



CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 12, No. 12

Electrical Safety: A Priority at Cowlitz PUD

In November a newspaper article about a local court case included comments that questioned Cowlitz PUD's commitment to electrical safety, specifically regarding the overhead wires that carry electricity from a PUD transformer to the weatherhead (or mast) on the roof of a home or building – and if the PUD will inspect those wires on request.

The answer is simple – yes. Our customers can contact us any day, any time if they have a concern with the electric service. That's our business and it has been that way for years.

It is not uncommon over time for trees to grow up into the secondary power lines on private property, or for those lines to sag, or for someone to have the need to work around those lines. If that's the case, call the PUD at (360) 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131 and a service crew will inspect the lines, service them if needed, and/or temporarily disconnect the power so you can safely complete your work.

In most cases we will be out the same day. Of course in an emergency we'll respond immediately, around the clock. The safety of its employees and customers was a priority at the PUD yesterday, still is today and will remain so tomorrow. Some examples of its importance to us include:

- Teaching electrical safety every school year to hundreds of local students in grades 2-5. This includes a video presentation, classroom discussion and an outdoor safety trailer demonstration. We gladly visit every school that asks us to come.

Inside This Issue:

- November Board Report
- Cowlitz PUD Partners with Crime Stoppers
- Automated Metering Project Update
- That safety trailer was built by several of our line crew members and provides a vivid example of the dangers of electricity. With it we can show people what can happen when garden tools, ladders, kites and hands come in contact with a live wire. It has also been used to train countless fire and law enforcement personnel about electric safety.
- An ongoing advertising program that reminds everyone to stay away from power lines and to “call before you dig” to avoid injury from hitting a live underground power line. Our ads point people to our website for a list of electrical safety tips and reminders.
- Routine visual inspections of every pole, transformer and other transmission and distribution system infrastructure, with repairs or replacements made when needed.
- Monthly safety training for all line workers, electricians and other operations department personnel.

Cowlitz PUD operates and maintains over 2,000 miles of overhead and underground electric lines and about 20,000 power poles. We count on our customers to help out as eyes and ears to any problems or safety issues and ask that you call us if you see something that does not look right.

NEVER TOUCH OR EVEN COME NEAR A UTILITY WIRE – YOU MUST ALWAYS ASSUME IT IS CARRYING ELECTRICITY. IF YOU SEE A POTENTIAL SAFETY PROBLEM CONTACT COWLITZ PUD AT (360) 423-2210 OR (800) 631-1131 IMMEDIATELY.

Cowlitz PUD and Crime Stoppers Teaming Up to Stop Wire Theft



Cowlitz PUD is pleased to partner with Crime Stoppers of Cowlitz County to help stop wire theft and other crimes. As part of this effort, the PUD is placing a Crime Stoppers sign on the fences at over 30 substations across the county, including the Meeker Substation in Kalama. As the sign notes, Crime Stoppers pays individuals up to \$1,000 for providing information leading to the arrest and filing of charges on any serious crime, including wire theft and theft of electricity.

Did You Know?

- There are **12.5 million televisions** in use in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana – more televisions per home than people.
- TVs consume **3.7 billion kilowatt hours of energy** each year according to estimates from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. That is nearly the amount of electricity used in a year by all Cowlitz PUD industrial, commercial and residential customers.
- According to the International Energy Agency, consumer electronics represent **15 percent of worldwide home power demand** – a percentage expected to triple over the next 20 years.

During 2010 and beyond, you will hear more from the PUD about how you can reduce electricity consumption by televisions and other consumer electronics by 30 to 50 percent. That makes efficiency improvements in TVs among the largest single sources of conservation potential in the region.

To find out more please visit:
<http://www.energyefficientelectronics.org>.

Go Green!

You can support the development of environmentally friendly “Green Power” sources like wind, solar, low-impact hydro, geothermal and biomass. The cost is as low as \$40 a year and may be tax deductible. To learn all the details:

1. Log on to www.cowlitzpud.org
2. Go to the **Conservation and Renewables** menu
3. Click on **Purchase Green Tags**

Power Outage Updates on our Website

Cowlitz PUD is posting power outage information on its **Twitter** page, and those updates are then automatically posted on the bottom left of the front page of our website.



You can also click on our **YouTube** homepage for additional information. To find out more online about what's happening at Cowlitz PUD:



www.cowlitzpud.org
<http://twitter.com/CowlitzPUD>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/CowlitzPUD1>

What's Happening



**GIVE. ADVOCATE.
VOLUNTEER
LIVE UNITED**

Cowlitz County United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on EDUCATION, INCOME, and HEALTH. These are the building blocks for a good life – quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

Many Cowlitz PUD employees donate bi-weekly to the United Way through a payroll deduction. You too can be a part of improving the health, education and income of people in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Please contact the United Way office at (360) 423-5320 or donate online at www.cowlitzunitedway.org.

Because united, we stand. United, we elevate. United, we can change what we see in our world.

As space is available in Connected, Cowlitz PUD offers the What's Happening column to provide public, non-profit groups with wide interest in Cowlitz County an avenue to promote their activities (on a first-come, first-served basis). Please send your request via email to: whathappening@cowlitzpud.org.

Commission Activities



November 2009 highlights:

- **Approved a resolution adopting a 10-year conservation plan** and 2010-2011 biennial energy conservation targets as required for compliance with the Washington State Energy Independence Act (I-937).
- **Received a quarterly update from the Cowlitz Economic and Development Council** on recent business development activity in the county.
- **Accepted the work completed by JH Kelly to reconstruct the Olive Way (Longview) substation.** This work included demolition, excavation, conduits, grounding system, concrete, steel structures, finish rock and fencing. (Note: JH Kelly is currently performing the same work at the 30th and Washington Way substation in Longview.)

Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

Tuesday, January 12
Tuesday, January 26

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.

Automated Metering - *New System Will Be Operating in 2012*

We continue on schedule to have 48,200 new automated electric meters installed by 2011. Last month we reported in the newsletter that 30,500 new meters had been installed through October. We have since found that was inaccurate.

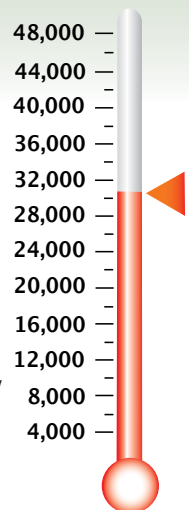
We're making great progress, but we were not quite at that level on October 30. After a busy month of installation we reached 30,600 meters by the end of November. Meter installation will continue in 2010 and will be concluded in 2011, which means every customer will soon have a new meter that is able to communicate with computers in our PUD office.

Our best estimate now is that the new system will take effect in early 2012. The PUD has just begun

installation of new customer information system hardware and software, which will work in-tandem with the new metering system to provide many new services to our customers. That eventually will mean automated meter reading, online billing, customer-selected billing dates, time-of-day rates and other exciting future services.

We will keep you posted in this newsletter space about the progress of both projects.

Email your questions about Automated Metering to customercomments@cowlitzpud.org and type "Automated Metering" in the subject line. You can also send your question to us at P.O. Box 3007, Longview, WA 98632. Please write "Automated Metering" next to the address.



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

At the PUD we see firsthand the additional hardships a weak economy places on people with fixed or low incomes, who are trying to pay their electric bill.



In the past year we have seen a growing number of customers who have always paid their bill on time, but economic circumstances have now forced them to make tough choices on which bills to pay first. Some of these customers are understandably hesitant or unfamiliar on where to turn for assistance.

The PUD's Warm Neighbor program is one such source. It is supported by voluntary contributions from customers who elect to add a few dollars to their payment each month. Others add in some extra dollars on occasion or send a donation directly to CAP. It's greatly appreciated.

In a normal year customers contribute \$30,000 to Warm Neighbor. Last August 65 Cowlitz PUD employees and family members volunteered their time to work at the Cowlitz County Fair Bingo tent and Babe Ruth World Series concessions, and helped raise an additional \$2,800 for the Warm Neighbor fund.

All told, those funds will help out 350 customers with their electric bill during the winter months. We know of many cases where a small boost from the Warm Neighbor fund made a big difference in a customer's life, by helping keep the lights on.

Each year at this time I like to share a particular situation that has come to my attention. Recently we received a letter that I found especially touching, from a family in Kelso. Both the husband and wife are disabled.

In the letter they shared that they are aware of the PUD's low-income rate discount program for disabled customers and the help from CAP they could receive. But they had not

applied in past years. They also were concerned that the Warm Neighbor fund was not larger and able to help even more customers.

So they decided to apply for the disabled citizen's discount this year and qualified for a 15 percent discount. But they have committed to turn around and contribute the amount of their discount back to the Warm Neighbor fund, thus helping out others in the community. It was one of the nicest customer letters I have received in 22 years of managing utilities and frankly it is still difficult to describe my emotions after reading it.

My wife and I moved here in 2003 and we both noticed immediately that residents of Cowlitz County are very generous when it comes to helping others. I know many of you donate to a variety of causes in the community. To those who are contributing to Warm Neighbor, thank you. To those of you who don't, we would appreciate your consideration.

Please join me in making a voluntary donation to Warm Neighbor this winter. If you are already making a contribution please join me in bumping that up for 2010. More than ever every little bit helps, and it's always appreciated.

As we end 2009 and move into 2010, we thank you for being a customer of Cowlitz PUD and wish the best for you and your family through the holidays.

(Note: To contribute to the Warm Neighbor fund, just add an extra amount to your next payment and note that amount on the space allotted on the front of your PUD bill. You can also contact CAP and make a direct donation.)

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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