

1-855-875-7210



DIRECT PHONE PAYMENT LINE

We have had feedback from customers that when they call the office and choose the extension for the automated phone payment system that the system is repeating the PUD's phone number instead of recognizing the customer's phone number. There is a way to bypass that, however the easiest way to use the automated phone payment system is to dial it directly!

If you call 1-855-875-7210 from the phone that is connected to your account, the system should recognize your phone number and you can proceed to your account for billing information or to pay your bill. If you choose to call the system by dialing in through the PUD, you will have to enter your phone number once you hear the request from the automated system regarding phone numbers.

If you experience any difficulty, you can call customer service for assistance and to pay your bill over the phone with them at (360) 877-5249 or toll free at (800) 544-4223.

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.

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



ROUND UP FOR THE CANAL COMFORT FUND

Since we first sent out our request for assistance for the Canal Comfort Fund, we've had hundreds of dollars in donations from generous PUD 1 customers! Thank you very much for supporting your neighbors in need. If you haven't donated yet, please consider rounding up the change on your next payment or signing up for a monthly contribution. Contributions are tax-deductable and the Canal Comfort Fund monies almost always run out each year before all qualifying PUD 1 families can receive assistance. Thank you again for your support!

Please consider a donation today!

THE
CONNECTOR
WINTER 2015-2016



Fish spawning at
Lilliwaup Falls.



www.mason-pud1.org

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STORM SEASON HAS ARRIVED

Without jinxing ourselves, we have to say that so far the nasty weather systems have not been too terrible to us along the Hood Canal. We had one full day of outages during the November 17th wind storm that caused chaos from one end of our system to the other, but considering our counterparts across the state had hundreds of thousands of customers without power for multiple days, we fared pretty well. Fortunately, we were able to make all of our repairs within a 24 hour period and send some of our employees to Snohomish PUD to assist them in getting their tens of thousands of customers back in power.

Each year we remind customers to prepare and this year is no different. If we continue to have a wet and windy fall and winter, mud slides and highway closures could prevent us from getting to you for hours or even days. Several callers were caught unprepared last month and were upset and stressed out about their kids, pets, or elderly family members. We strongly urge you to have supplies on hand. Buy or establish access to a generator if you have family members on life support or pets that require power to survive,

such as aquatic pets. If you are a life support customer who is on oxygen or dialysis, in addition to having an extra supply and back-up batteries on hand, please call us and get on our list so we can contact you directly. Lastly, see if there is a place nearby where you can go if the temperatures are freezing and electricity is your only heat source. Neighbors and community centers are vital to our networks for weathering the storms.

As always, we will be here to work round the clock, if necessary, to get you back in power. We want you to be as safe and comfortable as possible in the meantime. Please make sure you are prepared!



PUD 1 RECEIVES TOP COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

Mason County Public Utility District No. 1

took home two first place plaques and two second place awards at the Northwest Public Power Association's Northwest Communications & Energy Innovations award banquet held at Harvey's Lake Tahoe in Stateline, Nevada on Tuesday, September 15th.



The District won first place in the Group A division (<10,000 customers) for their website and social media presence. The Connector newsletter and the District's "Go Paperless!" campaign took second place honors.

"I'm so proud of what our small team here at PUD 1 continues to accomplish each year and that our communication efforts stand out amongst a group of well executed communication pieces from other northwest utilities," said Kristin Masteller (pictured), PUD 1's director of employee & public relations, who accepted the awards on behalf of the District.



MANAGER'S REPORT

What is Community Solar?

Community solar is a project that allows utility customers to get the perks of rooftop solar, without lending their rooftops or making a huge financial investment. While PUD 1's individual rooftop solar community is growing (we have about 15 net metering customers now), it isn't a feasible option for many of our customers for many different reasons: cost prohibitive, don't have the right kind of roof, no direct sunlight on property, ongoing maintenance, etc.

With community solar, customers can purchase units on a solar array that is installed and maintained on PUD property and then the PUD divides those costs amongst the participants based on the level of participation they choose. In our state, there are currently two ways to recover the costs for renewable energy projects, such as solar. The Washington Renewable Energy Cost Recovery Incentive Program offers incentives of \$0.54/kWh or \$1.08/kWh, depending on the type of installation and if the equipment is made in Washington state. This incentive is set to expire in June of 2020, which motivates us to begin our project as quickly as possible to shorten the return on investment period and maximize the money customers can earn. The second way customers can earn money is through an annual credit on their electric bill based on the electricity generated by their share of the project. Customers may also consult with their tax advisor to determine if they are eligible for additional federal tax incentives.

This fall, I worked with Energy Northwest (EN) through the process of a feasibility study, siting for the solar array, and production analysis. EN has helped several other utilities in our state launch successful community solar projects. We also sent out a survey asking if customers

were interested in the project and we had an overwhelming reply of interest and requests for more information on community solar.

While participants likely won't "get rich" on this venture, it's an affordable way to participate in a clean, renewable energy project without a high buy-in investment. The price per share for our project is estimated to be around \$85-\$100. Customers will be able to buy up to a pre-determined limit of shares. We are still working out the details on individual investment levels and how to begin the sign-up process. If our project is like those at Mason PUD 3 and other utilities across the state, the interest will likely be so high that we will have to do a lottery to determine who gets the opportunity to purchase shares on this project.

We are holding a public meeting on Community Solar on Tuesday, January 12th at 6:00 p.m. at the Hoodsport Fire Hall. We are collecting email addresses to contact customers once we are ready to begin. If you would like to be on that list, please email Kristin Masteller at kristinm@mason-pud1.org. We will also soon have a section on our website dedicated to the community solar project.



— Steve Taylor, GM



COMMISSIONER CORNER

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by so fast. For such a small PUD, we sure have accomplished a lot in the last 12 months. I'm very proud of the efforts of our management team and employees. They knocked out a very ambitious work list on our strategic plan that included tree trimming, underground line replacements in problem areas, new water system acquisitions, capital projects to repair aging water infrastructure, and celebrated our 80th year as the first PUD in the state. We had some great highlights as we received several regional, state and national awards for our employee's expertise and service in engineering, communications, water taste tests and safety. The commission held a budget hearing this month to discuss the 2016 budget and work plan. As commissioners, we have the budget presented to us line-by-line and we go through it with staff to

determine what projects are absolutely necessary and what we can live without, if needed, to offset impact to rates. Despite tightening belts and creative workarounds, we just couldn't absorb the impact of yet another increase from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). PUD 1 is a full BPA subscriber, meaning we purchase 100% of our power from them and they account for 50% of our annual operating costs. We have had nearly double digit rate increases each biennium for the last three biennium. This year, the impact to us was 7.1% in actual power costs and 4.4% to the transmission (delivery) costs. We absorbed the last BPA increase but were not able to do the same this year. We try to make the budget process as transparent as possible. The same documents that the commissioners receive are posted on the PUD website and we hold public hearings where these items are

discussed in detail. While it's never a fun or popular decision to raise rates, we know that in order to keep our water and power service safe and reliable for you, we have to keep our operations functioning, while keeping an eye on costs and the bottom line. Again, I feel that we have done a great job this year and look forward to the work ahead in 2016. If you have questions on the budget, rates or anything else, I know I speak for all three of us commissioners when I say that we're always available for our customer-owners.



Jack Janda
Commissioner, District 3



THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS RECOGNIZES PUD 1'S JOCELYNE GRAY

The Society of Women Engineers (SWE) awarded Jocelyne Gray, PE, director of operations-water with their Emerging Leader award for her impact on the Society and the engineering community. Gray accepted the award at SWE's annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee on October 23, 2015. The Emerging Leader award recognizes Gray for her remarkable generosity and initiative in her public, private, and professional life; specifically for educating the public about water safety and quality and for encouraging future engineers. Gray was the only engineer from a small organization (less than 5,000 employees) selected for this award. "Having my work in our small corner of the world be recognized by a national organization is a great honor.

The safety, quality, and availability of drinking water is important to me and to the citizens of Mason County. To be chosen among engineers from large, mainly international companies shows that the work I am doing for all of Mason County, not just PUD 1 customers, is important," said Gray. Originally from Kennewick, WA, Gray is a civil engineer licensed in the state of Washington. She graduated from Washington State University in 2000 with a bachelor of science in civil engineering. She has been with Mason County PUD No. 1 since 2009 and was previously recognized by our state's Department of Health Office of Drinking Water with their 2011 Grace Under Pressure award.