Spring 2014
A publication of
Mason County PUD No. 3

Mason County PUD No. 3 is a community-owned and governed utility, created to provide safe, reliable and cost-based electric and wholesale telecommunication services. PUD 3 strives to meet the community’s expectations through responsive customer service; an educated, well-trained staff; a strong commitment to protect and improve the public’s investment in the utility; and the wise and efficient use of the community’s resources.

Underground Power Line Installed in 1960’s
Required Emergency Replacement

PUD 3 crews worked to replace nearly two miles of underground power lines in the Lake Cushman area. The underground lines spanned cross-country along a walking trail from the Skokomish Park to Division 2 and were damaged during a February 16 storm. During the storm, nearly 500 customers in Divisions 2, 3, and 4 of Lake Cushman lost power.

It is much more difficult to determine the location of damage on underground lines than overhead lines. In addition, due to the remote area, crews faced access issues for their large equipment and trucks. After the storm, lineman were only able to temporarily patch a portion of the cables in order to restore power to most customers. Since the fix was not guaranteed to hold, an emergency replacement was decided.

“These cables power the water system that supplies the community,” said Terry Peterson, PUD 3’s Director of Engineering. “Since the outage, only one of the two well pumps was operating and it was powered by a generator.”

The cables were installed in the 1960’s and were already on the schedule for replacement. Most older underground lines typically last 35-45 years. “The crews faced many obstacles with this job,” said Operations Manager Scott Peterson. “Ground water, tree roots, uneven terrain, and heavy rains all made the working conditions challenging” Restoration work to the cross-country trail is all that remains to be done.

The crew did an outstanding job. What was expected to take six weeks was completed in just over two weeks.

Journeyman Lineman Dennis Simon (pictured above) worked on the Cushman job that began February 25.

Mason County PUD No. 3 Utility Fuel Mix Report
Legislation passed in 2000 directed electric utilities in Washington to report their fuel mix to customers each year.

The 2012 fuel mix for PUD 3** (reported in 2013) listed as a percentage of the total is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biomass</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cogeneration</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>Geothermal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroelectric</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landfill Gases</td>
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<td>Natural Gas</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 100%

A Message from the Manager

Our Clean Renewable Hydroelectric Power Comes with a Price

Because we live in the Pacific Northwest, sometimes we take for granted the amazing clean and renewable resource we have in the Columbia River system where PUD 3 receives most of its power. The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) operates dams along the Columbia and Snake rivers, providing us with an abundant supply of low-cost, renewable hydro-electric power, unlike other areas of the country where utilities rely on expensive and depleting fossil fuel sources for their energy needs.

Having access to this resource doesn't come without a price, however. Environmental concerns over protecting salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River Basin has led to effective, but costly measures to overhaul dams and improve the tributary habitats.

“The effort has been enormous, involving hundreds of state and tribal partners throughout the region, biologists, engineers and millions of dollars in funding from Northwest electric ratepayers and federal tax payers,” as reported in the Citizen’s Guide to the 2013 Comprehensive Evaluation.*

Public utility customers served by the BPA have spent approximately $1 billion over ten years for fish and wildlife programs. This amounts to about one-third the cost of wholesale electricity purchased from BPA. But it is working. There are more salmon and steelhead returning to the Columbia River Basin now than at any time since the first federal dams were constructed in 1938.

The PUD’s goal is to provide its customers with clean, safe and reliable electricity at the lowest cost possible. And while the fish and wildlife restoration costs are high, having access to greatest natural and renewable resource in hydroelectricity still makes our rates some of the lowest in the country. And as you can see from PUD 3’s fuel mix located on the front page of this issue, it is done at a near-zero carbon footprint.

As always, don’t forget to call 811 before digging holes for trees, shrubs, or fence posts. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs. The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines (such as electricity, phone, cable TV, water, sewer, gas, etc.) in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you, and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets a free location and marking service for underground utility lines and helps prevent undesired consequences.
Consider the Surroundings

When evaluating plants and trees for your yard, do not plant or landscape near power transformers, or under power lines. Working or playing near transformers can be potentially hazardous. Landscaping can hide or restrict important utility access to equipment for maintenance and repairs. If you have trees or shrubs growing near your electricity meter, please trim them for meter reader access.

Lastly, do not plant trees beneath the power lines. Over time, trees grow into the lines causing the potential for dangerous situations or extended outages. Well planned landscaping will not only add beauty to your yard, it will also ensure that the plants and trees are compatible with overhead utility lines.

Trees and Power Lines

Mason County PUD 3 manages nearly 700 miles of overhead electrical lines throughout its service territory. Every year, PUD 3 makes a significant investment in keeping vegetation clear of power lines, balancing sound environmental practices with the need to provide reliable electricity.

Trees growing too close to power lines can disrupt electrical service and cause dangerous situations and costly repairs. You can do your part by following a few guidelines when considering your home’s landscape.

Following the tips in this article can help you and your family stay safe, conserve energy and help preserve a reliable electrical system while working on your landscape. You can obtain additional information by contacting PUD 3’s engineering department or visiting the website: masonpud3.org/trees.

Trees and Safety

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For more information: 360-426-8255
www.masonpud3.org/trees
Mason County PUD 3 continues to provide its customers with clean, renewable and reliable electricity every day. PUD 3’s annual report on its sources of electricity shows that customers can be pleased about an excellent mix of energy sources. The official PUD report, a requirement under Washington State law, is posted on the front page of this newsletter.

Eighty-eight percent of the wholesale electricity purchased by the PUD for its customers comes from renewable sources, such as hydroelectricity, and qualifying energy sources under the Washington State Energy Independence Act (Initiative 937). Nearly nine percent of the electricity comes from the Columbia Generating Station, a nuclear power plant in south-central Washington.

According to the report, only three percent of the PUD 3 electricity comes from fossil fuel plants.

Information for the report comes from the Washington State Department of Commerce’s “Utility Fuel Mix Report for 2013.”

By comparison, the three large investor-owned utilities in Washington State get 46% their electricity from power plants fueled by fossil fuels; just over 28% from coal and about 18% natural gas.

PUD 3 uses nearly 88% Renewable Energy Sources and 97% Carbon Free Energy.

PUD 3 Customer Service Representative Wendi is this issue’s employee spotlight. You may have seen her friendly face at our downtown payment center. She has worked for the utility since October of 2005. Wendi relocated to Shelton from California, with her husband Doug who grew up here.

Wendi earned her bachelor of arts degree in business administration from California State University. She brought a wealth of experience and skills with her to the PUD. She was a branch manager for Wells Fargo Bank and has also worked as a claims adjuster and a licensed insurance agent. In addition to her position at the PUD, Wendi also manages the payroll and bookkeeping for her husband’s construction business.

On a personal note, Wendi is an avid runner. She belongs to the Guerilla Running group in Olympia. Over the past year, she has run about fifteen 5K’s, two 10K’s, and four half marathons. Her running has taken her places like San Diego, Phoenix, Hood River and back closer to home in Tacoma and Olympia. She and her husband enjoy their quiet lake-front property with friends, family and their three dogs.

Wendi is a shining example of the PUD’s well-trained staff who is committed to offering the best service to you, our customers. We hope you have enjoyed getting to know her a little better.

Low-Income Senior & Disability Discounts Available

PUD 3 offers low-income senior and low-income disability discounts. To see if you qualify, contact our customer service at 360-426-8255 in Shelton, 360-275-6518 in Belfair and 360-861-4247 in Elma or visit our website at www.masonpud3.org.