

Watt's Up

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF OKANOGAN PUD ~ ISSUE 09-01

PUD Commissioners Authorize Refunds

A spring 2007 ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will lead to credits on Okanogan PUD bills for a four month period starting in January 2009. The Court ruled against the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) stating that BPA had overstepped its authority in setting annual payments made to private utilities. The court found that BPA's actions were inconsistent with the Northwest Power Act. In May 2008, BPA responded to the ruling by suspending the payments to the private utilities.

What this means to the PUD is that it received just over \$2 million during 2008 in refunds. At the December 2 Commissioners meeting the Board decided to return a portion of the funds to the ratepayers of the PUD. The PUD will be crediting customer accounts in the amount of .6¢ per kWh during the first four months of 2009. The credit will apply to all kWh billed and will show up on a separate line of the bill. Any portion of the credit received from BPA that is not returned to customers will be added to the PUD's Rate Stabilization Fund. This fund has been established to levelize electric rates that can experience large fluctuations due to changes in power supply costs.

The commissioners decided to implement the credit early in 2009 since the winter bills have the greatest financial impact on customers. Please contact the PUD if you have any questions.

SAFETY MESSAGE—PORTABLE GENERATORS

Be Wise—Stay Healthy — Stay Alive

Winter storms can lead to power outages that leave us without power, lights, and heat. Please don't tragically compound these problems by bringing a portable generator into the house to provide temporary power. Combustion engine driven (gas or diesel) portable generators produce carbon monoxide exhaust gases. Overexposure to this deadly gas can lead to death or serious injury. Do not use a generator in a confined space or inside the home. Keep the generator outside in a well ventilated area and run a properly sized extension cord to the electrical devices inside. Do not run the generator in the garage. Exhaust fumes from the generator can get sucked into the house creating the same deadly situation.

Improper installation of a portable generator can also be deadly to our employees. Before purchasing or installing a portable generator for use during a power outage, consider these other important

safety issues:

Backfeed—Plugging a portable generator into an electrical outlet in your house could cause back-feed. This occurs when electricity from the generator flows through the home's wiring, out through the electric meter and passes through the utility's transformer, energizing the utility service lines. **Backfeed can injure or kill a utility worker who is working on a powerline!**

Transfer Switch—A transfer switch will mechanically disconnect the household's circuit from the utility's power supply system. A transfer switch MUST be used to avoid backfeed into the utility's power system and is required by electrical code.

Installation— The owner of the generator must acquire an electrical permit and all transfer switches and/or transfer operating schemes must meet applicable electrical codes and be inspected by the State Electrical Inspector.

START SAVING ENERGY—APPLY FOR AN ENERGY CONSERVATION LOAN TODAY

Our Energy Conservation Loan Program is available to assist Okanogan PUD customers to reduce energy consumption in their homes or businesses. Any measure that can be shown to save electrical energy can be considered for financing. We can finance insulation upgrades, window and door replacement, heat pumps, duct and air sealing, weatherstripping, lighting upgrades, and solar and wind systems to name just a few. Many of our commercial and industrial customers have taken advantage of the program to improve the efficiency of their business operations as well. Loan packets are available at any PUD office. Please call your Energy Service Office at (509) 422-8427, 422-8428 or 1-800-922-7011 to learn more about this program.

COLD WEATHER ENERGY BILLS

Data collected by the Alliance to Save Energy in 2008 indicates that more than 50% of a typical Washington state resident's energy bill goes to heat the home. Help keep your costs down by lowering the thermostat. Lowering your thermostat one degree can reduce heating costs by 4%. For more energy savings tips go to our website at www.okanoganpud.org and click on the conservation link.

FURNACE FILTERS

Furnace filters should be changed out regularly. We recommend customers replace the disposable filter every month. An easy way to remember to do this is to make a habit of changing the filter on the first day of every month during the heating or cooling season. It's an easy way to make this important conservation tool a regular habit.

OUTAGE SAFETY KIT

Having an outage safety kit is a great way to prepare for potential outages. The following items may be useful:

- ✓ Dry or canned food and drinking water for three days (for each person)
- ✓ Can opener
- ✓ First-aid supplies and first-aid book
- ✓ Copies of important documents (birth certificates, licenses, insurance policies)
- ✓ Special needs items (infant formula, eye glasses, medications)
- ✓ A change of clothing for each person
- ✓ Sleeping bags or blankets
- ✓ Crank or battery powered radio
- ✓ Crank or battery powered flashlight with extra batteries
- ✓ Corded phone (your cordless phone won't work in an outage),
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ Candles and waterproof matches
- ✓ Toys, books, puzzles, games
- ✓ Extra house and car keys
- ✓ List of contact names and phone numbers
- ✓ and a SAFE, alternative source of heat.

Other items should be considered to make the event as comfortable as possible.

It's a good idea to check all items in your outage safety kit once a year to make sure they're in good condition or that dates have not expired.

If your house can be seen from the road, leaving one outside light turned on will help PUD line crews know that your power is restored.

For additional information contact the:

Okanogan County Sheriff's Office
Department of Emergency Management
123 5th Avenue N. Room 200
Okanogan, WA 98840

509.422.7206

Or visit their website www.okanogandem.org