

## Commissioner's Corner

### 2017 Water System Improvements & Other Significant Activities



By Chris Stearns, District 3

**T**hurston PUD had a very productive 2017 that was highlighted by the acquisition of 144 water systems and welcoming over 4,000 new customers. The PUD family also grew by incorporating the former employees of H&R Waterworks, Inc. The consolidation of the workforce gives the PUD in-house expertise that was formally contracted out--resulting in extensive savings to the District and its customers.

We've compiled a list of our most notable accomplishments for 2017. We want to share how we are growing and the effective work PUD employees accomplish to reliably get water to our valued customers.

#### New Systems, Water Conservation Rebates and Sanitary Surveys

- **New Water Systems Acquisition:** In 2017, the PUD acquired 144 new water systems totaling 4,297 active connections. Adding more systems helps spread the fixed costs of the PUD over more connections providing a better economy of scale, and helps keep costs lower for all of our customers.
- **Water Conservation:** 128 garden hose timers were given to customers.
- **Sanitary Surveys:** 14 Sanitary Surveys were completed at: Travis Jack, Skookumchuck, Smith Prairie, Horsfall, Ridgewood, Pederson Place, Lazy Acres, Pit, Tolmie, Lew's 81st, Prairie Ridge, Nisqually Highlands, Hawk Acres, and Covington.

#### Projects/Extraordinary Maintenance

- **Skookumchuck:** Completed the 4 log chlorination treatment and customer service meter project.
- **N. Roy:** Permanent chlorination was installed.
- **Garden Acres 3:** Contamination to the well was found and fixed. The system is no longer connected to neighboring system.
- **Replaced the well at Fuller.**
- **Replaced the well at Fir Tree 2.**

*Continued on page 4*

#### About Commissioner Chris Stearns

*Chris Stearns is the present President of the Board and was elected to the Thurston PUD Commission in 2008. He is serving his second term. A long-time Thurston County resident, Chris is a retired Fisheries Biologist from the state Department of Fish & Wildlife and has served on the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and worked with local tribes. He helped initialize critical work to protect salmon and steelhead habitat in the southern regions of our state. Chris was elected from District 3 and is honored to serve and represent PUD customers. He supports conservation of water resources within the County.*

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**Thurston PUD**  
1230 Ruddell Road SE  
Lacey, Washington 98503  
Office (360) 357-8783  
Toll Free (866) 357-8783  
Fax (360) 357-1172  
[www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org)

## Don't Let Your Summer Bill Surprise You

There's no plainer way to say it: water conservation saves you money. As the weather warms up, many customers increase outdoor usage in order to keep lawns green, pools filled and gardens fruitful.

Don't let your summer water bill surprise you! Know and understand your water rates, so that you can enjoy your summer without sacrificing too much in your wallet.

Thurston PUD charges tiered rates which means as your water usage increases, the cost increases. Take a look at the tiered water rates example below. To see a full list of the rates and charges including non-residential rates, please visit our website [www.ThurstonPUD.org](http://www.ThurstonPUD.org)

### Example:

A single family of 4 living inside Thurston County with a 3/4" meter used approximately 600 cubic feet of water in November.

Each PUD customer pays the Capital Improvement Surcharge of \$6.70. Charges are made per 100 cubic feet, so 600 cubic feet is equal to 6 units. 5 units will be charged at \$2.58 and 1 unit will be charged at \$3.96. This is how they figure their bill:

Capital Surcharge	\$6.70
Monthly Base Rate	\$28.82
5 Units x \$2.58	\$12.90
1 unit x \$3.96	\$3.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$52.38</b>

Capital Surcharge + Monthly Base rate (select meter size) + (Consumption x Consumption charges) = Total charges

Monthly Base Rate & Consumption Tiers	2018 Residential—Single Family Units	
	Inside Thurston County	Outside Thurston County
<b>Monthly Base Rate Per Meter Size</b>		
5/8" or 3/4" (most common size for single family homes)	\$28.82	\$32.82
1"	\$61.89	\$65.89
<b>Consumption (1 unit = 100 cubic feet)</b>	<b>Consumption Rate</b>	
0-500 cubic feet	\$2.58	\$2.58
501-1500 cubic feet	\$3.96	\$3.96
1501-3000 cubic feet	\$5.45	\$5.45
3001+ cubic feet	\$6.23	\$6.23

*This table is for single family residents only. Please visit the website for more rates, fees and charges.*

## Ask a PUD Employee

Life can be confusing, your water service doesn't have to be.

### Question: What's an Easy Way to Tell if I Have a Leak?

Answered by PUD Superintendent Jim Campbell

An easy way to detect a leak is by first checking your water meter and comparing that number to the average monthly use found on your bill. (See 'How to Read Your Bill') If your water bill is abnormally high, you may have a leak. Please keep in mind that you may use more water during warmer months.

Here's another way to use your water meter to detect a leak.

#### Step 1

Make sure no water is being used inside or outside of your house by turning off all water-using appliances and fixtures (e.g. faucets, dishwasher, washing machine).

#### Step 2

Locate your water meter box around your property. It may be in your driveway, on the sidewalk or in your yard.

#### Step 3

Find the Low Flow Indicator on the meter. This is shaped like a star or a triangle. If this is moving, then you may have a leak. Some water meters don't have a low flow indicator. You can also take an initial meter reading and wait 1 to 2 hours and take another meter reading. Make sure no water is being used during that time. If the dial has moved, you may have a leak.

## An Easy Read: How You can Help

Thurston PUD employs two full-time meters readers who are responsible for reading over 8,000 meters in seven counties. It's a demanding and time-sensitive job that requires our dedicated crew to read 300-500 meters a day, and collectively log hundreds of miles a day. Oh, did we mention they have to accurately read all 8,000+ meters in *two weeks*? There are ways you can help them quickly access your meter and collect their reading, which can result in a more timely read the first time, and avoid a higher meter read on your monthly bill.

### Landscape

Although we think they're beautiful, meter boxes don't really go with landscaping motifs. Some homeowners plant shrubs, bushes and trees to distract the eye from meter boxes and liven up their landscape. Unfortunately for meter readers, plants, planted or invasive, can create difficult obstacles for data collection. "I encounter yards that have blackberry briars," said PUD Meter Reader Colton Campbell. "To avoid the brush, sometimes I have to get down on my stomach and crawl to meter boxes in order to get a read." Colton recommends customers keep a clear path to the meter box.

Some plants, like trees, can anchor themselves on pipes and can result in costly repairs to the homeowner. Ground covers like ivy can wrap around the meter box not only making it difficult for readers, but for anyone who needs access to your shutoff valves, like emergency first responders.

Plants can also pose an obstacle if meter readers are unable to locate the meter because it's covered by vegetation, so check the area around your meter to ensure its free of overgrowth and can be accessed. "Having a clear path is essential to our job," said Colton.



"Having a clear path is essential to our job." Colton Campbell, Thurston PUD Meter Reader

### Locked Gates

According to Meter Reader Rich Holmes, locked gates can pose another obstacle for getting a meter read. While the PUD understands customers lock gates to protect their privacy and homes, Rich does ask for customer understanding. "If I'm unable to get a read I will leave a door hanger, then we have to come back for another read," said Rich. A read that is scheduled for a later date can result in a higher bill because the data is pulled later. This summer some customers will receive new radio read meters which allows meter readers to get a read without having to access properties directly. "Radio reads will help a lot with the locked gates issue," said Rich. But if your meter is not slated to be replaced with a radio read meter, you can call us to arrange access.

### Pets

We understand pets are part of your family, and we know that some pets can be protective of their homes and family. To keep our meter readers and your pets safe, we recommend keeping your pets away from the path that leads to your meter. "I do keep dog bones in my car if I need to use them," said Rich. Our meter readers use the first two weeks of every month to read over 8,000 meters. You can look at your bill to find the approximate times your meter reader shows up each month. Meters are read between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.




Hide-n-seek: Water meter box filled with dirt

### Other Ways to Help Get a Good Read

- Make sure no objects are covering or blocking access to the meter box.
- Weed-eat around the meter box.
- Do not cover the meter with beauty bark.
- Clear out/dig out the meter box of dirt.
- If you see a blue flag, please leave it there for at least 90 days. Meter readers are responsible for knowing where over 8,000 meters are; the flags help them memorize where the meter is on your property.

# How to Read Your Bill



Public Utility District No. 1  
of Thurston County

1230 Ruddled Road SE  
Lacey, WA 98503  
(360) 357-8783

Office hours: 8:00 - 4:30  
Monday thru Friday

John and Jane Doe  
1234 Mockingbird Lane  
Olympia, WA 98501

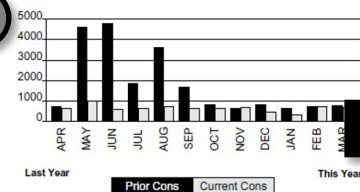
ACCOUNT INFORMATION	
ACCOUNT:	1234567
SERVICE ADDRESS:	
SERVICE PERIOD:	3/1/2018 To 3/31/2018
BILLING DATE:	3/31/2018
DUE DATE:	5/20/2018

METER READING INFORMATION					
Serial No	Date	Reading	Date	Reading	Usage
123456789	2/7/2018 1	202271	3/2/2018 1	202950	679

CURRENT CHARGES	
RESIDENTIAL BASE 3/4"	24.99
RESIDENTIAL CONSUMPTION	15.69
CAPITAL SURCHARGE	6.70

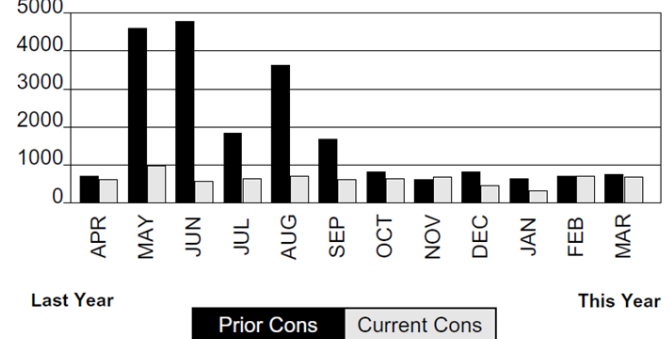
**SPECIAL MESSAGE**

**MONTHLY CONSUMPTION IN 100 CUBIC FEET**



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**MONTHLY CONSUMPTION IN 100 CUBIC FEET**



We determine your water usage each month by subtracting your Previous Meter Reading from your Current Meter Reading.

The Monthly Consumption graph helps you understand what your water usage patterns have been over the last year. You can see what your normal seasonal usages are and it could help you determine if you have a leak.

## 2017 Accomplishments...continued From Page 1

- **Well Pump Replacements:** Hansford Muck 1 and 2, Fuller, Seed, Easterday, Elk Heights, Pederson Place, Giffords, and Crowder.
  - **Booster Pump Replacements:** Helsep, Red Cloud 2, Eastridge W, Eastridge 3, and Sales.
  - **Treatment Upgrades and Treatment Maintenance:** A filter system was added at DWS Little. Treatment was replaced at Tracy #2, Eastridge W, and Maxvale. Treatment maintenance to improve system operation was completed at Eastridge 3, Eastridge 2, and Fir Tree 3.
  - **Electrical System Work:** Crowder and Elk Heights.
  - **Chlorine and Soda Ash Injection Pump Replacement:** Tanglewilde on both the Taylor and Coker wells, Terry Lane, Mathias, Trinity Muck 3, Brown S. Prairie, and Nisqually Highlands.
  - **Pressure Tanks Replaced:** Fir Tree 1, 3 and 7, Pit, Helsep, Eastridge 2, Enslow 1, Tisch, Clerget, Loma Vista, Pederson Place, Easterday, Brockway 2, Webster Hill, Mud Lake, Horne Creek 2, 304, 92nd, and Bald Hills.
  - **Pumphouse Repairs:** New roof at Travis Jack.
- Miscellaneous Maintenance:** Nisqually Highlands blow-offs installed, Garden Acres pitless adaptor replacement, Indian Crest 1 new service line, Crescent Park, sight glass on pressure tanks. Sand traps were installed at 336 1 and 2, and easement access at Ridgewood.