



CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 14, No. 6

Install a Ductless Heat Pump System, Earn a \$1,500 Rebate

A Ductless Heat Pump system will help make your home more comfortable year round – a welcome relief when hot weather hits.

A ductless heating and cooling system is a highly efficient system that is easily installed as a new primary heat source for homes that now have electric baseboard, wall or ceiling heat. It's safe, quiet and heats rooms evenly (no more hot or cool spots). And you get the energy-saving benefits of a heat pump, without the cost of installing ductwork.

Cowlitz PUD's residential energy conservation program offers a \$1,500 rebate on a new system. We've offered the rebate for two years and so far 472 customers have earned a total of \$708,000. These funds are available through BPA's regional energy conservation program that is funded through electric rates.

Based on what our customers are saying, the program is a great success. They tell us the energy savings are notable and they love the air conditioning on those hot days.



contact Cowlitz PUD's conservation department at (360) 577-7514 or (800) 631-1131.

Learn more from our four-minute ductless heat pump "video brochure" on YouTube, linked from www.cowlitzpud.org.

Inside This Issue:

- May Board Report
- Join Us for Charity Bingo
- Budget Plan Sign Ups End in August

Saving energy, saving money

- The average annual savings by adding a ductless system is 3,816 kilowatt hours (kWh), meaning those 472 customers enjoyed an average annual reduction on their electric bill of \$214 or about \$18 per month savings.
- Overall as a group they will save 1.8 million kWh in a year – enough electricity to light and heat the homes of 100 PUD customers.

Now's the time to consider a ductless system, to ensure you don't miss out on the \$1,500 rebate offer. To get started,

YOU CAN PAY YOUR PUD BILL ONLINE

www.cowlitzpud.org

Debit or credit card (Visa/MasterCard)

Cowlitz PUD Opens LEED Certified Technical Services Building



Cowlitz PUD Relay, Meter and Transformer department personnel have a new home, with the completion of the new Technical Services building. It is located at 875 Industrial Way in Longview, adjacent to our Operation Center's main building.


The building will be certified as LEED "Silver" (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the United States Green Building Council, based on earning 50+ points for meeting certain sustainable building practices, including:

- Energy-efficient lighting.
- Extra insulation in the walls and ceiling.
- A hydronic heating system, using a heat pump to heat water that is pumped through plumbing in the concrete floor.
- Skylights and oversized windows.
- Roofing and paving materials designed to reflect heat rather than absorb it.
- Zero irrigation landscaping.
- Low volatile organic compounds (VOC) building materials.


The new building replaces a much smaller 63-year old building and offers the necessary work space and functions needed to manage Cowlitz PUD's new Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system and related smart grid technology.

PUD Charity Bingo Tent Cowlitz County Fair – July 28-31


Come join in the fun when the volunteers from Cowlitz PUD run Charity Bingo for the 6th consecutive year at the Cowlitz County Fair – Thursday through Sunday, July 28-31.



Over four days we'll play close to 300 games of bingo. It only costs 50¢ for one bingo card. Half the proceeds from each game go to the person who calls the first "bingo" and the other half goes to the Warm Neighbor fund, which assists local low-income families in paying their winter heating bill.



Last year we raised \$5,325 and since 2006 over \$22,000 has been raised – thanks to the generosity of PUD customers and their families and friends who join us for one or many games of bingo.



The PUD bingo tent will open all four days at noon. We have a lot of fun coming to the fair, meeting our customers and working together to raise funds for a good cause. We look forward to meeting you.

Budget Plan Enrollment Period Ends in August

Residential customers can sign-up for the popular budget payment plan through August.

This convenient option allows you to make 12 equal monthly payments and avoid unpredictable seasonal electric billings. To qualify you must be a PUD residential customer and live in a residence with at least one year of billing history. Your account must be paid in full before starting.

Every 12 months we review the budget pay accounts and adjust the monthly payment accordingly, based on past electric usage and the balance on the account. Find out more at www.cowlitzpud.org or call us to see if you qualify.

What's Happening

Sign Up For Head Start



Fall signup is now underway for Lower Columbia College Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS),

and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). EHS serves children from prenatal to 3 years old in Kelso and Longview with a home base and combination models. The traditional Head Start/ECEAP provides free preschool for children who are 3 years old by August 31. The programs serve 498 children from prenatal to 5 years old in Longview, Kelso, Castle Rock, Toutle, and Kalama.

With the free preschool, the programs offer health and social services, snacks and lunch, services to children with disabilities, limited transportation, bilingual education, and parent training. Income guidelines must be met. For enrollment information and eligibility contact 360-442-2800 or visit the Head Start office. Apply Today!

**Lower Columbia College
Head Start/EHS./ECEAP
1720 20th Avenue, Longview**



Para información sobre inscripciones llame al 360-442-2833

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.

Commission Activities



May 2011 highlights:

- **Approved a revised resolution in support** of Bonneville Power Administration's proposed Residential Exchange Settlement.
- **Approved as complete the Technical Services Building/Yard Expansion Project** at the PUD Operation Center on Industrial Way. (See story on page 2.)
- **Met with staff in a workshop to discuss progress and key issues** related to the Customer Information System replacement project, Automated Metering Infrastructure and development of the Smart Grid.

Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

Tuesday, July 12
Tuesday, July 26

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

Cowlitz/Wahkiakum Relay For Life

24 hours, August 13-14,
10 a.m. to 10 a.m., Cowlitz Expo Center.
Contact dennisrelay@comcast.net



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

There's been significant press coverage regarding BPA's decision to curtail the output of Pacific Northwest wind generation at times. That's brought an outcry from some wind power companies and political allies. But the wind industry's protests have not told the whole story.



Why is BPA doing this? There's simply more power being generated at times when customer demand is low – with the heating season ending and before air conditioning and irrigation season is in full swing.

It's also the time when mountain snows melt and the wind blows hard in the Columbia River Gorge. We have a large snowpack this year. There is only so much water that can be stored behind the Columbia and Snake River dams, so that water must be moved through the turbines or spilled over the dams.

It is BPA's responsibility to balance electric generation and customer loads on its extensive transmission system. If generation is too high, BPA must take steps to reduce it or sell it outside the region – including California. However the need for power in the Southwest is down and the capability of the transmission grid limits BPA from selling excess power much beyond the west coast.

It would seem that the next option for BPA is to just spill the excess water over the dams. But large amounts of "spill" create a high level of dissolved gases in the river, harmful to salmon and in violation of the Clean Water Act.

So with storage, power sales and spill limited, BPA's next option for balancing supply and demand is to ask regional utilities to ramp down or turn off gas and coal plants. In addition the region's one nuclear plant is shut down for maintenance. Curtailing wind generation is BPA's final option.

During times when the supply of electricity is much greater than demand, market power prices can spiral to zero or even negative. (I wish we could take that power locally, but space won't let me explain the reasons we cannot. I'll save that discussion for another time.) This so-called negative market pricing actually puts pressure on the BPA rates we pay, since revenues from these "non-firm" power sales are treated as a credit against the costs we are responsible for.

In an effort to protect those who ultimately use its power (like you) BPA won't sell excess generation at negative prices. However, BPA will replace the curtailed gas, coal or wind power with excess hydroelectric power at a low or no cost in these special circumstances.

But that's not good enough for most wind generators, who want BPA to pay them to cover their lost Federal Production Tax Credits, which are only earned when the blades are turning. BPA's unwillingness to pay the wind generators to curtail has caused this very public controversy.

Cowlitz PUD sides with BPA, and we also have a unique stake in this issue. We have a high percentage of wind resources relative to load, compared to other NW utilities. We purchase the second largest amount of power from BPA, behind only Snohomish PUD.

So on one hand, by not paying negative pricing to wind generators the rates we pay BPA stay lower. At the same time the revenues the PUD gets from its wind sales go down. Those revenues also serve to reduce the rates you ultimately pay.

I'm on the region's Wind Integration Steering Committee, so I'm at the table working to solve complicated and divisive issues like this one. Our challenge is to balance the promotion of new renewable resources, maintain healthy salmon runs and protect customers from higher power costs.

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

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