

Your Utility News

WAHKIAKUM PUD

Winter 2020

PO Box 248, 45 River St.
Cathlamet, WA 98612
360-795-3266; 360-465-2171
www.wahkiakumpud.org



Manager's Corner *By David Trambly, General Manager*



David Trambly

As many of you may already know, our efforts to secure a grant to build the infrastructure required to provide high speed internet to our community fell far short of our request. We are hopeful that our legislators will allocate additional funding in 2021 and we will continue to explore funding opportunities that may provide the resources required.

The Skamokawa Water Consolidation Project has been very successful. We were able to consolidate several inadequate water systems and provide much needed chlorination to the new system that will help assure water quality to 48 homes!

Year 2020 proved to be a very unusual year with Wahkiakum PUD experiencing surprising growth throughout Wahkiakum County. We added more new water and electrical services than in the past 20 years. This influx of new services helps to keep our rates stable.

With the current pandemic still very much a part of our lives I would like to thank all of our customers for your understanding of our altered business practices. While our lobby remains closed to the public, our office is fully staffed and able to handle all of your requests. Our water and line crews are fully staffed as well and prepared for whatever mother nature may throw at us this winter. Thank you for your continued patience and as always, please don't hesitate to call us in the event of a water or power outage.

Here's a sample of what you will find when you visit www.wahkiakumpud.org and click on My Account:

- Easy access to log into your online account so you can view billing statements, see usage history and print payment receipts
- Quick Pay payment option with no log in required
- Assistance & Resources for information on VFW assistance, CAP, Washington 2-1-1 and our Residential Energy Assistance Program
- Payment arrangements and payment option information

Why Do the Lights Blink?

When the lights quickly blink, it usually indicates the PUD's equipment is working properly. It reflects the operation of equipment that protects the lines and keeps the power from going off for more than just a moment.

Wahkiakum PUD's electric distribution system includes reclosers that operate similar to a self-resetting circuit breaker. Whenever there is a short circuit on the line the recloser interrupts the flow of electricity. In most cases the short circuit is temporary; the recloser allows only a brief interruption of service—meaning your lights blink.

This can occur for all kinds of reasons in the Pacific Northwest (e.g. a tree branch coming in contact with a power line on a windy day). To protect your sensitive electronic equipment during moments like these, Wahkiakum PUD recommends all customers install surge protectors. However, if you experience continuous blinks or a continuous power outage please call us at 360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, we accept

Visa, MasterCard, Discover & Electronic Check.



Your Commissioners' Meeting Schedule:

8:30am 1st & 3rd Tuesday of
each month at
45 River St., Cathlamet

Commissioner's Column

By Commissioner Dennis Reid



This time of year as the colder weather arrives many of our friends and neighbors have a hard time covering their utility bills. This year, with the pandemic affecting so many jobs, the situation is a lot worse than normal. But it is not that hard for us to help. The Wahkiakum PUD Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) is here to help low income rate payers that cannot pay their electric or water bill. Funds for REAP are collected by the PUD and administered by the Wahkiakum Health & Human Services.

Voluntary contributions can be done any time and in any amount at the office, by phone, by mail and with your utility payment. When you pay your bill just fill in the blank for the REAP donation or contact our staff at 360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171 to have a monthly, designated amount of REAP contributions automatically included on your monthly billing statements.

Contributing to REAP is very easy. It doesn't have to be a lot, but that would be nice. If every rate payer added just one dollar a month to their bill the program would be well funded. And for those that can give more, all the better.

So please, let's all help out our neighbors with a monthly or a one time contribution to the REAP program. All donations remain in Wahkiakum County and 100% of the contributions go to local families in need. Please feel free to contact me at 360-795-3589 or dreid@wahkiakumpud.org if you have any questions or concerns.

I am having difficulties paying my bills; are there any resources available to assist me?

Answer: YES! The following agencies/programs are available for assistance. We understand customers may experience financial hardships as a result of COVID-19. Customer service staff is available during normal working hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – Noon and 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm (excluding holidays), to discuss payment arrangements*.

Wahkiakum PUD Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) & Wahkiakum County Human Services

Web: www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/250/Utility-Emergency-Assistance
Phone: 360-795-8630 (option 4) or 1-800-635-5989 (option 4)
Wahkiakum Community Outreach serves Wahkiakum County and administers Wahkiakum PUD's Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) as well as other sources of utility assistance, housing/rental assistance, emergency housing, food/ clothing assistance, referrals, qualification of Wahkiakum PUD's Senior and/or Disabled Citizen Discount Program and more.

Lower Columbia Community Action Program

Web: www.lowercolumbiacap.org
Phone: 360-425-3430 / 1-800-383-2101
LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) is a federally funded program that assists low-income households in making home heating more affordable, avoid shutoff of utility services during the winter months, and maintain a warm, safe, and healthy environment for their families. Clients must meet income eligibility guidelines to qualify. CAP may offer additional services such as Home Energy Assessments, housing, senior services, Meals on Wheels and more.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Assistance

Web: www.dva.wa.gov/resources
Nicci Bergseng, Wahkiakum County Auditor
Phone 360.795.3219 or email bergsengn@co.wahkiakum.wa.us
Wahkiakum Post 5297 of the VFW may be able to assist with resources such as utility and food assistance.

Kinship Caregiver Support Program

Web: www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare
Phone: 360-759-4317 or KinshipNavigator@dshs.wa.gov
Local assistance may be available for a family member caring for a relative's child (ren) in Wahkiakum County. Assistance may include rent, utility, bedding, furniture, clothing, school supplies, instrument rentals, gas and bus vouchers, car repairs, tutoring, food, and interpreter services.

** Meters will continue to be read on a monthly basis and billing statements will continue to be delivered as regularly scheduled. Current Covid-19 prohibitions do not relieve a utility customer from the obligation to pay for utility services.*

Are you on the PUD's **Budget Pay Plan**? Now is a good time to review your actual account balance to ensure your budget payment is sufficient to cover your upcoming winter bills. Your actual account balance is the difference between your actual usage and what you have paid during this budget cycle.

Customers can find your **Actual Account Balance** on every statement or call the PUD so we can assist you in reviewing your current budget pay plan.

Payment Options

Wahkiakum PUD offers the following payment options: checks, e-checks, cash, money orders, debit and credit cards. Payment locations:

On The Web

www.wahkiakumpud.org

Cathlamet Office

Monday–Friday

8:00–4:30 PM (we are closed
12:00–12:30 PM for lunch)

Night Drop

PUD parking lot drop box

Other Payment Options

Make payments over the phone or set up automatic monthly payments. Call customer Service: 360-795-3266
Toll free west-end: 360-465-2171



After Hours Outages

Call Wahkiakum Co Sheriff's at
360-795-3312 or 360-465-2202

Holiday Office Closures



Wahkiakum PUD will be closed to recognize the following holidays:

**New Years Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Fourth of July
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day**

Looking for a way to make a difference?



Donations to the Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) can be made in the office, by phone and by mail. Customers can also request including a designated amount every month on your monthly statement. All donations remain in Wahkiakum County to help local families in need.