



2,500 lb. spool of wire that had to be walked across a ravine to the repair site.

Last month we got hit hard by a snow storm with trees and branches falling down everywhere. We were without power for more than two days in parts of our system. With trees and branches coming down, the crews would fix one outage and then there were 10 more lined up. I would like to thank all of the hard working people at Mason PUD 1 who worked to get the power back on. I would like to thank Mason PUD 3, Lewis County PUD and Moza Construction for their hard work as well.

During the outage, we had to rent a helicopter to fly above our transmission line behind Potlatch State Park. The line goes cross-country and over a ravine. There was 18 or more inches of snow with a layer of ice under the snow so our service trucks could not get any traction on the access road to the site. Once we found the downed line, we rented a Snow-Cat to get the new line close to the repair spot, but ultimately the crew had to "hike in" a 2,500 lb. spool of new wire across a 1,500' span to make the repair.

PUD 1 line crews really work hard to get the lights back on but if we didn't have help from our neighboring utilities, it could have been several more days before we made all the repairs. We live in a temperate rain forest, which means we grow more vegetation here than just about anywhere else in the world. We grow three big layers of vegetation: ground cover, shrubs, and trees, which means we have lots of vegetation to manage due to the amount of rain we get. The last few years we have increased the amount of tree trimming both contracted and in-house. We are trying very hard to keep the branches and trees out of the lines and keep you in power.

We appreciate your patience as crews worked through this last storm and again, I want to express my appreciation of the PUD 1 employees and the other crews who came to our aid.

Ron Gold, Commissioner

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
regularly meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday  
of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the PUD 1  
office in Potlatch. For more information  
on meetings, agendas and minutes,  
please visit [www.mason-pud1.org](http://www.mason-pud1.org).

**MASON COUNTY PUD 1 COMMISSIONERS:**

**DISTRICT 1**

Karl Denison .....(360) 898-2618

**DISTRICT 2**

Ron Gold .....(360) 426-9540

**DISTRICT 3**

Jack Janda .....(360) 877-5867

**GENERAL MANAGER**

Steven Taylor .....(360) 877-5249





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**THE CONNECTOR WINTER 2012-2013**



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# FINANCE news

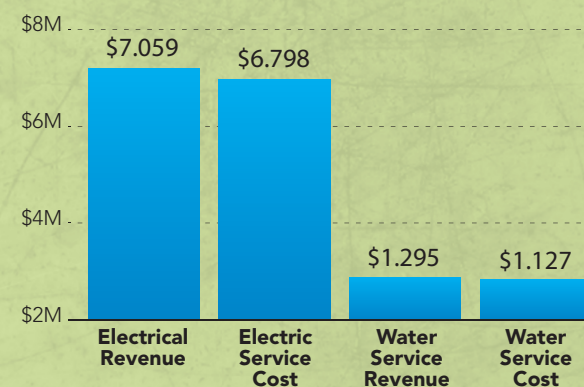
In November 2012, the Washington State Auditor's Office presented their annual audit findings for PUD 1 for the year 2011. Results showed a clean audit report of the district's financials with no findings or letters to management. Commissioner Ron Gold attended the Auditor's exit conference and reported the excellent news to the board at the following commissioners meeting. Gold commended the District's auditor Greg Kester and his team for their high level of accountability in financial practices and

reporting. Since its inception in 1935, PUD No. 1 has not had a single audit finding.

The board also adopted the 2013 budget for both the electric and water departments. "Like last year, we worked on a high, medium and low budget scenario so we could see what line items we absolutely needed this year and what could wait. Given our utility's small size and large seasonal customer base, we have to be very strategic and prudent with our expenditures," stated Kester. "We presented a budget that we felt was appropriate to maintain our reliability and sustain our operations."

The 2013 budget passed with no additional rate increases, despite the 15.3% increase in Bonneville Power Administration's wholesale power cost to the

District in 2012. Customers are in the final year of the four-year, 4% increases that were approved back in 2010. The 2013 budget calls for electrical revenues of \$7,059,000 and cost of electric service of \$6,798,549. The PUD water budget calls for revenues of \$1,295,000 and cost of water service of \$1,127,779.



## CANAL COMFORT FUND

The Canal Comfort Fund is the utility assistance fund provided by Mason PUD 1 through Community Action Council (CAC). The fund exists to help Mason PUD 1 customers avoid disconnection. The CAC qualifies the applicant and processes the payment to the PUD to be applied to the customer's account. 100% of the benefit goes to the eligible customers. The CAC receives no processing or administrative fees for facilitating the program. Every dollar donated goes to a customer or family in need.

With continued unemployment and the lingering recession, more families than ever are in need of assistance to help keep their power on during these cold months and to keep their water service connected. For several years, generous PUD 1 customers have contributed to the Canal Comfort Fund by making donations through the PUD on their bill remittance slips and through other means. As with most charitable donations in our region, these donations have slowed in the last few years. While donations are decreasing, the need is increasing. The CAC and PUD thanks customers for their past donations and asks our customers to consider rounding up their next payment and sending the change to the Canal Comfort Fund. Every little bit helps!

**DONATIONS  
IN 2011-2012  
WERE ONLY  
25% OF THE  
AMOUNT  
DONATED IN  
2009-2010**

For customers needing assistance, you can contact the CAC for Mason County at (360) 426-9726 and for Jefferson County at (360) 385-2571 to make an appointment. The Mason County

CAC also has information on their website at [www.caclmt.org](http://www.caclmt.org). In addition to payment assistance, they also have programs to help weatherize homes with insulation, weather stripping, and caulking for families that qualify. Please take advantage of this program by calling (360) 438-1100, ext. 2100. It's a great way to lower your power bill and conserve energy!

For more information on the Canal Comfort Fund and how to make a tax-deductable donation, please feel free to contact our Customer Service Representatives.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Our crews got a workout last month as they responded to the hundreds of outage calls that came in while the wet, heavy snow fell just before Christmas. Calls came in from all over the system as trees and hillsides gave way to the weight of the snow and rain. Our priorities went from individual restorations to a system-wide restoration.

As the outage stretched over three days, cold and frustrated customers called to ask when the power would be restored. That is a very difficult question to answer during storm events. We can tell you it will be a couple of hours and then it turns out to be three. We can tell you it will be three and it turns out to be only one. During this last storm, we restored power to one location and then another location would go out. As we restored the second location, the first one would go out again. It was one of those natural disaster events that seemed like it would never stop and we couldn't catch a break. Luckily, we had some great assistance from Mason PUD 3, Lewis County PUD, and Moza Construction and we were able to split up and tackle the major repairs all at once.

December demonstrated to us the real power of Mother Nature. The wet snow and rain was devastating to our electrical system and repairs have continued into January. Some customers asked why we don't just bury the overhead lines, thinking this would solve the tree problem. On the surface, that appears to be a simple solution. However, like most things, there's a cost involved with it. Just the materials for underground line are about 350% of the cost of overhead line,

not including labor and construction to dig and install it. That cost rises when the line is installed along roadways and in rocky or hard ground. It may seem that underground power lines would be more reliable, and it is in some cases. Some of the damage may have been avoided if it had been underground. However, we had several places where trees fell over and their roots pulled the line right out of the ground. So it's a Catch-22. We have to weigh the options and determine if the value you would get is enough to justify the cost impact on rates. Our responsibility to our customers is to provide reliable and low-cost electrical service.

We increased the 2013 tree trimming budget by an extra \$50,000 over 2012. Living in the scenic, mountainous area that we do, there's only so much trimming that we can do along scenic highways and state and federal protected areas. We are focusing on increasing reliability and making sure that we can improve infrastructure in a way that won't raise your rates through the roof; especially in light of the 15.3% rate increase we just received from Bonneville. We are being very strategic with our construction projects to ensure that you are getting the most value and reliability for each dollar that is expended.



Steven Taylor,  
General Manager



## LET'S COMMUNICATE!

**The PUD has received rave reviews on its email and social media communications outreach. If you are not on our email notification list, please join! You will get updates and status reports on major outage events, planned outages, and other topics that affect the majority of PUD customers. Send an email to [kristinm@hcc.net](mailto:kristinm@hcc.net) to sign up!**



For those of you on Facebook, the PUD has a very interactive page with up-to-the-minute reports on outages and projects. Find us on Facebook and "Like" our page so you can start getting information first!



Even if you do not have a Twitter account, you can get twitter updates (or "tweets") sent right to your phone via text message. All you have to do is type the words FOLLOW @MASONCOUNTYPUD1 and send the text to 404-04. You will get each tweet sent right to your cell phone.



PUD employees removing old pressure reducing valves in Alderbrook.

# WATER DEPARTMENT NEWS

## Alderbrook pressure reducing valve removal project

**IN THE LATE HOURS** on a cold, wet January night, the water crew removed four pressure reducing valve (PRVs) assemblies along Beach Drive in the Alderbrook Water Company. These valves had been inactive for ten years when new PRVs had been installed. The old valves were leaking water under the roadway and removal had to be coordinated with the annual maintenance shutdown of the Alderbrook Resort & Inn. The water main on Beach Drive was out of water after 10 pm Thursday, January 3rd and water service was

restored by 5 am, Friday, January 4th. The crew was able to remove all PRVs and install lengths of ductile iron pipe and gate valves at all four locations. The gate valves allow for isolating pipe segments should repairs need to be made in the future. Previously, the only isolation valve was at the intersection of Beach Drive and Country Club Drive. The existing PRVs that were installed ten years ago will continue to operate as usual. We appreciate the cooperation of our customers especially after water restoration when it took several days to get the air out of the lines.

Other construction projects scheduled for this year are: the Canal Mutual Water System

Improvement Project and the Hood Canal Water Company A and B Intertie Project, both scheduled for construction this summer. Canal Mutual will replace water mains in the Starr White Development and along US 101 and install service meters. The Hood Canal Intertie will replace water mains on Dalby and SR 106, install water meters in the Hood Canal Water Company B, decommission the wooden reservoir off Dalby and combine Hood Canal A and B Water Companies into one water system.

Jocelyne Gray, PE,  
Director of Operations - Water

*Thank you*  
**for your years of service with PUD 1!**

**The following employees reached service milestones for the second half of 2012...**

**25**  
years!

**Julie Gray**

**15**  
years!

**Mike Rose**

**10**  
years!

**Teresa Hummer**

**5**  
years!

**TJ Goos**