



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to our customers.

January 2025

Leadership Message

Project Help Customer Support Program

By: Mariah Montague, Customer Service Supervisor

Since 2013, Thurston PUD has offered the Project Help Customer Support Program. The program is meant to provide financial assistance to qualified, income-eligible District customers and is funded by the PUD and donations received from PUD customers.

At the end of 2023, we reviewed Project Help and found ways to improve the program that would allow us to provide more financial assistance to customers in need. We implemented the revamped program in January 2024 and saw an increase in the use of this program since then.

We are pleased to announce that through Project Help, a total of \$6,300 was distributed to 34 families in 2024!

We would like to give a special thanks to the PUD customers who made donations to Project Help last year. We hope to continue helping customers in need in 2025, so please don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions about Project Help.

Eligibility requirements for receiving these funds are:

- i. The applicant must be the owner or tenant of the property and have an active account in their name.
- ii. The applicant must have received a disconnect notice for their water service.
- iii. The applicant must provide documentation that the household income is \$64,000 or less.

If you qualify as income-eligible and need assistance paying your water bill, you can apply for Project Help. For an application, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/links-and-forms.htm and select *Project Help Application For Assistance* under Service Forms. You can also call our Customer Service Team toll-free at (866) 357-8783 to request that a paper application be mailed to you.

If you're interested in making a one-time or monthly donation, please complete the form on the last page of this newsletter and mail, email, or fax the form back to Thurston PUD Customer Service. Alternatively, please call us at (866) 357-8783 or email us PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.



Mariah Montague,
Customer Service
Supervisor

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

In This Issue

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First Look at the Adopted 2025 Budget, Rates, Fees, Charges and Surcharges

On October 1, 2024, the PUD Board of Commissioners adopted the budgets for 2025 as well as the rates, fees, charges, and surcharges for 2025. PUD staff had presented several budget goals to the PUD’s Board of Commissioners, and we wanted to share a few of these goals below.



- Meet the revenue requirement to operate and maintain 271 water systems serving 10,092 customers in five (5) counties.
- Meet our payment obligations for existing bonds and loans and debt coverage ratio.
- Develop rates that would improved revenue stability and not rely heavily on unpredictable weather conditions.
- Provide funding for capital projects identified in the water system Asset Management Plan.
- Provide funding for emergency preparedness for water systems, employees, and buildings.
- Provide funding for ongoing replacement needs as identified in the Facilities and Fleet & Equipment Asset Management Plans.
- Investigate strategic investment and provide funding for technology to enhance the efficiency of the staff.

If you would like to review the Adopted 2025 Budgets, Adopted 2025 Rates, Fees, Charges, and Surcharges, or take a look at the bill impact scenarios that estimates your bill amount based on several levels of consumption, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/our-rates.htm.

Bill Breakdown—Explanation of Charges

Water rates are adopted by the Board of Commissioners during the annual budget process. Rates are set to cover the costs to operate and maintain the PUD owned water systems. For most PUD customers, the monthly bill is comprised of three (3) parts: a base rate, a consumption charge, and capital improvement surcharge.

What is a Base Rate?

The Base Rate is billed monthly to all customers based on meter size. Base rate revenue pays for the costs to operate and maintain PUD-owned water systems.

CURRENT CHARGES	
BASE RATE - 3/4" RESIDENTIAL	46.35
CONSUMPTION-RESIDENTIAL	27.88
CAPITAL SURCHARGE	13.50
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	87.73

What are Consumption Charges?

The Consumption Charges are based on customer usage (typically 30 days). Consumption charges are billed on a tiered rate schedule with conservation in mind. Consumption charges also help pay for the costs to operate and maintain the PUD owned water systems.

What are Capital Improvement Surcharges?

Capital Improvement Surcharges are billed monthly to all customers based on meter size—this charge is noted as “Capital Surcharge” on your billing statement. Collection of capital improvement surcharges pay for water system capital improvement projects identified in the Asset Management Plans (AMP).

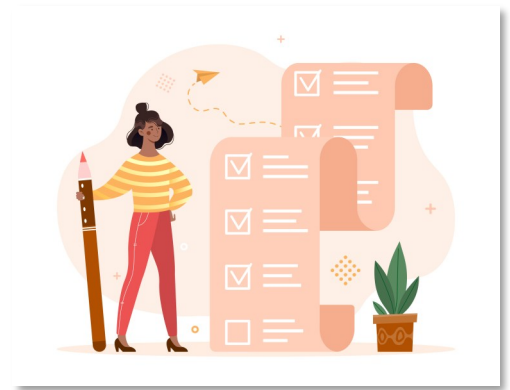
What is an Asset Management Plan?

An Asset Management Plan (AMP) is a financial planning tool we use to estimate when water system components will reach the end of their life cycles. We predict costs which helps us determine how much we need to budget each year. Staff has created an AMP for each of the 271 water systems owned and operated by the PUD.

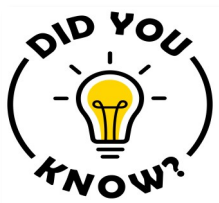
For more information regarding rates and our budgets, please visit www.thurstonpud.org/our-rates.htm.

Preparing Your Home For Winter

As the weather gets colder, the PUD maintains a checklist of things staff does to prepare our water systems for winter. From ensuring our field technicians have warm clothes to equipping pumphouses with heaters, our team prepares for the freezing weather by checking off a list of annual items. We've learned that by preparing for winter and freezing weather, we save the District time and money later on. Preparedness works for us, so here's a list of things for you to consider for the winter.



- Protect Pipes:** Drain water from outdoor faucets and insulate pipes to prevent freezing. Check for pipes that pass through unheated spaces or rooms, such as crawlspaces, basements, garages or uninsulated exterior walls. Protect exposed pipes by wrapping them with some sort of insulation.
- Clean Gutters:** Remove leaves, twigs, and debris that slow down water draining to prevent ice dams. You can also install gutter guards to prevent buildup.
- Check Fireplace:** Check the chimney for cracks and debris.
- Check Heating System:** Inspect and service your heating system, including furnaces, boilers, and heat pumps.
- Check The Roof:** Inspect your roof for missing or loose shingles, blocked gutters, or potential sources of mold and decay.
- Check Smoke Detectors:** Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly.
- Programmable Thermostat:** Use a programmable thermostat to keep your home at a consistent temperature and reduce energy output. If you are going to be away for a few days or more, set your thermostat at least 55 degrees to prevent freezing.
- Purchase Winter Storm Essentials:** Stock up on snow shovels, batteries, cases of water, non-perishable food, candles, and flashlights before a storm hits and local stores sell out of these items.
- Winterize Windows and Doors:** Apply weatherstripping around doors and windows to prevent drafts and reduce energy output from your heating system.
- Install Window Treatments:** Not just for decoration, window treatments can help improve a room's energy efficiency.
- Ensure Snow and Ice Removal Tools Are Accessible:** If the snow or ice gets really bad, the last thing you want is difficulty accessing essential tools in the shed in the back of your yard. We suggest relocating these winter tools to the garage or somewhere else easily accessible for when they are needed.



Household leaks can waste nearly one (1) trillion gallons of water annually nationwide. Remember that you can find and fix leaks inside and outside your home to save valuable water and money all year long. (Source: www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week)

Recruitment for the Utility Rate Advisory Committee (URAC)

Are you interested in learning more about the rate-making process at Thurston PUD? Then the URAC may be for you!

We are currently looking to recruit Thurston PUD customers to join our Utility Rate Advisory Committee (URAC)! Established in 2018, this committee learns about the PUD and observes how rates, fees, and charges are set. The URAC then provides advice and recommendations to PUD Management and the Board of Commissioners related to rates, rate structure, fees, and other charges made to water utility customers.



Quarterly meetings are hybrid, held in-person at Thurston PUD Headquarters and online using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Virtual meeting attendance is encouraged for members that cannot attend in-person.

For more information about this group or to request an application, please contact our General Manager John Weidenfeller at (360) 357-8783 ext. 107 or send an email to jweidenfeller@thurstonpud.org.

Office Closures



The PUD will be closed on the following days:

- * New Year's Day—Wednesday, January 1, 2025
- * Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Monday, January 16, 2025
- * Presidents' Day—Monday, February 20, 2025

If you experience a water service emergency, contact us at (360) 357—8783 or toll-free at (866) 357—8783. Calls received outside of normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) are routed to our answering service and on-call staff.

Project Help Customer Support Program

If you're interested in making a one-time or monthly donation to our customer funded Project Help Customer Support Program, please call us at (866) 357-8783, email PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org, or return the form below with any payments mailed to our office at Thurston PUD, 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

I authorize Thurston PUD to bill my account \$ _____.

- One-time only
 Each month

This authorization shall remain in effect until the PUD receives written notification from me to terminate this agreement. I understand that if my account becomes past due, this authorization becomes invalid.

Name: _____ Account No.: _____

Service Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____