

Skamania County PUD's News From the Wire

**August-
September
2016
Edition**

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**PUD #1 of
Skamania County**

**PO Box 500
1492 Wind River
Hwy.
Carson WA 98610**

Office Hours:

8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

www.skamaniapud.com

Phone: 509-427-5126
Toll Free: 800-922-5329
Fax: 509-427-8416

**Board of
Commissioners**

Meeting Schedule

9 a.m.

Monday 08/01/16
Monday 08/15/16

Tuesday 09/06/16
Monday 09/19/16

Monday 10/03/16
Monday 10/17/16

We Paid BPA Too Little for Power and Must Now Pay Them Back

We made a mistake that we must now correct. Fortunately, it likely will have little or no impact on you, our customers.

The electricity we provide to you comes from the Bonneville Power Administration and has from our earliest days as a utility. We enjoy a great relationship with BPA. It turns out, though, that we had been overestimating the size of our system to BPA for several years. As a result, BPA gave us a small added discount for the power they sold us. We passed that discount along to you, our customers, in the form of slightly lower electric bills.

We are now being required to fix that mistake.

Going back to at least 2008, we provided BPA data every year that entitled us to a 6% discount on what BPA was charging for electricity. Our data was based on what we thought was the size of our power line distribution network. However, a mapping project that we completed last year showed that we were a smaller system than previously thought. As a result, we only qualified for a 4.5% discount. That was 1.5% less than we actually received. Since the cost of the electricity sold to us by BPA accounts for about half of our total costs, the savings that we passed along to our customers was less than 1% of their bills.

Right after we started our mapping project in 2014, we learned that we likely were overestimating our system mileage. At that time, we were notified by the Justice Department that it had opened a formal inquiry to see if we were making false claims to BPA about our size. We now know that we were reporting that we were bigger than we actually were. While not a criminal matter, claiming to be bigger than we were, even if it were not intended, violated the law.

The Justice Department could have been much harder on us, but chose not to be. We accepted their settlement offer. We have to pay back the \$362,500 overpayment going back to 2008. We also must pay damages equal to the overpayment, plus some attorneys' fees. The total comes to about \$862,200. We also will repay BPA directly about \$180,000 for the last three years that wasn't part of the settlement.

While this was a serious matter, it should have little or no effect on the rates we charge our customers or our ongoing operations. We will pay what we owe from contingency funds that will be built back up over time. With our system now fully mapped, we are confident that the data we provide BPA in the future will be correct, so this kind of mistake is not likely to happen again.

Brent Bischoff
General Manager

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.

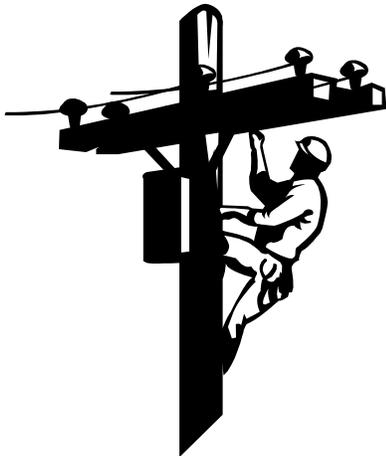
“Call Before You Dig” is a free service that can prevent dangerous and costly accidents.

Please Keep Signs off Power Poles

PUD #1 of Skamania County appreciates your cooperation in keeping our power poles clear of nails and staples. Nails in power poles can injure linemen and cause their climbing spikes to slip, leading to a fall. That is why hanging signs on power poles in Washington State is against the law. (RCW 70.54.090).

We'll print a gentle reminder now and then to keep yard sale and other types of signs off power poles.

Thank you again for helping with this safety issue.



Help Us Stay Connected with You

Whether you're a customer who appreciates staying connected via email or the type that prefers doing business over the telephone, we've got you covered. Please provide us with a current email address so that we have another way of contacting you. Call or email us at: info@skamaniapud.com

It is also important that we have your correct physical address and phone numbers. Occasionally a situation arises where we need to get in touch with you. For example, there are times when we need to shut off your power for a planned outage. We attempt to contact every affected customer. Or we may notice an issue with your meter reading that could result in an inaccurate bill. Help us help you by keeping your contact information current.

Are you an Auto Pay customer? Please make sure your banking information is up to date.

News From the Wire

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

PUD Commissioners:

District 1..... Vacant

District 2..... Curt Esch, President
509-427-8591

District 3..... Liz Green, Secretary
509-538-2568

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