

PUD CUSTOMER CONDUIT

Public Power, Local Services, Community Connections

November 2018 Newsletter



HELPING MORE CUSTOMERS IN NEED

In June of 2018, Customer Service Manager Jean Hall came to General Manager Larry Dunbar with a problem.

The PUD had budgeted \$200K to fund its low-income and senior bill credit program, which provides qualifying customers either \$39.50 or \$20 reductions on their monthly bills respectively. But due to greatly increased participation, the fund would be out of money by October unless the PUD made a change.

Dunbar and Hall brought the issue to the PUD's Board of Commissioners who, in September, voted to increase the program's budget from \$200K to \$350K. In 2019 Dunbar has asked the board to increase the budget further still, to \$400K.

Hall credits the PUD's Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) for the participation jump. CAB studied the PUD's low-income support

programs throughout 2017. "They determined we needed to increase our outreach and promotional efforts and to expand the eligibility, both of which we've since done."

Hall invites customers who think they might qualify for the program or who need other assistance to contact customer service ASAP. "We have the bill credit program and we offer things like budget billing to help spread out the cost of the utilities over the whole year and keep people from being surprised by jumps in bills. We also have winter shutoff protection and protections for customers with special medical needs. We do everything we can to help. When we can't do more, often times our partners can."

Olympic Community Action Programs (OlyCAP) provides

Assistance Program (LIHEAP), helping with winter heating costs, which is expected to be available beginning sometime in November.

The PUD partners with both OlyCAP and St. Vincent de Paul on an additional program. Formerly known as "Power Boost," the PUD's

"We're asking customers to help their neighbors who need it most: people who have to choose between eating and heating their home."

-Will O'Donnell,
Communications Manager

newly re-named Rainy Day Fund provides one-time grants of up to \$500 in emergency assistance to eligible low-income

residents who have received shut off notices and are in immediate danger of losing utility services.

Unlike the bill credit, which is funded through electric base rates, PUD customers have the option to support the Rainy Day Fund by checking boxes on their bills to either round up to the nearest dollar each month or make a one time or recurring donation of any amount. Some customers give \$5 per month and some give \$250 once a year, said Hall.

"This isn't for people who are just having a hard month or are repeatedly delinquent," explained

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CUSTOMER SERVICE
OFFICE HOURS 9 AM - 4:30 PM
STARTING DECEMBER 3

Final 2018 Board of Commissioner Meetings
November 20th and Dec 11th. 5pm
Jefferson Transit Board Room, 63 Four Corners Rd
CAB Meets 11/19 and 12/10 at 2pm

Address: 310 Four Corners Rd. Port Townsend WA 98368

(360) 385-5800 jeffpud.org

Larry Dunbar, General Manager

LOW INCOME CONT... the program. In the video Hall. "This is for people who are on the verge of homelessness or face severe health risks if they lose their water or power, or both."

Why the name change? According to Communications Manager Will O'Donnell "local artist Michael McCurdy made a really lovely stop motion animated video to promote

a mother and child walk through the rain to a neighbor's house to receive some shelter and some tea. The idea is that we all have rainy days, and it's the kindness of others that helps us get through," said O'Donnell.

"We're asking our customers to help their neighbors who need it most: people who have to choose

between eating and heating their home. Last year we raised about \$30,000. There is need for at least double that amount, and I would love to be able to help get us there."

O'Donnell is using imagery from McCurdy's animation to promote all of the PUD's low-income support programs across Jefferson County.

For information or assistance call 360 385-5800 or go to jeffpud.org.

CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

The Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) is a 9 member committee that reviews upcoming PUD policy and program changes, makes recommendations to the PUD's Board of Commissioners, and voices concerns to staff. The CAB meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 2pm.

The CAB has studied and made recommendations on low-income programs, late fees, metering, solar power, rate adjustments, and more. The CAB currently has openings in all three representative districts (same as county commissioners). Residents interested in serving on the CAB are

invited to submit letters of interest addressed to "Commissioners" and delivered to the Four Corners office no later than 5pm on Dec. 3rd, 2018. Please include contact info & relevant experience along with reasons for applying in the letter. This is a non-paid position.



PAPERLESS BILLING PRIZE AWARDED NEW DRAWING SET FOR JANUARY

Nearly 300 customers signed up for paperless billing in August and September, and from that pool, Townsend resident Kay Harper (pictured, left, w/ GM Larry Dunbar) was randomly selected to win an Echo Spot. Dunbar was so happy with the number of sign-ups that he has authorized a new drawing

to be held after January 1st. Any customer who has signed up for paperless billing between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 2018 is eligible to win (except Kay). Paperless billing allows customers to control their account online 24/7 providing more options and preventing waste. Sign up today. See jeffpud.org for more info.

MAPMAKING IN THE SCHOOLS

As the PUD's GIS Specialist, Casey Finedell (pictured, right) makes maps for a living. GIS stands for geographic information system, and Finedell uses computer-based GIS software programs to track and map PUD assets like power lines, poles, transformers, water pipes, meters, septic tanks, and more.

Finedell has volunteered at Blue Heron Middle School in Jennifer Manning's (pictured, right) 7th and 8th grade STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) classes to share his love of geography, cartography, and technology. "The kids get the technology part of maps fast," said Finedell, "and I enjoyed sharing the history of mapmaking as well."



PULL OVER FOR PUD VEHICLES

Linemen and other utility workers are now protected by Washington State's "Move Over Law," giving them the same safety protections as law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency responders. Linemen and crews often work along roadways. Motorists who don't pay attention can add an extra layer of danger to this work. When you see the flashing emergency lights on a truck, flaggers, or a bright orange sign saying "Utility Work Ahead," move over or slow down. Failure to do so can lead to fines, jail, and/or loss of license.

PLEASE DON'T POST ON OUR POLES

It's a misdemeanor in Washington state law to attach to utility poles signs, posters, or any similar object which presents a hazard to, or endangers the lives of, electrical workers. Attachment to utility poles can only be made with the expressed permission of the utility involved.

Line crews wear protective clothing and gloves to prevent electric shocks. Protruding nails or pins from postings can tear this protective equipment and tiny punctures in a worker's gloves or equipment can expose them to electric shock, causing serious injury or death.