

Okanogan County PUD



WATTS UP

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PUD WINS IN COURT OVER EIS CHALLENGE

Methow Valley necessary system improvements took a big step forward November 22nd when Superior Court Judge Burchard ruled in favor of the PUD with regards to a lawsuit filed by long time opponents PACE, MVCC, Peter Goldman (legal counsel and Washington Forest Law Center), and newcomer to the challenge Daniel Gebbers. The plaintiffs made many assertions in their suit, most of which have been expressed repeatedly in letters to the editor and regular PUD meetings. Judge Burchard took over one hour to clearly articulate his ruling on the many complicated issues finding in favor for the PUD in each instance. He further defined each of his findings as a matter of fact, as a matter of law, or both. In summing up, he stated: (court) "it found no issue on which the plaintiffs should prevail".

Although the PUD is extremely pleased with this outcome, there are still likely challenges to come. The Methow Valley newspaper reported Peter Goldman, the Seattle based environmental attorney instrumental in the past challenges, intends to move the fight to permits and right of way. He has, on behalf of others, already written a letter to the DNR.

Our next steps for 2007 include the acquisition of permits, right of way, complete engineering and create bid documents. Then construction may begin. The PUD will make every effort to efficiently make progress on this project.

We heard crystal clear from many customers during the 25 hour Loup outage Dec 14-15, on how important a new line was to them. Our line crews, customer service representatives and engineering staff did a fantastic job working through the night on all of the many outages in the county. The Loup outage was in several feet of snow on very difficult terrain. The snow cat and expert operator from the Loup Loup ski hill, and the Department of Transportation crews also contributed greatly which shortened the outage time. The cause of the outage was 3 trees that fell across all 3-phases that damaged the insulators and some connecting hardware. Fortunately the poles, cross arms and wires all held together or the outage could have been much longer in this location.

(We had outages throughout the county that night and we would like to thank our customers for their calls, patience, understanding and tremendous support.)

**See the next newsletter for complete story on the recent outage.*

NEW PUD COMMISSIONER

Newly elected PUD Commissioner, Trish Butler, will take her seat on the Board of Commission on January 2, 2007 representing District 2. Trish has worked in municipal government for 30 years, managing finances and operating a governing board. She has been clerk/treasurer for the city of Omak for the past 16 years. PUD commissioners are elected to serve six-year terms with terms staggered at two year intervals. The three-member commission is the District's governing body and has overall responsibility for District policy and operations.

Congratulation Trish! We look forward to working with you.

We're on the Web
www.okanoganpud.org



SAFETY MESSAGE

Keep portable heaters away from anything that will burn. Be sure the heater is placed so it can't tip over or have something fall on it accidentally. Be extremely cautious about leaving portable heaters unattended or during the night when you are asleep. It doesn't take much for a serious fire to occur. But it also doesn't take much to insure it won't happen.

RENEWABLE CREDITS AND SNAP

Washington state's recent passage of Initiative 937 shows the residents of this state are dedicated to the use of clean energy. Okanogan Co PUD has a long-standing history of supporting and providing clean, renewable energy options to its customers. We rely on clean renewable hydroelectric power for over 80% of our electricity. We were one of the first utilities in the state to invest in wind energy as evidenced by our 25% share ownership in the Nine Canyon Wind project at the tri-cities. We were an early adopter of a net metering policy and have implemented Chelan County PUD's award winning SNAP program for the benefit of our customers. Now we want to give customers another opportunity to become "green energy" partners by providing them with annual incentive payments for all the electricity they produce from renewable energy sources. Customers who generate their own electricity with solar, wind or anaerobic-digester systems can receive 15 to 54 cents for each kilowatt-hour (kWh) their system generates up to a limit of \$2,000 annually beginning this year. These payments are in addition to Okanogan Co PUD's net-metering benefits, SNAP program and cash rebates for the installation of solar-power equipment.

Customers who install renewable energy systems using components manufactured in Washington may boost their earnings to as much as 54 cents per kWh. The newly implemented law provides financial incentives through 2014 both to customers with existing systems and to customers who install new systems. To qualify for the program, customers must be connected to the utility's distribution grid and sign an interconnection standard agreement with Okanogan Co PUD. Please contact the PUD conservation office at 422-8427 or 422-8428 for further details.

INSULATION CREDIT AVAILABLE

SHOULD I INSULATE?

LET ME GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT

If you are in need of additional insulation in your home or business now is a great time to do just that. Okanogan County PUD is participating in Bonneville Power Administration's Conservation Rate Credit program. This program allows the District to offer incentives for insulation. The amount of the credit is dependant on several factors. Please contact an insulation contractor for a preliminary inspection. Once that is completed, we can then determine the credit amount. Insulation is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy usage.



WINTER TIPS

Turn it down, turn it off, plug-it, seal-it, caulk-it. That's the energy saving mantra you continue to hear. These energy-conservation tips will help reduce your home's operating cost and will be good for the environment. Now here are a few more tips for a warm, lower-cost winter season:

- Insulate wherever you can.
- Lower that thermostat at least 5 degrees.
- Set your water heater no higher than 120 degrees.
- Make sure your furnace or heat pump is operating properly.
- Seal wall outlets with child-proof safety caps.
- Cover windows with insulated drapes.
- Insulate water pipes. Wash clothes in cold water.
- Don't use your fireplace in combination with your primary source of heat such as a heat pump or electric furnace.
- If your appliance has an energy setting, use it. Refrigerators should be set at around 38 to 42 degrees and between zero to 5 degrees for the freezer.
- Install low-flow showerheads, and limit the amount of time spent in the shower.
- Change out your most used incandescent lights with Energy Star-rated compact fluorescents available at your utility.
- Last but not least call your Energy Services Dept for more information at 422-8427 or 422-8428 before you pull on that fleece and jog in place.