

PUD

Jefferson County
Public Utility District

CUSTOMER CONDUIT



**Meet Dan Toepper,
Commissioner District 3**

EXCEPT FOR A FEW YEARS IN PORT HADLOCK,

newly elected PUD Commissioner Dan Toepper has lived his entire life in the district of Jefferson County he now represents. Toepper was born in Port Ludlow and along with his wife Robin, lives there still.

Toepper's father worked for the Forest Service out of the Quilcene Ranger Station when Toepper was born. Toepper said he "grew up in the outdoors" and at two months old was taken by horseback up to the abandoned Tubal Cain mine on the trail his father was working on.

As a younger man, Toepper worked in the fishing and timber industries. For the last 28 years, Toepper worked in union construction as a heavy equipment operator. Toepper learned a lot about the installation of utilities during those years. He worked on fiber optic cable installation along the Hurricane Ridge road, sewer infrastructure in Sequim Bay State Park, and many other projects around Western Washington,

In September of 2018 Toepper retired to focus full time on the final stretch of his campaign. During the first half of his campaign for PUD commissioner, Dan often left home before dawn to work in the South Sound, then raced back to attend campaign events in the afternoons or evening.

Toepper credited his election win in part to the deep roots he has in the county. Toepper graduated from

Chimacum High, and many of his four children and six grandchildren have gone or are going to school in the county. Toepper also coached little league for many years, and he believes those connections have been invaluable in helping him stay informed about what residents of this county want and need. He hopes to use those same channels to keep his neighbors, friends, and family members informed about issues related to the PUD as commissioner.

Dan is proud to carry on his predecessor's role as the rural, blue collar voice of the PUD. Previous District 3 Commissioner Wayne King lives in the woods of Gardiner, owns and operates a machine shop, and is renowned for his hydraulic repair skills. He was also known for being a passionate and blunt-speaking advocate for the rural residents of Jefferson County. Toepper praised King's many achievements as commissioner, as well as his commitment to improving and advancing the PUD, something Toepper intends to continue, though with his own personal style.

In his first few months as commissioner, Toepper says he looks forward to working with the other commissioners and staff to improve the PUD's organizational stability and structure.

"The PUD is a work in progress," said Toepper. "We have moved

forward on the initial promises of local jobs and local investment. But there's been a lot of turnover at the PUD in the last five years, and we need to find more ways to keep the people we have and to attract good people to work here."

Toepper's other priorities as a new commissioner are to increase the PUD's participation in local emergency management preparations and to do what he can to keep PUD rates low for customers, though Toepper explained that doesn't mean lowering existing rates. Rather his goal is to keep the PUD efficient and proactive, with an enhanced focus on conserving power and resources to reduce expenses.

Commissioner Toepper can be reached by email at dtoepper@jeffpud.org.

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

SPACE HEATERS: COMFORT OR MENACE?

COMFORT: Space heaters are generally inexpensive, portable, and easy to operate. They provide heat quickly and directly. For many of our customers, space heaters are an essential part of staying warm during the winter and cooler months of the year.



If you are using a space heater to heat or supplement heat for your home, use it wisely. The US Department of Energy recommends those shopping for new electric space heaters buy UL-tested, thermostatically controlled units, with tip-over safety switches that will automatically shut off the heater if knocked over.

MENACE: According to the National Fire Prevention Association, space heaters account for 43% of home heating fires and 85% of associated deaths. Unvented, combustion-based space heaters have asphyxiated homeowners or led

to explosions. Portable electric space heaters plugged into overloaded outlets or circuits can lead to burning wires inside the walls of homes. Unattended heaters left too close to drapes, couches, or other household items can lead to damages or fires.

Also: never plug space heaters into power strips, they are not designed to handle the high current flow and can melt or burn. Try to leave 3 feet of clearance around space heaters and avoid operating them unattended.

CHECK YOUR GFCI's AFTER FLICKERS OR OUTAGES



Jefferson County has experienced a number of outages over the last two months, and we're not even halfway through storm season. Even for those customers who didn't lose

power surges through our electrical grid and can trip the breaker in GFCI-protected outlets. GFCI outlets are most often found in kitchens and bathrooms, but in some homes are also found behind refrigerators, freezers, sump-pumps, or hot-tubs. Our friends at Frederickson Electric suggested we remind folks to check their GFCI outlets after outages

or flickers, especially those that might be hidden, or connected to appliances that aren't used often. To avoid a freezer full of thawed deer or u-pick berries, or a sump-pump that fails to activate during a home flood, do a search around the home and reset any tripped GFCI breakers by pressing either the reset button, or the off button and then reset.

power, there were flickers where the lights blinked on and off repeatedly. Outages and flickers can send short

LETTERS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS



Jeff Randall, District 1

Thank you for your support and business as a PUD customer over the past year. As 2018 draws to a close I am pleased that our PUD is in a strong financial position and that we received clean financial and accountability audits from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

Looking ahead, we will break ground in 2019 on an expansion to our PUD building at 310 Four Corners Road. If you visit this office, you will notice it is crammed to overflowing. This facility was originally built by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to serve as a storage yard with limited quarters and office space. This expansion will allow us to consolidate our staff together for the first time since 2013 when we began electric utility service and our staff grew from about 8 to more than 40. The new larger office will allow us to sell one administrative building and end the use of a second building we currently lease in Port Hadlock. All this we plan to do for a budget of about \$4 million which will come from reserves. We will take on no additional debt. Best wishes to you and your families in the coming year!

Commissioner Randall can be reached by email at jrandall@jeffpud.org



Ken Collins, District 2

Why can't the PUD do more to prevent outages? If you are living in an area that has experienced a number of outages already this season, you are probably asking yourself this question. It is very frustrating to have the lights and everything else suddenly go out when the wind starts

howling. Generally speaking, there are two times when customers think about the PUD; when there's an outage and when the monthly bill arrives. Over the last few years, the PUD has spent between one half to three quarters of a million dollars each year on tree trimming. The PUD's goal is to eliminate trees that are close to transmission and distribution lines. However, wind gusts of 40 miles per hour plus will cause nearby trees to fall into power lines, even though they are not directly adjacent to them. Currently, the PUD is spending several million dollars per year replacing aging infrastructure, which is another (but less frequent) cause of outages. For PUD staff and Commissioners, it's a balancing act to allocate the right amount of resources for prevention, maintenance, operations and emergency response, and also avoid shocking* customers when the bill arrives.

Commissioner Collins can be reached by email at kcollins@jeffpud.org

**pun intended*