

# TRADING TIMBER

Improving reliability  
one pole at a time



March 2026 Newsletter

**Approx 10,000 poles support hundreds of miles of utility line throughout Jefferson County and each plays a vital role in reliability.**

Routine inspections of utility poles help prioritize replacements, making our nearly 400 miles of aboveground lines safer for both the public and line crews.

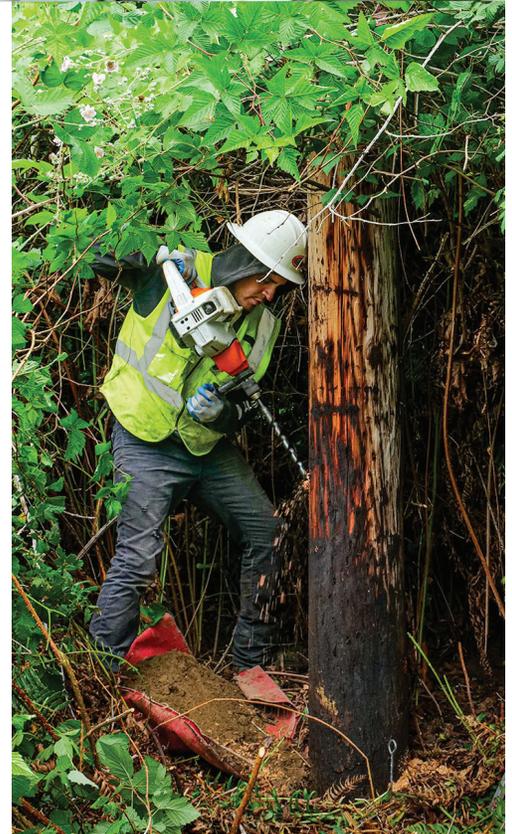
Contract inspection teams check approximately 1,000-1,300 poles annually with the goal of a complete pole inventory every 10 years. The inspection process often requires bushwhacking through roadside brush to gain access before the work truly begins.

A visual survey is conducted, focusing on malicious attacks by woodpeckers, fine wood dust from boring insects, and weather damage typically in the form of a rotten, jagged pole top. A pole may look fine from the outside but inside may tell a whole different story. A quick “sounding test” (lightly hammering the exterior of the pole), and a well-trained ear, often tell what lies inside.

Internal testing involves 3 bore holes into the pole at various heights—below ground to ~18”, at ground level, and aboveground 24”. Each bore is angled at approximately 45 degrees to provide the tester a larger sample area.

Testing the internal structure requires a delicate, seasoned touch. A metal feeler gauge with a lightly curved end is inserted into each bore hole and drug along the sides to determine the internal structure. A soft, punky center where fibrous pieces come out with the gauge signifies rot or bug damage to the heart wood (center) of the pole—larger pieces of wet wood pulled from the bore can indicate water intrusion and rot.

**continued on back**



**It's not a boring process. Pole testing requires drilling in multiple locations for a snapshot of the poles health.**

## **Southeast Jefferson Fiber Surveys Now Underway**

Construction between Chimacum and Coyle is scheduled to begin in early-Fall 2026 in the Southeast Jefferson fiber area. In preparation, contract engineers have been in the field conduct surveys plotting fiber pathways to registered homes.

Fiber construction to the home in the SE Jefferson fiber project is fully-funded by grants until the 65% take rate is reached. Currently, registrations are

at 55%! Visit [jeffpud.org/broadband](http://jeffpud.org/broadband) to see if your home qualifies and to register today!

During the site visit, the survey team may ask for your assistance identifying any private underground utilities, such as septic systems, irrigation lines, propane lines, outdoor lighting, or power lines not owned by the PUD. They will also note landscaping features like gardens, plantings, driveways, and other obstacles that could affect installation.

**REPLACEMENT, cont.** While on site, crews inspect approx 60-70 poles per day. Once inspected, the team fills each bore hole with preservative designed to ward off insects and rot.

Next, our PUD engineers review the pole. The most recent survey in the Port Townsend area revealed numerous poles to address. Utility poles work together as a system, supporting power lines, transformers, communication lines, and other equipment. Each attachment adds weight and stress to the pole and nearby poles. Engineers confirm the pole's capacity and issue work orders to ensure everything is properly supported.

Work order in-hand, line crew prep the replacement pole, while metering staff conduct a locate at the site, identifying any additional underground utilities in the area. On average, PUD line crews can replace 1-2 poles per day, depending on the type of pole and its location.

Placing a pole requires a new hole, with the old pole often being cut off below ground after the new one is set—this is referred to as a 'cut-and-kick'. With the derrick digger and it's 16" auger positioned, the line crew begins the task of boring-down. How deep depends upon the height of the pole—a 45' pole will be about 6.5' underground, while a 75' transmission pole might be closer to 9.5'.

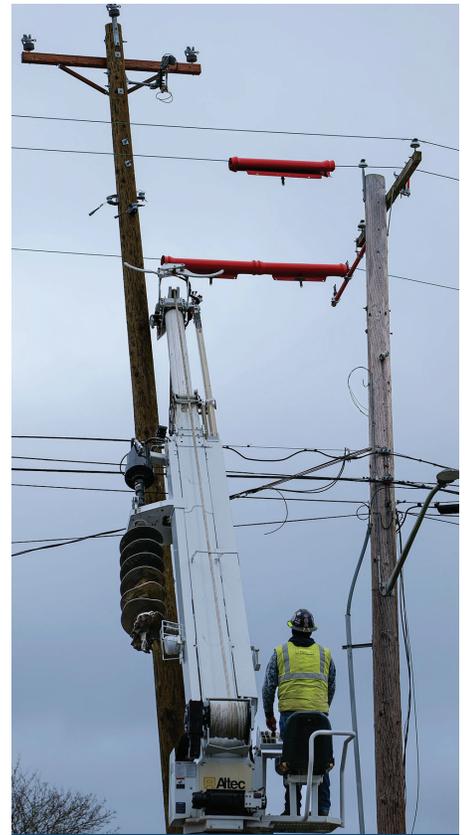


The final step before setting the pole is to check level from all angles using a plumb bob.

Slowly, carefully, the auger churns up the earth, which is placed nearby on a ground cloth to refill around the new pole. Minutes later, the same armature supporting the auger bit transforms, revealing a large claw at the end of the boom. A lifting chain is placed around the pole and it is hoisted airborne, guided into place by the line crew and securely held in the vertical position by the claw.

This is where modern technology meets old-school Pythagorean theorem. A traditional plumb bob is used to check the pole for level before being filled in.

Crew backfill the hole and use a long handheld air ram to pack the dirt around the pole. Aboveground, lines are secured and down-guy support wires are installed—these are the wires extending from the midpoint of a pole that connect to a ground-based anchor to better support the pole on corners or tricky terrain.



Out with the old, in with the new. Line crew replace a woodpecker-damaged 3-phase pole near the Mountain View pool in PT. Woodpecker infiltration is a common occurrence that can quickly reduce a utility poles lifespan. When possible, replacement occurs while lines are still energized (as indicated by the red line protective covers) to avoid potential contact. Shown is a 45' pole replacement near the Mountain View pool in PT.



## Stronger Links. Better Connected.

*A note from our friends at Jefferson Transit*

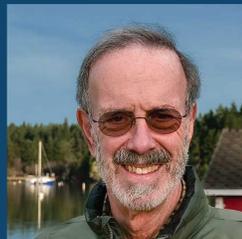
Jefferson Transit wants to hear from you as they review proposed route changes. Scan the QR code with our smartphone or visit [jeffersontransit.com](http://jeffersontransit.com) to learn more!



Regular meetings of the PUD Board begin at 4pm on the first and third Tuesdays of most months. A Public Comment period begins shortly after the start of each meeting, followed by staff and board reports and voting items. Meetings are available in-person and online with a web link on the event calendar on [jeffpud.org](http://jeffpud.org)



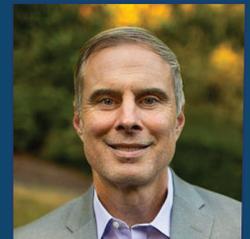
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# Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events 2026

**Residential Customers Only  
NO FEE**

## Limits

Paint - 25 gallons

Fuel - 20 gallons total

Container Size - 5 gallons

Containers with liquids cannot be returned and must be no larger than 5 gallons.

**SATURDAY  
10:00AM - 2:00PM**

**April 11**

Chimacum High School  
91 W Valley Rd, Chimacum, WA

**May 9**

Jefferson Transit  
Haines Park & Ride  
440 12th St, Port Townsend, WA

**June 6**

Quilcene Roads Shop  
295316 Hwy 101 Quilcene, WA

**September 12**

Chimacum High School  
91 W Valley Rd, Chimacum, WA



[www.jeffersoncountysolidwaste.com](http://www.jeffersoncountysolidwaste.com)

## ACCEPTED at the Collection Event



Aerosols



Automotive products



Gasoline & fuels



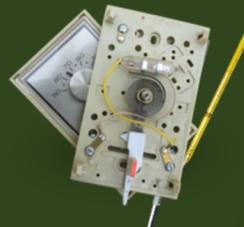
Household cleaners



Latex paint



Marine & road flares



Mercury thermostats & thermometers



Oil paints, stains, solvents



Pesticides, herbicides



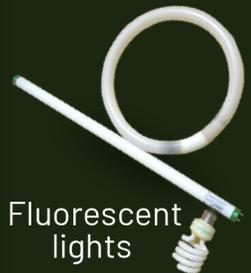
Pool & Spa Chemicals

## NOT ACCEPTED

Drop these off at Solid Waste facilities during regular hours.



Antifreeze



Fluorescent lights



Lithium, button, & rechargeable batteries



Motor oils