



Skamania County PUD's

# News From the Wire

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Edition**

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**PUD #1 of  
Skamania County**

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**8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.**

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**Board of  
Commissioners**

**Meeting Schedule**

**9 a.m.**

Monday 06/16/08

Monday 07/07/08

Monday 07/21/08

Monday 08/04/08

Monday 08/18/08

## **A Summer Update By Bob Wittenberg Manager for the District**

This summer of 2008 brings a tremendous workload to your elected Commission and PUD staff, focused on the costs and reliability of your electric power supply and the cost there of. Our power supplier, BPA, has embarked on a project to offer new power supply contracts to their utility customers of the Northwest, such as Skamania PUD. Our current contracts expire in 2011. This is a very big deal!!

Roughly 55% of the annual budget to run the PUD electric system is the BPA monthly power bill, which added up to \$4.2 million in 2007. When your Commission and Manager consider a 20-year contract for an allotment of BPA power, for such a huge portion of the cost of doing business, you really want us to get it right. We are trying.

Please recognize that although your personal power bill at home may seem high, folks in California are paying nearly twice as much for 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity. And, their California utilities would really love to have the low-cost electricity produced by the Columbia River hydro system. After all, many big high-capacity power lines have been built to move huge amounts of power both north and south between Los Angeles, CA and The Dalles, OR. And, people who are paying twice as much for power can get very creative.

With a mood in Washington D.C. to 'de-regulate' the utility industry, and competition between states for jobs and economic development, many states are asking their Congressional delegations to look into grabbing a piece of the Columbia River hydro system output. Some argue 'if the Forest Service sells trees off the federal lands to the highest bidder, why doesn't BPA sell its power to the highest bidder'? This is a very serious risk that could be very expensive. We currently pay BPA about 3 cents for a kilowatt-hour and the open market price for the same is 6 to 7 cents.

This issue will carry over into 2009, when public utility customers of BPA will have to decide where they are going to get the power they need to serve new electric loads above their BPA allotment. Your Commission and staff will work hard to get this one right also.

Continued on Page 2

## A Summer Update Continued

Another cost increase risk we face is the cost of salmon recovery. To date, and depending on what is included, BPA has extracted from the electric customers of public power utilities in the Pacific Northwest, roughly \$9 billion in the name of salmon recovery. US District Court rulings over the past couple of years have been very expensive for electric ratepayers. Now BPA has just signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with four tribes, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Bureau of Reclamation, to the tune of \$900 million over a ten-year period. This money also will come from the electric ratepayers of the Pacific Northwest. Oddly enough, I actually support this agreement. When I consider the risk and cost of future Court rulings, and the increased likelihood of actual habitat improvements being made in the tributary streams, I think the long-term benefit will outweigh the cost, and probably lower the cost in following 10 year period. And, I think my grandchildren will have a better chance of catching a salmon.

The above will go on while your staff also trims trees near power lines, replaces rotten poles and underground wire, and make improvements to the Carson and Underwood water systems. It is going to be a very busy summer. And, I am glad I can be involved on your behalf.

## Call Before You Dig 1-800-424-5555



Whether you are planning a major construction project or landscaping your yard, it is important to call for a line locate at least 48 hours before digging or excavating.

When calling be prepared to give your name, phone number, service location, nearest cross road and any special instructions. The Northwest Utility Notification Center will then contact the proper utilities.

“Call Before You Dig” is a free service that can prevent dangerous and costly accidents.

## Help your Meter Reader

Even friendly dogs can be unpredictable when a stranger approaches. You can help our meter reader and service crew by confining your dog in an area away from your electric meter and notify us when you have a new pet.

Speaking of meter, it's a good idea to know where your meter is. If you have a hard time getting to it, so will we. Please take the time to make sure the path to your meter is easily accessible for all.

### *News From the Wire*

is an informational newsletter published by  
*Skamania County PUD* for our customers.  
Reader comments are welcome.

#### **PUD Commissioners:**

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