



# CONNECTED

The Newsletter of Cowlitz PUD

Volume 13, No. 3

## Home Weatherization: A Good Springtime Project

Springtime is home improvement time and at Cowlitz PUD we can help you make your home or business more energy efficient. We've offered energy audits and financial incentives to weatherize Cowlitz County homes and businesses since 1982.

Conserving energy is more crucial now than ever as we work together to keep electric costs down. It costs a lot less to save a kilowatt hour (kWh), than it does to build a new power project to generate that same kWh.

These measures will help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter – and you'll reduce your energy use at the same time:

### Home Weatherization

The Residential Weatherization Plus program offers incentives for customers (with electric heat) to insulate ceilings, floors and walls and install more efficient windows. You'll need a home energy audit first, so call us if you are unsure if an audit was done previously. Qualified low-income customers are eligible for additional benefits.

### Heat Pump Rebates

Our Ductless Heat Pump Rebate program is very popular, providing a \$1,500 rebate, and in many cases a federal tax credit as well. There's a link to the Going Ductless video brochure on our home page. Our H2 Advantage Plus provides residential customers with rebates up to \$900 on conventional heat pump installations. Whether your current heating system is fueled by oil, natural gas or electricity – you can qualify.

### Inside This Issue:

- February Board Report
- Use Caution Around Transformers
- Warm Neighbor Plus Program

### Home Appliance Rebates

Our EnergySHARE Plus program offers cash rebates on your purchase of ENERGY STAR® rated clothes washers, dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers and energy-efficient water heaters.

### Commercial Programs

Cowlitz PUD has assisted hundreds of businesses and schools with its Commercial Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP) Plus lighting offer, for energy efficiency improvements to existing lighting systems, and improving refrigeration systems. Call to see if your business qualifies.

### Industrial Financial Incentives

Industrial customers, both small and large, have received financial incentives over the last 15 years for the development and installation of electrical energy saving measures in their processes, such as compressed air, pumping, fan and motor efficiency improvements.

You will find full details at [www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org) (click on Conservation & Renewables), or by calling our Energy Conservation Department at (360) 577-7514.

## Join Us on Earth Day

Saturday, April 17, 10:00-3:30  
Cowlitz County Fairgrounds

Cowlitz PUD will be at the Earth Day celebration, with displays and information. Our weatherization experts will be on hand to answer your questions about conserving energy



# What's That *Big Green Box* in My Yard?

Many of our customers have a green metal box in their yard, which houses a high-voltage electrical transformer that can pose a serious safety hazard if treated or handled inappropriately.

For your safety these transformers have warning labels. We caution customers not to allow children to play on or near this equipment.

In the event of an equipment failure or a power outage, our electrical workers need to have safe and easy access to this equipment to make repairs. For your safety and ours, landscaping must be limited near this electrical equipment. Trees, shrubs, fences, landscape rocks or other obstructions are not permitted in access areas around underground electrical equipment.

Keep your family safe and help us out by:

- **Allowing ventilation to the box. Adequate air is needed to keep the box cool and working properly or it could become a fire hazard.**



- **Leave the box uncovered. Do not build a shed around it or fence it in.**
- **Encourage children to stay away from the box.**

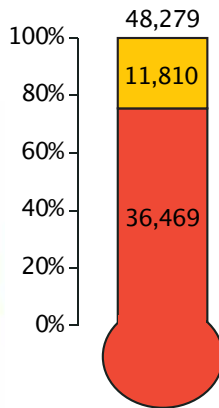
If you have any questions about construction or landscaping around a transformer box on your property please give us a call at (360) 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131.

## ***BE SAFE AROUND ELECTRICITY***

If you see a wire on the ground or hanging low – or showing signs of wear that in your judgment looks dangerous call Cowlitz PUD at (360) 423-2210 or (800) 631-1131 any time of day or night. Our trained personnel will come inspect it and make any needed repairs to help ensure your safety.

## Automated Meter Installation Progress

### Meters Installed in February – 2014



■ Meters Installed to Date   ■ Meters Remaining

## Tweeting When the Power is Out

With so many customers now having wireless devices which do not need electricity to operate, more of you are asking us to provide real-time power outage information and other updates on our website.

We are now able to do that with Twitter.



Cowlitz PUD posts most power outage information on its Twitter page, which also updates our website with the same information. It's an easy way to find out if we're aware of your outage, and to find out how long it could last.

[www.cowlitzpud.org](http://www.cowlitzpud.org)  
<http://twitter.com/CowlitzPUD>

## What's Happening

### HULDA KLAGER LILAC GARDENS

*"LILAC DAYS"*



April 17 through May 9

Open DAILY 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Come stroll four acres of blooming lilacs, with exotic tree plantings and vast shrub and perennial plantings. Admission is \$2, with kids under 12 free, if accompanied by an adult.

The Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens have been a long standing beloved attraction in Cowlitz County for so many decades. The Victorian home (built in the late 1880s) and the nearly four acres of blooming lilacs are not only on the historic registry, but also a beautiful, relaxing and fun place to tour.

It's located at 115 South Pekin Road, Woodland, WA. Take exit #21 off Interstate 5 and follow the signs.

More information: [www.lilacgardens.com](http://www.lilacgardens.com) or (360) 225-8996

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

## Warm Neighbor Plus Program is Underway

As we noted last month, Cowlitz PUD and Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP) are working together to offer a special 2010 program to help low-income PUD residential customers who may not normally qualify for financial assistance.

The program is a result of a settlement between the State of Washington and Enron, stemming from the 2000-2001 energy crisis orchestrated by Enron and other West Coast energy trading firms. Cowlitz PUD will receive \$95,692 of the \$9 million state wide settlement, which must be distributed in 2010 to low-income customers for billing assistance or weatherization.

The PUD has contracted with CAP to assist PUD residential users whose income falls between 125 and 200 percent of the

## Commission Activities



### February 2010 highlights:

- **Authorized the issuance of revenue bonds to finance improvements to Cowlitz PUD's electric distribution system.** The issue will provide sufficient funds to the PUD to pay for its share of the Harvest Wind Project and for capital construction projects over the next three years.
- **Accepted the work completed by JH Kelly of Longview to construct substations** at 30th and Washington Way in Longview and east of Cougar (Beaver Bay Substation).
- **Received staff updates on the progress of the new Technical Services building at the PUD Operation Center and Project FOCUS,** which is the two-year project to install and manage the new Cayenta business enterprise software system.

### Upcoming PUD Board meetings:

Tuesday, April 6

Tuesday, April 20

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.

federal poverty guidelines, who are behind on paying their electric bill and are facing a pending disconnect of service.

Under the guidelines of Warm Neighbor Plus a one-person household could be earning a monthly income from \$1,128 to \$1,805 to qualify; a two-person household could earn from \$1,518 to \$2,428 per month.

For more information on Warm Neighbor Plus call CAP at 360-425-3430, ext 231.



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

My very first job in the utility business was as an energy auditor for the Springfield (OR) Utility Board in 1982. I had just finished my Master's at the University of Oregon, and before that had earned my Bachelor's at the University of Nebraska.



Working as energy auditor was not the job I had my sights set on coming out of grad school. But the economy was lousy in the early 80s and it was not easy to find a job. So I started my utility career crawling in attics and under floors doing residential energy audits.

In 1982 electric rates had risen significantly as a result of the (mostly failed) effort to build five nuclear plants at once in the Pacific Northwest. That left the region short of power and with rising rates, which in turn prompted Congress to pass the Pacific Northwest Power Supply and Conservation Act, known as the Regional Act.

The Regional Act fundamentally changed how utilities planned for power supply in the region, and mandated BPA and its customers to emphasize conservation in a way not previously done in this country. It essentially treated conserving energy as an equivalent to building new power plants.

This emphasis on conservation created a job for me and many others and I ended up doing about 400 audits prior to being promoted. It gave me a first hand opportunity to meet and discuss energy and utility issues with customers. It turned out to be a great first job.

Almost 30 years later the region is again facing questions about new power supply, as the amount of federal hydro has been reduced (primarily due to fish concerns) and our populations and electric demands have grown dramatically.

Under our new BPA contracts which take effect in 2011, utilities will be required to meet their own load growth. No longer will we be able to just turn to BPA to serve growing customer power demand.

No matter where we turn – coal or gas, wind or solar, or nuclear – these new resources will be more expensive than the hydroelectric power we buy from BPA and from our own Swift No. 2 project. Making matters more difficult for Cowlitz PUD is the end of our 50-plus year contract to buy cheap hydro from Grant PUD. Grant PUD now needs that power to meet its own customers' needs.

That makes energy efficiency and conservation the best option to help stretch our low-cost hydro power further. We'll continue to promote simple and reliable measures like insulating attics, floors and walls and more efficient lighting.

However there are new technologies – some already here and others on the horizon. Our ductless heat pump program is very popular. This is a breakthrough for service territories like ours, by offering a technology to replace baseboard or wall heaters without having to install duct work. You'll see highly efficient appliances, heat pump water heaters and "smart" appliances that can be turned on-and-off to avoid putting large peaks on the grid. Similar measures will be available for commercial and industrial sectors as well.

If you hang around long enough things comes back around, which is the case with a renewed emphasis on conservation and me. The PUD will be spending more time, effort and money on conservation programs in the coming years. But our success will come down to how willing our customers are to adapt to these new technologies and make lifestyle adjustments, so we can maximize our low-cost hydro and lessen the need to build expensive new resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Skeahan', written in a cursive style.

Brian Skeahan  
General Manager

## Contact Information

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