



Deer on the shoreline at 2 Margaritas in Union

THE CONNECTOR SUMMER 2025

WATER DEPARTMENT RECEIVES OVER \$6.5 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR WATER SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS

The Washington State Department of Health's (DOH) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) awarded \$6,550,397 in funding to three water projects this year. \$5,851,548.50 of the funding is in the form of grants (loan forgiveness) and \$698,848.50 is a low interest loan.

The following projects were funded this cycle:

Big 5 Consolidation- This project will consolidate the five neighboring water systems in Shelton including: Lakewood, Cherry Park, Woodland Manor, Island Lake Manor and Springwood. By consolidating these systems, the PUD can improve the overall water quality for each of the systems. These systems' wells had low levels of PFAS detection during our investigative samples that we took in 2024, which many water purveyors are finding in systems near airports. The systems also have elevated nitrate levels that do not exceed MCLs but will be treated preemptively. A new water reservoir and backup generator will also be installed at Cherry Park to support the consolidation. This will ensure that customers on all five systems will have water service when the

power is out. Mainline installation will also occur to tie the systems in. Island Lake Manor has a history of unsatisfactory water quality samples prior to the PUD acquiring the system, which led to permanent chlorination requirements by DOH. Island Lake Manor's well will be decommissioned, and they will be served by the greater consolidated system. Small water system consolidation is a strategic goal of both the State and the PUD, as it reduces the administrative work and tracking by the PUD and Dept. of Health. This project was 100% grant funded in the amount of \$4,992,000, marking the largest water grant the PUD has received to date.

Harstene Retreat- This system received \$160,700 in grant funding to update the water system plan and also includes the design & construction of an iron and manganese removal treatment system to improve water quality and aesthetics.

Viewcrest Beach- This project includes the design & construction of a new reservoir, booster station, and iron & manganese treatment, ensuring adequate water storage and improved water quality and aesthetics. This funding totaled \$1,397,697 and includes 50% loan forgiveness (grant) and

50% low interest loan at 1.75%.

Now that funding has been awarded, the PUD will work on the contracts with DOH and begin engaging with our engineering firms to complete the design and planning for each of the projects. This process, along with obtaining final design approval by DOH, can take 12-18 months. Once approved, the PUD will begin putting these projects out to bid to construct. When we reach that phase, we will begin communicating with customers at each of the systems about the impending work. The PUD is pleased to be able to provide these solutions for our customers without impacting water rates and is grateful for our partnership with the DOH Office of Drinking Water. We thank them for choosing these important projects for funding and for helping us deliver safe and reliable drinking water to our community.



Brandy Milroy,
Water Resource Manager



Morrison Pixley



Linemen and Manager



Old PUD Office Building



Old Warehouse and Trucks



Women's Club



Linemen and Truck

This year marks the 90th year of our Public Utility District's (PUD) service to Mason County residents along the Hood Canal. Public power in our part of the state is attributed to the Washington State Grange and to PUD 1's founder, Morrison F. Pixley of Union, Washington. Mason County PUD 1 has the distinction of being the first and oldest operating PUD in the state. It was actually 91 years ago this fall that Mason County voters went to the polls to authorize the formation of Mason County PUD No. 1, which became operational just three months later, in February 1935, when the utility acquired the assets of the former Hood Canal Mutual Company located in Union, Washington, and began serving 212 active electric customers along the Hood Canal. It was Morrison Pixley and the shareholders of the Mutual Company that supported the creation of a PUD because it offered public control over electricity and greater flexibility in financing and the ability to expand service to other residents of the area including those that were previously denied service in remote areas due to the high costs to extend service lines. There was also a concerted effort to suppress the public power movement by large private landowner interests who wanted to keep regulations and property taxes low over their land and resources, and profitability up for investor-owned utilities that had a monopoly over electrical distribution in the county. PUDs are community owned utilities with the authority to issue tax free municipal bonds. Professional staff directly manage the utility while locally elected commissioners are responsible for policy, budget, hiring of the manager, and oversight of the utility operations.

Back to Mr. Pixley, as he and the Grange deserve most of the credit for our being here today, he was a land developer and the nephew of Frank M. Pixley, the celebrated founder of The Argonaut, one of the most influential publications in California in the late 1800s. After the great San Francisco earthquake in 1906, Pixley purchased land along Hood Canal from lumberman John McReavy, with the hopes of creating an artist haven in "Yacht Haven", what would later become Union City. In 1916, Pixley moved his family from California to their new estate just west of where Alderbrook Resort is and became fast friends with another local artist named Orre Nobles.

In addition to his dedication to creating his artist colony or haven, Mr. Pixley also became very involved in local politics and improvements for the quality of life for Hood Canal residents. In 1934, he started the Hood Canal Telephone Company (now present-day's Hood Canal Communications), which operated a cooperative telephone network in rural Mason County. This was two years after he began working relentlessly to create a public utility district for the Hood Canal. In fact, Pixley helped organize the deal that would allow PUD 1 to acquire the assets from the Hood Canal Mutual Company, which was managed at the time by his son Clark Morrison Pixley. Clark Morrison Pixley was appointed as PUD's first manager after the acquisition was completed.

This year we celebrate and thank the Washington State Grange for sponsoring the very first people's initiative (Initiative No. 1) to the State of Washington in 1930. The outcome is there are now 28 active public utility districts within the state serving more

than a million customers. And of course, we thank the forward-thinking Morrison F. Pixley's vision and drive, along with the tradition of service and success during PUD 1's 90th anniversary. The district plans to hold an anniversary celebration with our customers and industry counterparts on October 3rd in conjunction with our annual customer appreciation event and Public Power Week celebration.

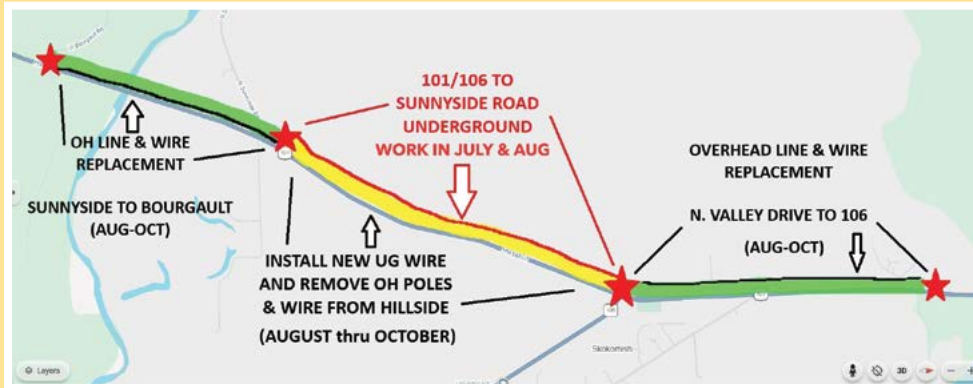
We will keep you informed of the upcoming celebration of our 90th anniversary as Washington State's first operating Public Utility District serving the owners/customers along the beautiful Hood Canal.

I would be remiss to not mention what a great utility you have today. It is operated by the best of the best. Most are native Mason County residents themselves and a significant part of the community. These talented individuals provide services for our electric, water, fiber and sewer customers in Mason County and south Jefferson County. Customers have praised our service and the professionalism of our personnel. The PUD runs lean, with just 26 employees serving over 5,600 electric customers, 3,170 water customers on 77 water systems, 88 fiber customers, and one community sewer system. 90 years later, we still uphold the same time-honored values of public service and providing value to our community. We all look forward to seeing you at our customer appreciation event in October.



Jack Janda,
District 3 Commissioner

Upcoming Electric Construction Projects



The PUD has a few electric construction projects starting this summer that will impact traffic in various areas. The largest project is the line rebuild on U.S. Highway 101 starting just north of N. Valley Drive on the Skokomish Reservation and continuing south to Bourgault Road by the Skokomish River bridge.

Starting in July, contractors will begin installing conduit and vaults along the west side of the highway from the intersection of Highways 101 & 106 near Hood Canal School, south along 101 to Sunnyside Road. There will be occasional short, single lane closures with alternating traffic. This underground phase of the project should be completed by the end of August.

The next phase will be overhead construction in three different areas:

1. Just north of N. Valley Drive on the Skokomish Reservation to the 101/106 junction contractors will replace poles and upsize wire along the highway.
2. From the Hwy 101/106 junction to Sunnyside Road, contractors will convert the overhead line to the newly installed underground conduits and remove the existing poles and wires that are currently on the hillside along that stretch of Hwy 101. This will reduce tree contacts in these lines, protect the lines from slides on that hillside, and save on tree trimming expense in future years.
3. Contractors will also replace poles and upsize wire from Sunnyside Rd. to Bourgault Rd.

The overhead portion of construction should be completed by the end of October. Upsizing the wire will also allow the PUD to feed this area from other substations when there are outages or substation maintenance scheduled.

This rebuild project is grant funded by FEMA as part of the PUD's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and grid resilience strategy to harden the electrical grid from identified hazards and reduce outages. We appreciate everyone's patience as we complete this important work as quickly as possible. We thank you all in advance for driving carefully around our employees and contractors. Everyone needs to go home safely to their families at the end of each workday!

The PUD's line crew will also be working on line rebuilds on Eagle Creek, Shar Lane, Old Mill Hill and Lon Webb Road in the next few months as part of this FEMA HMP funding, with several additional small rebuilds in the queue over the next 18 months. We will keep residents posted as we get closer to moving into each neighborhood. Our tree trimming program will also continue in the last half of 2025 with contractors working in two sections: from Robinson Rd. to Spencer Creek Road in Brinnon and from Glen Ayr Resort to N. Robinson Road in Lilliwaup. We will also remove some danger trees along the power lines on Highways 101 and 106.

Any questions about these projects can be directed to the PUD's Engineering Manager or Electric Superintendent at the PUD office (360) 877-5249.



Jeremiah Waugh, PE,
Engineering Manager



Join Us!

**FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 3RD**

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**21971 N. HWY 101
IN POTLATCH**

**Celebrating our
90th Anniversary and
Public Power Week at
our drive-thru event!**



PUBLIC POWER WEEK

Powering Strong Communities



PUD's Manzanita House



Community Partnerships- A Regional Approach to Safety

In recent years, PUD 1 has taken a more comprehensive approach to regional safety. In addition to participating in Mason and Jefferson Counties' regular emergency management planning meetings, we also entered into an interlocal agreement with Hoodspport Fire & EMS to become the local airlift site for the west Hood Canal area, setting up access for ambulances to bring patients on site to meet helicopters any time of day. We also conduct joint trainings now with local fire departments and Life Flight to train on site to load people onto backboards and into the helicopters. The PUD has specific Mayday Procedures that we practice and follow in case of live electrical line contacts that we also want our local EMS agencies to be aware of. While we hope to never encounter a Mayday situation, we want everyone to know exactly how to respond because every second counts in those rare but extreme circumstances. This community approach to safety and education has

been overwhelmingly positive and helped strengthen relationships and the services that our rural community receives from its public agencies.

This year we were able to build upon these partnerships even more. Last summer, PUD 1 and Fire District 6 in Union started discussing a practice burn of the PUD's house on the Manzanita Campus in Union. The house was used for employee and contractor housing on the site where the new substation was being built, and it needed to be demolished in early 2025 to make way for new water storage facilities. The PUD invited FD 6 to use it for a practice burn training exercise. FD 6 chief Clint Volk then invited MACECOM 911, Hoodspport Fire & EMS and West Mason Fire that serves Skokomish Valley to join in this practice burn training. Chief Volk said that in his 18 years of working at the Union Fire Department, this was the first time that a house was available locally for this type of training and that typically, they had to go

to Snohomish County to receive this type of hands-on live burn experience for their employees and volunteers. The PUD was excited to be able to provide this training to our community partners who work so hard to keep our employees and community safe. It was a great multi-agency, public sector partnership. The training went smoothly, the fire departments all got great experience out of the event, and the PUD got one more good public benefit out of the house before it was demolished.

PUD 1 thanks FD 6 Chief Clint Volk, West Mason Fire Chief Matt Welander, Hoodspport Fire Chief Michael Sexton, MACECOM Executive Director Joe Schmit, Dedrick Allan from MasonWebTV, and our Manzanita Campus neighbors in Union for the coordination and partnership in making this joint training exercise go so smoothly. Stronger public partnerships mean a safer Mason County!

PUD 1 Wins TWO Industry Safety Awards for ZERO Time Loss in 2024

1st Place Safety Award in <70,000 Exposure Hours Category from Northwest Public Power Association and **Safety Award of Excellence** from the American Public Power Association.

Good job, everyone! #SafetyIsACulture



THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS regularly meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are now held both in person and remotely. The call-in instructions for the public are posted on the PUD website along with the meeting packets. For more information on meetings, please visit mason-pud1.org or call the PUD office.

MASON COUNTY PUD 1 COMMISSIONERS:

District 1

Mike Sheetz(360) 898-7934

District 2

Ron Gold(360) 490-1560

District 3

Jack Janda(360) 490-1800

General Manager

Kristin Masteller.....(360) 877-5249



www.mason-pud1.org

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