

# CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 14, No. 4

## Recycle That Old Refrigerator or Freezer – Get a Check for \$30

In May Cowlitz PUD will begin its second year of offering customers a free, in-home recycling service for older refrigerators and freezers. Not only will we come to your home and haul the old one away, you'll also get a \$30 incentive check in the mail.

A 20-year old refrigerator can use four times more energy than a newer model. An older 18-cubic foot refrigerator consumes 1,400 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually on average, or about \$78 a year on the electric bill.

Compare that to a new Energy Star® rated model, which will use more like 350 kWh or about \$20 of electricity. That means the new model will save you roughly 1,050 kWh and \$58 a year. We also offer a \$25 rebate on the purchase of a qualifying new model.

Where the electric costs can really add up is when you have more than one refrigerator. Having a second fridge or freezer in the garage or basement can be a real convenience, and a necessity in many cases.

But if it's an older, energy-guzzling unit that you kept around after purchasing a new one, you may want to reconsider – especially if it mostly sits empty or close to it. You have to ask yourself if it is worth the \$78 in electricity costs.

We can recycle up to two qualified old refrigerators or freezers for you. All the details are on our website, plus you can make the appointment online to have your old fridge

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hauled away. You may also call toll-free 877-577-0510 to schedule a pickup.

To qualify, the refrigerator or freezer must be in working condition (we need to be able to hear the compressor working), 10-30 cubic feet in size and a 1995 model or older.



The PUD contracts with JACO Environmental, which offers a convenient in-home pickup service. JACO recycles about 95 percent of the materials used to manufacture each refrigerator or freezer and safely disposes of the toxins and ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbon gases from foam insulation.

Proper recycling of the foam insulation and refrigerant in the cooling circuit can prevent the release of up to an equivalent of five tons of CO<sup>2</sup> into the atmosphere.

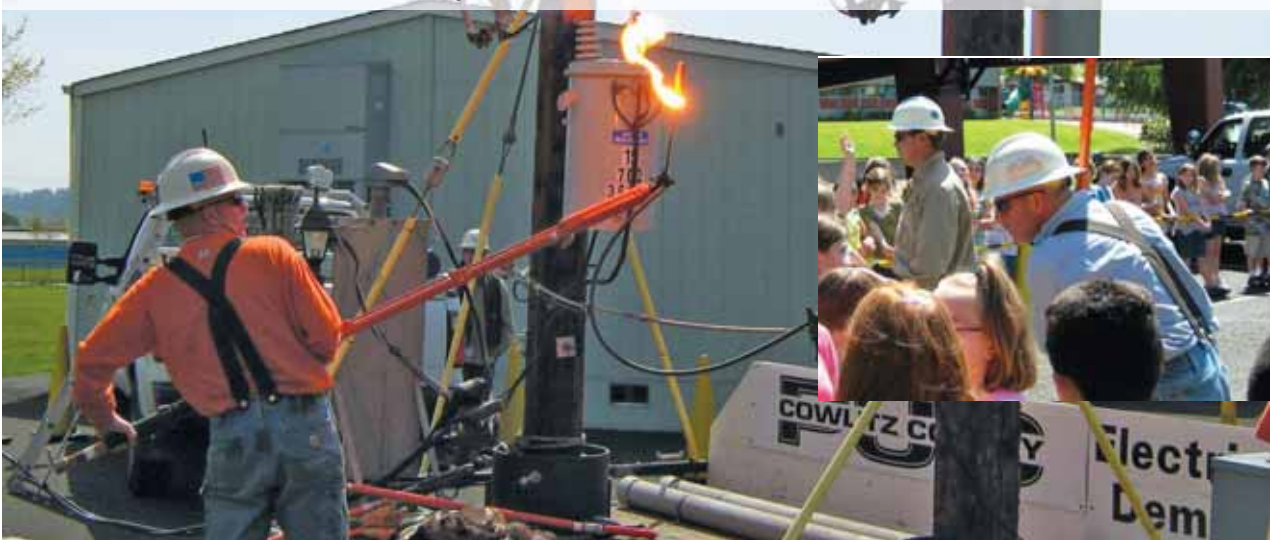
It's all part of the PUD's energy conservation effort. So far well over 300 customers have taken us up on the offer and they are saving a lot of electricity in the process.

**YOU CAN PAY YOUR PUD BILL ONLINE**

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

Debit or credit card (Visa/MasterCard)

## Safety Trailer Visits Local Schools



*Hundreds of Cowlitz County elementary school students have learned about the potential dangers of electricity with the help of PUD electrical workers and the PUD's safety trailer. We also have a new four-minute safety trailer video demo, available on the PUD's YouTube page. It's linked from our home page at [www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org) or by entering "Cowlitz PUD" in the search bar at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Call the PUD at (360) 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131 to schedule a safety trailer school visit this spring.*

### Sign-Up Now for Budget Pay

The annual budget payment plan enrollment period began on April 1. Cowlitz PUD residential customers can sign-up for this popular bill paying option now through August.

The budget payment plan allows you to make 12 equal monthly payments, which helps you avoid unpredictable seasonal electric billings. To qualify:

- You must be a PUD residential customer.
- Live in a residence with at least one year of billing history.
- Your account must be paid in full before starting.

Every 12 months the PUD will review your budget pay account. At that time we will adjust the monthly payment accordingly, based on electric usage over the past year and the balance on the account after making budget payments for 12 months.

Some years your budget payment may increase and in other years it may decrease on your anniversary date.

Find out more about Budget Pay at [www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org) or call the PUD to sign-up or to find out if you qualify.

### Customer Information Available on Request



Looking for more information about Cowlitz PUD? We publish an annual customer report, a fuel mix report and brochures with information about electric rates and customer policies that are available to anyone.

Just call us at (360) 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131 or email us at [mailbox@cowlitzpud.org](mailto:mailbox@cowlitzpud.org) and make your request. The same information can also be accessed on our website.

### Don't miss the Regional Senior Connections Fair Wednesday, May 4

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Three Rivers Mall, Kelso

## What's Happening

# Run the Path .....to great mental health

Saturday, May 21

Lake Sacajawea in Longview

Registration at 9:30 a.m. - Lions Covered Shelter

The community is invited to join the 4th Annual Mental Health Awareness Run/Walk:

- Fun Run - 3.6 miles on the Lake Sacajawea path or walk a short section of the Lake Sacajawea Path
- Informational Booths - Free Giveaways
- First 150 participants receive a free run t-shirt
- There is no fee to participate in the event, the event is free to the community

Contact Ron Lehto

Riverview Psychiatric & Counseling Service

(360) 577-0266

*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: [whathappening@cowlitzpud.org](mailto:whathappening@cowlitzpud.org).*

## Commission Activities



### March 2011 highlights:

- **Approved purchase of three power transformers** from the lowest responsive bidder Waukesha Electric Systems, totaling \$632,530. Two of the new transformers will be installed as part of the 115 kV upgrade at the John Street Substation in 2012. The other unit will replace a failed transformer at the S. Kelso Substation.
- **Held discussions with staff on BPA's proposed Residential Exchange Settlement.**
- **Met with staff to review the PUD's policies related to non-pay service disconnects.**

### Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

Tuesday, April 26

Tuesday, May 10

These public meetings are held in the John Searing Auditorium at the PUD, 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.

## Order a Free Home Energy-Saving Kit

There's still time to request a FREE energy-saving kit from Cowlitz PUD:

### Your kit includes:

#### 2 compact fluorescent lights (CFL)

- Lighting accounts for up to 20 percent of your home's total energy use.
- CFLs use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, and can last up to ten times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs.

#### 1-2 energy-saving showerheads

- Energy-saving showerheads reduce the amount of water used and decrease the amount of energy needed to heat the water and can make your hot water last longer.
- Using one energy-saving showerhead in your home can reduce your electric bill \$20 or more a year.

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

Phone: 1-888-553-7467

Have a copy of your PUD bill, as you will be asked to provide your premise (prem.) number. There's a limit of one kit per household and you can expect it to take 7-10 business days for the kit to arrive.

**Don't miss out on this free offer from Cowlitz PUD, so you can start saving electricity right away.**

EarthTronics® ET114 120V/60Hz

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

Longtime PUD Commissioner John Searing passed away on March 20 at the age of 90.



In February the PUD Board honored John for 24 years of service as a PUD commissioner, by naming our auditorium after him. The auditorium is heavily used by many organizations. It was a fitting tribute to John, given his commitment to our community.

I'm in my 22nd year as a utility general manager and over that time I've worked under 20 different elected officials, including John Searing.

I've also come into contact with many other elected officials at the local, state and federal level. While working for and watching elected leaders over the years, some important characteristics stand out. John Searing demonstrated the qualities I have come to admire.

A good leader is not one who is called into public service over their strong opinions on a narrow range of issues, or personal quarrels or disagreements with an incumbent. Rather, the most effective elected leaders are people motivated by a desire to give back to their community.

They've typically had successful business and work careers, gaining knowledge and good judgment along the way. They're active as volunteers in the community, which adds to their experience.

One of my former board members told me once, "I'm not any smarter than I used to be, I have just lived longer." Each passing year that statement makes more sense to me, seeing the wisdom, knowledge and good judgment one gains over years of a successful career and serving the community.

Elected officials – local, state and national – face challenging issues and decisions that quite often are far more complicated than many realize. Making good decisions requires information, but also the ability to draw on personal experience. Understanding the core values and beliefs of a

community is essential in making sound decisions.

These days it helps to have thick skin. Early in my career as a GM there was a greater willingness for people to give their elected officials more benefit-of-the-doubt.

There was a time when you may not have agreed with a decision, but you were willing to tell the elected official, "I probably don't know everything that went into your decision. But I know you and I think you listened, so I trust your judgment on this one." We see less of that today and I am not sure that's good.

John Searing was a successful businessman, a good family man and involved in a variety of community organizations. He first served on the Kelso Planning Commission and later was elected to the Kelso City Council.

From there John was elected PUD Commissioner in 1976. Six years later his career took an interesting turn, as he lost a re-election bid in 1982. That election saw a number of Washington PUD commissioners voted out in response to significant rate increases arising from the WPPSS controversy.

Frankly it was unfair to place the blame on John for the failed attempt to build five nuclear plants in the state, but people were mad and the economy was poor.

While many would have called it quits, John persevered and ran again in 1988 – and won. He followed that up with two more election victories in 1994 and 2000.

Over 24 years John faced many difficult and important decisions. He dealt with controversy and adversity, and saw a lot of changes. He did so with a solid grounding of wisdom, knowledge, values and community service. Cowlitz PUD and our entire community are better today because of the commitment of John Searing.

Brian Skeahan  
General Manager

## Contact Information

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