, locally-controlled PUDs.

It was a huge victory and the first of many battles to follow.

Recently there has been a lot of press, particularly in Oregon, regarding the 9th Circuit Court ruling on a lawsuit addressing the \$350 million public power customers were forced to pay BPA for the Residential Exchange benefits it pays to investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in the region.

The Court ruled on the side of public power, saying these payments were illegal because BPA's methodology ignored protections provided to public power customers by 1980 legislation. In response to the Court's order BPA has begun a process to determine how much really should go to the IOUs under law. The IOUs feel entitled to these ill-gotten gains – legal or not. Of course Cowlitz PUD agrees with the court and is closely involved to make sure your interests are represented.

Another fight is being waged over the reconstruction costs of our Swift 2 Hydro Project. Recently the Federal District Court in Tacoma gave the PUD a big win in the battle with

TIG Insurance, over its failure to pay under our insurance policy. With that ruling in place (TIG is appealing), the PUD is now going on offense and has filed a bad faith claim against TIG. A win in that case may allow us to recover our legal costs and open the door for millions in payments to recoup previously unrecovered costs, penalties and interest.

Yet another battle underway involves Initiative 937, the renewable portfolio standard which narrowly passed last November. What you may not know is that the passage of a law is not always the end of the story. A new law is often sent to an administrative agency for rulemaking, where it can be subject to some real mischief if you're not paying close attention.

Our concern? I-937 language clearly protects the bedrock public power principle of local control, relating to the conservation provisions of the initiative. So far rule makers have not acknowledged that. We are pushing back hard to make sure the principles of local control and your rights as a public power customer are represented.

I started in this business as a conservation specialist in 1982. I've participated in the building of a hydro project that reduced juvenile salmon mortality, helped develop a landfill gas electric project, and planned a wind project that's nearly built. The business has changed a lot in those 25 years, as we evolve into a future even more committed to conservation and renewables. That said, we can never lose sight of the original principle of public power: Utilities controlled by local people, to benefit local needs.

The future will undoubtedly hold more controversy as competing interests continue to vie for advantage and control of power resources. It's my job to see that Cowlitz PUD keeps fighting the good fight and to make sure our customers' best interests are always represented.

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

Brian Skeahan
General Manager

Contact Information

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