



Skamania County PUD's *News From the Wire*

**Aug.-Sept.
2010
Edition**

Vol. 76, Issue 4.10

Published Bi-Monthly

**PUD #1 of
Skamania County**

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**Board of
Commissioners**

Meeting Schedule

9 a.m.

Monday 08/16/10

Tuesday 09/07/10

Monday 09/20/10

Monday 10/04/10

Monday 10/18/10

A Mid Summer Update

We continue to improve the electric system. Overall it is in good shape and is getting better. Our crew has been vigilant in replacing failing underground cable, trimming trees and replacing portions of powerline on SR 14 between North Bonneville and Skamania. We are also looking at creating redundancy at our Underwood substation.

Because Skamania PUD relies 100% on BPA for power, we watch prospective BPA rate increases very carefully. This summer BPA, under the Integrated Program Review, has hinted strongly it will raise rates by 15 to 20% by October 11, 2011. We are actively engaged in trying to help BPA find ways to reduce the size of their increase. We have even proposed that if BPA were to pass along a 15-20% rate increase, that it consider doing so gradually or in a two step manner (5% in 2011 and 10% in 2012.) Previously, BPA raised rates to the PUD in October 2009 by 7% however, we did not pass along the rate increase to you; instead we opted to absorb the increase cost of power. Time will tell if, and how much of the next increase the PUD will be able to absorb. Power costs from BPA make up nearly 50% of the PUD's electric budget.

There are several cost drivers for BPA's prospective rate increase of 15-20%. First, BPA has a number of debt payments that are maturing and secondly BPA needs to undertake a number of renewal and replacement projects on the federal hydro system. Many of these things, like the debt, were deferred during the early 2000s because of the 'Energy Crisis' of 2000 and 2001. Remember, BPA had a 46% rate increase to us in October 2001. They then scrambled to push costs off into the future to avoid sending us more rate increases. Now those deferrals are coming due. Furthermore, the last two winters have delivered well below average snow packs. This has forced BPA to buy power on the market when they didn't have enough water to generate the power needed. All these factors compounded together create circumstances for the prospective rate increase.

Another big cost for BPA, roughly one-third of their budget, is the recovery effort for salmon. BPA spends approximately \$900 million on fish recovery. The good news is salmon and steelhead returns are up (not in every stock, but in many.) The Snake River sockeye salmon run looks good again this year, and the Okanogan River sockeye run is off the charts big. So far year-to-date at Bonneville Dam, Chinook salmon returns are 150% of the ten-year average, Steelhead returns are double the ten-year average, and Sockeye returns are 4-times the ten-year average. It appears that some of our efforts and dollars may be paying off.

The PUD will undertake a substantial electric conservation project this summer. The PUD is working on a plan to get Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) into your homes. This program, assuming a large percentage of the low-energy-consuming CFLs are used to replace existing incandescent bulbs, will save energy on a scale that makes the program cost-effective. Look for a box of CFLs in August or September.

Bob Wittenberg, Manager for the District

Betty Daubenspeck Retires

After twenty years of dedicated service to the PUD #1 of Skamania County, Betty retired on July 21, 2010. Upon retirement Betty and her husband Ron plan to spend time with their grandchildren and travel. Thank you and congratulations to Betty.

Yearly Reminder: Check Your Water Heater Settings

1. It is recommended that water heaters be set at no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the minimum setting on a water heater which cannot be set as low as 120 degrees to prevent severe burns and to reduce excessive energy consumption; and
2. The thermostat of an individual water heater furnished in a residential unit leased or rented in this state to new tenants shall be no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the minimum setting on a water heater that cannot be set as low as 120 degrees, pursuant to Chapter 19.28 R.C.W.

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.

Safety Alert Keep Signs Off Power Poles

Nails in power poles can injure linemen and could cause their climbing spikes to slip, leading to a fall.

That’s why hanging signs on power poles in Washington State is against the law (RCW 70.54.090).

Thank you for helping with this safety issue.

News From the Wire

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

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Printed by Optimist Printing