



**Jefferson County**  
Public Utility District

**Public Power,  
Local Services,  
Community  
Connections.**  
February 2019  
Newsletter



l-r: Jeff Gordon, Brian Van Ness, Colton Worley, Gerrit Van Otten

## LOCALLY GROWN: THE CHS CLASS OF 2008 AT THE PUD

Chimacum grows a lot of things, including, apparently, PUD employees. Nearly a dozen PUD staff members and one commissioner attended or graduated from Chimacum schools. Four employees even graduated in the same year.

The Class of 2008 includes SCADA Apprentice Colton Worley, Journeyman Lineman Brian Van Ness, Customer Service Coordinator Jeff Gordon and Warehouse Storekeeper Gerrit Van Otten.

Two of the four, Worley and Van Ness, have known each other since grade school. They were some of the earliest hires in the electrical department, joining the PUD in 2013. Van Otten and Gordon first met in freshman year of high school. They joined the PUD in 2014. All four have since moved up.

Worley was originally hired to

work in the warehouse, but soon moved over to work on the PUD's Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition System (SCADA), which is both the brain and central nervous system of the PUD's electrical grid. Worley monitors and controls the system, and helps to build and expand it. He also helps manage metering and substations.

Because he can monitor the electrical grid from his office at the PUD, Worley helps dispatch for the line crew during outages. In some cases Worley can reroute power from his office remotely, other times he directs the crew to manually close and open switches in the field, restoring power to an area affected by an outage before repairs are done.

As a lineman, Van Ness is in communication with Worley to coordinate work restoring the

electrical grid. Van Ness was the only one of the four who knew he wanted to work in the utility industry after high school.

"Pretty much every task associated with the job sounded good to me," said Van Ness. "I get to climb and operate equipment." Van Ness was one of the first apprentice lineman hired in 2013 and achieved his journeyman status in 2017.

As Storekeeper, Van Otten makes sure Van Ness has the supplies he needs to do the work in the field keeping the power and lights on. Van Otten was originally hired as a Customer Service Representative...

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## ROUND UP FOR THE RAINY DAY FUND CHECK THE BOX ON THE FRONT OF YOUR BILL

Winter is not over and many residents still need help affording basic utility services. A lot of us take power and water for granted, but even short times without make clear how dependent we are. Help ensure some of our most struggling citizens can afford access to light, heat, and clean water. If you haven't already, consider checking the box on your bill to round up for the Rainy Day fund. Or consider making a larger monthly or one time donation.



## MEETINGS/EVENTS

Regular meetings of the PUD Board of Commissioners occur monthly on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 5pm.

Meetings of the PUD's Citizen Advisory Board are held at 2pm on the second Monday of each month.

Commissioner and Citizen Advisory Board meetings are open to the public and are held at the Jefferson Transit Board Room at 63 Four Corners Rd. *Check our website for more details or changes.*

Come see us at the  
**JCHBA Home Show**  
Blue Heron Commons  
March 2nd, 9am - 4pm

District 1 Commissioner: **Jeff Randall**  
District 2 Commissioner: **Ken Collins**  
District 3 Commissioner: **Dan Toepper**

**Kevin Streett**, Acting General Manager

# MEET JAKE SWAN, OUR NEW STAKING ENGINEER



As soon as it was clear that Jake Swan was a top candidate for the open Staking Engineer spot at the PUD, his future co-workers began referring to him as Jake 2.0.

Swan was hired to replace Jake Medley, and in addition to sharing a first name and title, Swan, like his

predecessor, grew up in the utility world. Swan's father works for Portland General Electric (PGE) as a repair dispatch supervisor. His uncle and cousin also work for PGE, as project managers.

Swan has worked in the utility world since 2016. He was a project manager at

Potelco before coming to the PUD at the start of 2019.

Swan said he was attracted to Jefferson PUD because he was looking to settle down in smaller, more picturesque town with better quality of life than he experienced stuck in traffic between job sites in the Portland Metropolitan Area.

## WHO'S ON FIRST? PRIORITIZING POWER RESTORATION

On Thursday, December 20th, 2018, Jefferson County was hit by one of the most damaging storms the PUD has experienced since taking over electrical service in 2013.

Though less than 6,000 customers experienced outages (out of over 19,000) and all but ~1000 had their power restored that same day or by the next morning, some customers remained without power until 10pm on Sunday night, four days later.

Why did it take so long to restore power to those last homes? Unlike the transmission line outages that occurred in November, where one incident of a tree falling on a wire took out power to 16,000+ customers, the Dec 20th storm led to 69 separate incidents of trees damaging lines, or trees damaging poles, or other weather induced damage to the grid.

That means instead of going to one location to fix one problem restoring power to all customers, PUD crews had to attend to nearly 70 locations. And not just once.

Because so many live electrical wires had been knocked down in the first day, a lot of the initial work involved driving around the county de-energizing downed wires, or

cutting them from roadways.

Safety is the PUD's first priority, and PUD crews had to eliminate any dangers to the public before they could start on repairs. This is why some customers saw PUD trucks working near their home soon after the storm, but remained without power for hours or days after.

So how does the PUD decide who gets restored first? According to Acting General Manager Kevin Streett, once the immediate threats to public safety are taken care of, the PUD prioritizes repair work based on the type of system affected:

1. Transmission Lines
2. Substations
3. Three phase distribution lines
4. Single phase distribution lines
5. Secondary distribution lines.

Additionally, the PUD prioritizes restoration of power to the hospital and emergency management facilities. Restoring power to grocery stores and pharmacies is also high on the list. After these locations are restored, the PUD responds to incidents in order of largest number of customers affected, and works down from there.

Secondary distribution lines are the lines leading to homes or businesses, and the majority of the outage incidents that occurred on the 20th were of this type and spread across the entire county.

PUD crews worked around the clock during the four days during and after the storm. Two private crews were also brought in to assist. The storm was declared a FEMA event.



PUD crews tending to a large tree on wires on the Coyle Peninsula

## THE CLASS OF 2008 *continued...*

then became a meter reader before moving to the Warehouse/Storekeeper position in 2018.

In his current position, Van Otten is responsible for maintaining all the supplies needed by PUD crews. During an outage situation, he is often contacted by Worley or Van Ness to pack up supplies and deliver them to the crew in the field. Van Otten also fills in as a flagger when

repair work requires road closures or blocking of lanes.

Jeff Gordon was promoted from Customer Service Representative to Coordinator in 2018. In this role, he helps lead the PUD's interactions with customers. More than half of the work performed by the PUD is a result of customer interactions with customer service, whether because of an outage report, an application

for new service, or problems with a bill. When a customer reports an outage, Gordon will take the call, enter it into the system and then pass it on to Worley in dispatch.

Gordon says growing up here has helped him with some of the more difficult parts of his job. "Knowing a lot of people in this county and the culture here helps me customize my approach." Gordon has two children of his own, The oldest attends Chimacum Middle School.