



Skamania County PUD's

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**PUD #1 of
Skamania County**

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Board of Commissioners

Meeting Schedule

9 a.m.

Monday 04/19/10

Monday 05/03/10

Monday 05/17/10

Monday 06/07/10

Monday 06/21/10

A Good Time for Conservation

It's March 15th. This winter has been way too warm and sunny, and now BPA is projecting a winter snow pack of only 67% of normal. Last year at this time I wrote about BPA and snow, and BPA projected a snow pack of 79% of normal. This was a key factor in BPA's rate increase to the PUD of 7% last October 1st. This leads me to contemplate the coming fights over water for fish, the cost of electricity, economic development, etc.

It seems to me if the Columbia River gets only 67% of the normal spring runoff, the out-migrating juvenile salmon will have less water to swim in, and the water will be moving slower, allowing more opportunity for predators to eat the juveniles. I suspect the water will also warm up more, further stressing the young fish. This all leads to the issue of barging juvenile salmon past the four lower Snake River dams and the four lower Columbia River dams.

Barging of the out-migrating young salmon has shown to be very effective during low-water years. In high-water years barging seems to be on par with in-stream migration. Yet, in this low-water year, the U.S. District Court could impose rules for spilling stored water to simulate a big spring run-off, and thus deplete the water stored in reserve for power production. Again, your electric rates (BPA's costs) are affected by this issue.

There is a way to reduce the financial impact of rate increases, whenever they come. Use less !! For this your PUD offers a variety of energy conservation programs that can help. I list some below.

Heat Duct Sealing: If you live in a manufactured home with electric heat ducts under the floor in the crawl space, our contractor will come and check for leaks. If he finds leaks, he will fix them. The objective here is to put the heat in the house, not under it. Your cost: \$ zero. A similar program for site-built / stick-built homes is coming.

Heat Pump Conversion: If you have electric base-board, ceiling cable, forced-air furnace heating, or an old heat pump, you may qualify for conversion to an electric air-to-air heat pump conversion rebate. Rebates vary with the amount of estimated savings, from \$1,900 for a furnace conversion, to \$450 for upgrading an old heat pump.

Continued ...

Energy Efficient Appliances: If you are buying a new refrigerator, dishwasher, etc., you can get a \$25 rebate for buying one that uses less energy. A top-rated clothes washer could bring you a \$70 rebate. Yes, you will pay more for this better appliance. But you will pay less in electric bills over the life of the unit.

Home Weatherization: We still have the old 'add some insulation, change out the single-pane windows, etc.,' programs. Again, the rebates vary with the energy savings. While most homes in Skamania County have been upgraded, some have not. And again, it will cost you some cash up front, and pay for itself over time.

With the coming water shortages, I would expect BPA to again talk about raising electric rates to the PUD. And, although the PUD absorbed the last BPA increase, we cannot do this forever. Your elected Commission is constantly vigilant in controlling costs. But they too have limits.

So, the best way to control rising costs of any product is to use less of it. Your PUD is here to help with this.

Bob Wittenberg, Manager for the PUD

Budget Plan– Time for recalculations and new sign ups

Now is the time to sign up for the monthly budget plan. Calculations are based on the accounts actual usage for the previous year history, divided into twelve equal monthly payments. Annually all budget accounts will be recalculated to adjust for changes in usage. The status of the budget is tracked through out the year and adjusted as needed. Please contact our office if you would like to become a new budget plan customer.

News From the Wire is an informational newsletter published by <i>Skamania County PUD</i> for our customers. Reader comments are welcome.	
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