

# Your Utility News

WAHAKIAKUM PUD

January 2022

PO Box 248, 45 River St.  
Cathlamet, WA 98612  
360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171  
[www.wahkiakumpud.org](http://www.wahkiakumpud.org)



## Manager's Corner *Dan Kay, General Manager*



This is my first customer newsletter. I would like to start with a huge Thank You to Dave Trambie for all his dedication and years of service to the Wahkiakum PUD customers and community. He will be missed. I am excited and honored to become part of the PUD.

I would like to take a moment and reflect with a brief history of your PUD. Wahkiakum PUD began operation in 1937. The PUD is community owned and locally controlled by a publicly-elected board of commissioners. Our customers have a voice in their utility. The PUD provides essential services that focus on reliability, affordability, and safety. Collectively, between your staff and commissioners, your team here has over 241 years of experience. They are dedicated, professional and here to serve you.

2021 was an exciting year here at the PUD. There was tremendous growth of new customer installations on both the electric and water systems. We also continued our equipment maintenance program with pole testing on approximately one-half of the system, replacement of deteriorated poles and we replaced nearly 7,000 feet of water pipe on the three water systems.

Looking forward to 2022, in addition to continuing to support our new customer installations we will remain committed to the reliability of our electric and water systems. We will continue with our aggressive water system leak detection and maintenance programs, we will continue our pole test-and-treat program and carry on with our ongoing tree trimming program. With the support of your commissioners and team here, the PUD will continue to invest back into our systems.

I would like to close with a quote from Dave Trambie, "Our commitment is to provide professional and personal service to all of our customers."

## Commissioner's Column

By Gene Healy



While doing some research to write an article about the history of our PUD, it became apparent there was too much information for this short column. I decided instead to highlight a few milestone events from our past.

In 1916 James and John West installed the first electric light plant in Wahkiakum County.

In 1926 the Peoples West Coast Hydro-Electric Corp. purchased the West brothers' distribution system.

In 1927 a cable was laid from Westport, Or. to Puget Island, a line was constructed across the island and a cable laid to Cathlamet. Conversion of the West's direct current system to alternating current was completed and expansion into rural areas began. About this time West Coast built a transmission line from South Bend to Ilwaco with a leg to Naselle and Grays River.

On December 30, 1935 County Commissioners Theodore Swanson, Charles Foster and Andrew Shold passed a resolution directing a proposition be submitted to the voters on the November 1936 ballot to decide whether or not to create a Public Utility District. The measure passed 625 to 445 and three PUD Commissioners were chosen; G.J. Jaspers of Puget Island; J.I. Maki of Skamokawa and C.R. Worrel of Grays River. The Board was officially organized on Jan. 7, 1937.

On March 1, 1940 our PUD acquired all electrical properties from the private utility West Coast Power. All West Coast employees remained with the new PUD, including John Dickson our first General Manager. Mr. Dickson held this position for 18 1/2 years. Our PUD became the first in the northwest to serve electrical customers county wide.

After serving 15 years as our Auditor, at the November 1974 election Myna A. (Peggy) Martin was elected and became the first woman to serve as a PUD Commissioner in the state of Washington.

In 1974 BPA completed construction of the transmission line we currently use, from Oregon across Puget Island to Cathlamet. They also built a new substation in Rosedale. The original submarine cable was then abandoned. A second substation was added at the site in 2012.

Most of the information contained in this article is from accounts written by Myna A. (Peggy) Martin.

## COVID-19 CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

### *Normal collection practices reinstated January 1st*

Due to the financial hardships as a result of COVID-19, Wahkiakum PUD temporarily suspended all late fees and disconnects for non-payment of services for our customers from April, 2020 to December 31, 2021. Normal collection practices, including late fees and disconnects for non-payment are reinstated, effective January 1, 2022.

All utility customers seeking resources to help pay their PUD bills can visit [www.wahkiakumpud.org](http://www.wahkiakumpud.org) or contact Customer Service staff during normal working hours to discuss assistance or payment arrangements.

PUD customers with past due balances are encouraged to contact Customer Service at 360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171 to discuss payment arrangements.

### FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, we accept

Visa, MasterCard, Discover & Electronic Check.



## PUD Commissioners' Meeting Schedule

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

Meetings can be attended virtually. Meeting agenda, meeting information and previous meeting minutes can be found at [www.wahkiakumpud.org/about-us/](http://www.wahkiakumpud.org/about-us/).

*The mission of Public Utility District No. 1 of Wahkiakum County is to provide the most reliable electric and water service at the most reasonable cost along with quality customer service to the District's ratepayers. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE AN OUTAGE?**

Electrical outages or water line breaks can occur from a variety of conditions – adverse weather and wind, trees, freezing temperatures, vehicle accidents, digging near utility lines or even floods. Knowing these tips ahead of time will help prepare for a variety of potential emergencies.

### **BE PREPARED:**

- Know the location and how to shut off electrical circuit breakers in your home
- Know the location of the shut off hand valve for your water
- Know how to manually override an electric garage door
- Insulate your water pipes and outside faucets to protect from freezing
- Install surge protectors on appliances and electronic devices
- Make copies of personal documents (identification, insurance policies, medication needs, etc.)
- Have alternate power supply ready (especially if you rely on life support equipment)

### **ASSEMBLE AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT**

Red Cross recommends everyone put together a 2-week emergency preparedness kit with at least these supplies in case of a prolonged or widespread outage:

- Water – one gallon per person per day for 2 weeks
- Food – non-perishable, easy-to prepare items for 2 weeks and manual can opener
- Pet supplies – food, water, travel supplies and medication for 2 weeks
- A safe secondary heating and cooking source
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- First aid kit, medications and medical items, including eye wear and hearing aid batteries
- Sanitation, garbage bags and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (identification, insurance policies, medication needs, etc. )
- Cell phone with portable chargers
- Standard (not cordless) telephone and a printed list of family or emergency contact information
- Emergency cash

### **DURING THE OUTAGE**

- For electric outage check circuit breakers to rule out problems with electricity inside your home
- For water outage check your water meter to rule out a water line break on your property
- During business hours call Wahkiakum PUD to report outage 360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171
- After hours call Wahkiakum Co Sheriff's to report outage at 360-795-3312 or 360-465-2202
- Leave one light switch on so you'll know when electricity has been restored
- Unplug all unnecessary sensitive electronics to protect from surges (always use surge protectors)
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances (like stoves) you were using when the power went out.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer closed to retain cold temperatures

**Our crews work hard to restore utility services as quickly as possible, but with these simple steps, outages are much easier if we're prepared.**

### **Energy Efficiency Program Rebates Available NOW!**

Looking to make your home or business more comfortable and reduce electric usage? Wahkiakum PUD may be able to assist through our rebate program. Rebate Programs include insulation, windows, ductless heat pumps, LED lighting (non-residential only), air source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. Prequalification is required.

Visit [www.wahkiakumpud.org](http://www.wahkiakumpud.org) or call 360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171 to learn more.



## **Payment Options**

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

### **On The Web**

[www.wahkiakumpud.org](http://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

45 River Street, Cathlamet

### **Autopay**

Visa, MasterCard, Discover or ACH

### **By Phone**

360-795-3266 or 360-465-2171

## **After Hours Outages**

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

## **Holiday 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?**



Consider donating to the Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP). All of the funds raised help local low income families in need. Customers can request including a dedicated amount every month on their monthly statement.

*All donations remain in  
Wahkiakum County to help  
local families in need.*