

CONNECTIONS

Winter 2009
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WASHINGTON PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION
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Power Play in Jefferson County

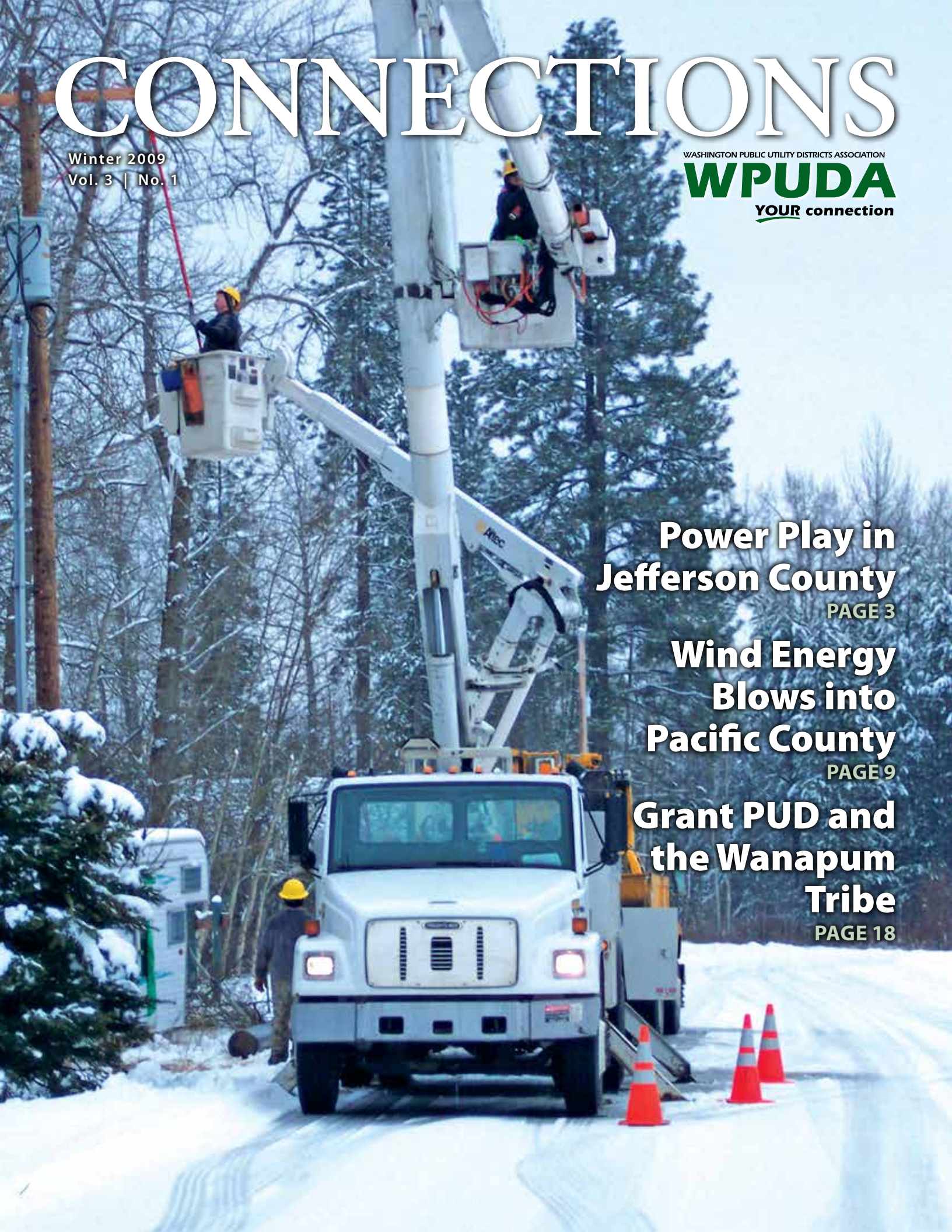
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On the cover: A line crew from the Pend Oreille PUD reconnects a line along Yergens Road that was snapped when heavy snows brought down a tree that toppled into a power pole.

Correction: The article in the Fall 2008 issue of *Connections* about Energy Northwest's efforts to ensure emergency communications for Benton and Franklin counties was off by a few thousand feet when it referred to Rattlesnake Mountain as the state's highest peak east of the Cascade Range.

As Port of Columbia Manager Jennie Dickinson pointed out,

we seem to have forgotten about the Selkirk Mountains of northeast Washington, with peaks topping 7,000 feet, and the Blue Mountains of southeast Washington, with peaks of 6,000 feet and higher. Then there's the Monashee Mountains that dip from Canada down into Ferry County, with Copper Butte topping out at 7,140 feet.

But at 3,650 feet, it is the highest point in Benton County and towers over anything in Franklin County, making it a darn good location for emergency communications equipment in the Tri-Cities area.

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Imagine Tomorrow

By Steve Johnson, Executive Director

How to power the future? That's a question that a great many people are asking, from university research laboratories to your local public utility districts, from Congress to our own state Legislature. How do we, as a nation, reduce our dependence on oil and coal, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while continuing to meet the ever-rising demand for electricity.

It's also a question that Washington State University is posing to high school students around the state as part of its Imagine Tomorrow competition.

Imagine Tomorrow, now in its second year, asks students to address a fundamental challenge: As the world transitions to alternative energy resources, what technologies will be needed, how will we need to redesign our living space and work environments, and how will we bring about the necessary behavioral changes?

Those are daunting questions. On one level, we are blessed in the Northwest because so much of our electricity comes from hydropower, a resource that is already clean, renewable and emissions-free. More than 80 percent of the electricity sold by PUDs is hydropower, most of it generated by the Federal Columbia River Power System. Several PUDs also own and operate their own hydroelectric projects, including Grant, Chelan, Pend Oreille, and Lewis.

But PUDs are also searching for ways to develop alternative resources such as wind and solar to meet growing demand. And they are exploring ways to reduce usage through better efficiency and behavior – how and when we use electricity.

The Imagine Tomorrow competition dovetails nicely with those goals.

It encourages students to invent or redesign a machine or process to reduce energy usage, or uses renewable resources for power generation. It encourages them to find ways to reduce carbon emissions in the home or workplace. And far from being solely another science fair, it encourages them to consider why people are often reluctant to adopt energy conservation and how to

change that behavior.

Answers to some of these questions may come out of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado or the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Washington or some other laboratory or think tank. But it's also possible that some bright, inquisitive students will also come up with some answers.

Jeff Johnson, a senior systems engineer at Microsoft and one of the judges in last year's Imagine Tomorrow competition called the entries "amazing."

The winning team from Roosevelt High School in Coulee Dam demonstrated how alternative resources – sun, wind or hydropower – could be adapted to different locales to produce hydrogen for a fuel cell for household needs. They built miniature working models to power


an electrolyzer, separating the hydrogen and oxygen in water, and then built a hydrogen fuel cell to power a small motor.

A team from Redmond High School actually tackled the problem of vehicle emissions – a much worse source of greenhouse gases in Washington than utilities – by proposing a traffic policy based on a system of rush-hour tolls and incentives for employers to provide shuttles for their workers.

And a team from Bellingham High School demonstrated the use of algae to sequester carbon dioxide emissions from cement plants, then extracted oils from the algae to create a biofuel.

The Washington PUD Association is pleased to join WSU this year as a sponsor of Imagine Tomorrow.

While our PUDs, industry associations, research laboratories and elected officials work to find answers to the difficult questions about our future energy resources, it's also encouraging to know that we have so many bright young people who are interested in taking on the challenge.

The second annual Imagine Tomorrow high school energy competition will be held at WSU in Pullman, May 29-31. For more information, go to <http://imagine.wsu.edu/>. 

Steve Johnson is executive director of the Washington PUD Association. He can be reached at sjohnson@wpuda.org.



Hydropower is at the heart of public power in the Pacific Northwest.

POWER PLAY

Jefferson PUD considers electric options

By Dean Boyer

Jefferson County PUD, a small water-and-sewer utility with nine employees and about 3,000 customers, is embarking on a path that could result

in the PUD becoming an electric utility serving much of the eastern half of the county.

In November, the voters approved a resolution granting Jefferson PUD electric authority, and PUD commissioners wasted little time in beginning to explore their options, agreeing at their first meeting of the year to begin talks with the Bonneville Power Administration, a federal agency that markets power produced by 31 government-owned hydroelectric dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers.

It would likely be a lengthy process, but Jefferson PUD could potentially replace Puget Sound Energy, which now serves about 17,400 customers in the county, including Port Townsend, Quilcene, Port Ludlow and Discovery Bay. Other areas of the county are already served by adjacent public utility districts, including the Clallam County PUD, Grays Harbor County PUD and Mason County PUD No. 1.

If Jefferson PUD does decide to exercise its new authority, it would be the first PUD in the state to become an electric utility since 1994, when the Asotin County PUD,

then a water-only utility, purchased a three-mile distribution line from a small power company and began buying electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration to meet

its own needs and to serve its lone customer, the Quail Ridge Golf Course.

The last PUD to get into the business of providing residential electric service was the Snohomish PUD, almost 50 years ago, when it purchased the distribution facilities to serve all of Snohomish

County and Camano Island from the Puget Sound Power & Light Co., the forerunner of Puget Sound Energy.

"Over the years, PUDs have served their communities exceptionally well," said Steve Johnson, executive director of the Washington Public Utility Districts Association, noting that 23 PUDs in Washington now

provide electricity to nearly a third of the state's residents, or more than 900,000 households. "We're excited to see another community considering whether to join in that tradition of public power."

The measure authorizing Jefferson PUD to "construct or acquire electric facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power" passed with 54 percent of the vote.

But becoming an electric utility won't happen overnight. While all three PUD commissioners have expressed their support in becoming an electric provider, they have also stressed the need to move cautiously and with input along the way from their potential customers.

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Bill Wise, a retired electrical engineer, co-chaired the grassroots group that championed electric authority for the Jefferson PUD.



PHOTO: PORT TOWNSEND & JEFFERSON COUNTY LEADER

“We really won’t know whether it’s a good idea or a bad idea until we have a chance to study it in depth,” said Ken McMillen, a retired Navy aviator and former Jefferson PUD commissioner who was re-elected in November after a six-year absence.

Dana Roberts, who spent 24 years on staff with the New York State Public Service Commission and who has served on the Jefferson PUD since 2002, suggested the first step may be to hire someone to coordinate a public planning process.

“We need to proceed with all deliberate speed, maybe in horse terms, a good canter,” Roberts said. “The people voted in favor of their PUD becoming an electric PUD and they need to see that we’re moving in that direction and have the goal in sight”

In addition to beginning talks with BPA, the PUD is expected to undertake a detailed study of various options for

becoming an electric utility, including how it would interact with Port Townsend, which is still considering whether to go with the PUD or form its own municipal utility.

But two preliminary studies released during the campaign already point to significant savings for local ratepayers if the PUD replaces PSE as their electric company.

A consultant hired by Jefferson PUD estimated that a PUD-run electric utility would likely save ratepayers about \$22 million over the first 10 years. The second study, commissioned by the Washington PUD Association, concluded that a new electric-service PUD would be able to charge up to 20 percent less than future rates projected for PSE.

The PUD study by D. Hittle & Associates found that Jefferson PUD would likely need to charge rates slightly higher than PSE for the first three years of operation. But those rates would “decrease noticeably” once the PUD became eligible to buy electricity at the lowest possible wholesale price from the BPA.

BPA has reserved 250 megawatts of its lowest cost, carbon-free hydropower power for new public utilities. According to PSE, its average load for Jefferson County is about 40 MW, with a peak load of 79 MW.

The WPUA analysis by EES Consulting found that PSE rates have gone up sharply

over the past several years – nearly 25 percent since 2002, or almost twice the national average. PSE now has the highest rates of any electric utility in Washington.

Based on public information regarding PSE’s costs and future capital plans, EES Consulting also found that PSE faces significantly higher costs in the near future, due in large part to expiring power contracts with other power providers and PSE’s stated need to invest more than \$5 billion in new infrastructure over the next five years alone.

In addition, PSE’s largest generating resource, the coal-fired Colstrip Power Project in Eastern Montana, could face significantly higher costs because of growing concerns over greenhouse gas emissions and new state and federal regulations.

In contrast, EES Consulting concluded that with access to low-cost hydropower power from BPA, “a new public utility would be able to charge rates up to 20

percent less than the rates projected for PSE.” The D. Hittle study also concluded it would cost between \$35 and \$70 million for the Jefferson PUD to purchase PSE’s assets in the county, including eight substations, 40 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, and 570 miles of distribution lines.

Meanwhile, PSE has put a price tag on its Jefferson County assets closer to \$100 million, and has said repeatedly that the utility is not interested in selling to the PUD. PSE also spent nearly \$250,000 in a failed effort to defeat the ballot initiative in Jefferson County. Early in the campaign, PSE threatened to take legal action – at a “huge cost” to the Jefferson PUD – if the measure passed.

Jefferson PUD Manager Jim Parker has drafted a letter to PSE asking if the Bellevue-based utility would be interested in discussing a deal. If PSE refuses to negotiate, one option would be for the PUD to acquire the company’s Jefferson County infrastructure through condemnation, with the courts determining a fair price.

But there would also be other options.

“One thing we need to keep in mind, if PSE wants a fight, is there’s no obligation on our part to buy any of their largely worn out equipment,” Roberts said. “We could decide it’s more cost-effective to build a new, more

efficient system.”

Bill Wise, a retired electrical engineer and co-chair of Citizens for Local Power, the grassroots group that backed the measure, also plans to stay involved in the process.

Wise was a founder of Local 20/20, an umbrella group that has helped form several action groups focused on sustainability and quality of life in Jefferson County. He also serves on Port Townsend’s Alternative Electric Management Committee, which will advise the city council on forming a municipal utility. It was his work with that group that led to his involvement in extending electric authority to the PUD.

“Now that the campaign is over, we’ve disbanded Citizens for Local Power,” Wise said, “but over the next several months, Local 20/20 will be having conversations with the PUD staff and commissioners as they evaluate how to proceed. We’re looking to the PUD to provide leadership, but we’ve done lots of work in responsible energy management, conservation, and renewable energy over the years and now we’re offering our citizen services to the PUD to move things along.”

While Jefferson PUD commissioners (and commission candidates) were free to express their personal views on the ballot measure, under state law the PUD could not take a formal position for or against electric authority. It was Citizens for Local Power that gathered more than 2,000 signatures last summer to place the measure on the ballot. The group also organized dozens of informational meetings throughout the county and debated senior PSE executives at public forums.

“A number of earlier surveys indicated it might be feasible for Jefferson PUD to become an electric utility, but it had never been put before the people,” Wise said. “The PUD has been thinking about this since the 1990s. Our focus was on educating the voters.”

During the campaign, Citizens for Local Power stressed that PSE customers pay 30 percent more for power than Clallam PUD customers pay, which the group likened to a \$7 million a year tax on Jefferson County residents.

Equally important was the fact that in recent years, PSE had scaled back its presence in Jefferson County, eliminating or outsourcing as many as 30 jobs. Then there was the pending sale of PSE to a group of investors led by Australia-based Macquarie Bank and several Canadian pension funds, which was approved in December, more than a month after the election.

Pro-PUD campaign signs proclaimed: “Nonprofit Rates, Local Jobs, No Foreign Ownership.”

PSE countered by hiring Strategies 360, a Seattle public relations firm, to create an anti-PUD front group, Jefferson County Citizens Against Prop. 1, which flooded the community with fliers warning of higher rates and taxes with a “government takeover” of the electric utility.

“Our lowest point was when we saw the deluge of literature that PSE was sending out,” Wise said. “Two weeks before the election, three separate mailings went out to every household in the county urging them to vote no. We were worried that PSE was reaching a lot of people we hadn’t had a chance to talk to.”

As it turned out, all voting in Jefferson County is by mail-in ballot and many of PSE’s fliers reached voters too late to make a difference. In the end, 10,080 Jefferson County residents voted in favor of extending electric authority to the PUD; 8,830 voted against.

Parker, who has managed the Jefferson PUD since retiring from the Army in 1994, believes the prospect of more local jobs was especially critical in the outcome. “Lots of people, me included, would like to see more jobs here in Jefferson County,” said Parker,

who grew up in Port Townsend and earned a degree in civil engineering at Gonzaga University. “PSE used to have 30-40 employees here. I think that’s what did them in.”

The D. Hittle study found that turning the Jefferson PUD into an electric utility would create as many as 67 new family-wage jobs in the county. In addition, because most of those employees would live in Jefferson County, and the PUD would be doing business locally, D. Hittle projected another 280 jobs in the community within 10 years and a total impact on local business revenues of \$89 million a year.

The PUD commissioners have indicated they may want to hire a project manager early in the process to coordinate the planning effort and help keep the public informed. Bottom line is that none of them expects the PUD to rush into becoming an electric utility, but all three believe they have an obligation to the voters to carefully study their options, and all three say public power could be a boon to the community through lower rates, more responsive service, and jobs.



“I think you can safely say we won’t drag our feet,” Roberts said. “We have a mandate from the people to consider this, and if it looks good, I think we can be in business – fully in business as an electric utility – in five years.”

Strong grassroots effort overcomes all-out push by PSE

By Scott Wilson

Few corporations have fought as hard as Puget Sound Energy to keep the loyalty of three Northwest communities during the general election of 2008.

Forced to wage political campaigns for voter and customer loyalty simultaneously in Jefferson, and Skagit counties, and on Whidbey Island in Island County, the private utility company with 120-year-old roots put vast resources to work to convince voters to reject an unexpected siren call for public power.

In the end, PSE would spend \$959,000 in the campaign, as reported to the state Public Disclosure Commission. The

campaign was designed and managed by Strategies 360, the state’s elite campaign consulting company based in Seattle. Just over \$400,000 of PSE’s money went to consulting fees and extensive telephone polling directed by Strategies 360, with the rest going to tangible campaign tools like signs, advertising and mailings.

The company spent thousands more to open or expand local offices in the three communities or to publish informational advertisements about PSE services.

All of PSE’s top executives – Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Stephen Reynolds, Chief Operating Officer Bert Valdman, Chief Financial Officer Erik Markell, and

Senior Vice Presidents Phil Bussey and Terry Oxley – spent autumn evenings looking for Grange halls and community centers to speak at local forums, sometimes before just handfuls of voters. Before and after came the paid consultants, two of whom were hired away from Sen. Patty Murray’s office specifically to help keep those communities in the PSE fold.

The result?

Voters on Whidbey Island stood with PSE and rejected public power by a two-to-one margin. Voters in Skagit County stood with PSE, rejecting public power by a narrow 5.6 percent margin. But in Jefferson County,

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Jefferson PUD first to regain electric authority

Jefferson County Public Utility District is the first PUD in the state to ever regain the authority to provide electric service.

When the Jefferson PUD was voted into existence in 1939, like all new PUDs in the state, it had that authority. But in 1969, the state Legislature made several changes to the PUD law, including a provision rescinding electric authority for any existing PUD that wasn't already providing electric service.

In addition, PUDs created after 1969 would have 10 years to begin providing electric service, or they would also lose that authority.

To regain electric authority would require another vote of the people.

Water-service PUDs in Skagit, Jefferson, Kitsap and Thurston counties immediately lost their authority to become electric providers. Two inactive PUDs, in Yakima and Lincoln counties, were also affected. The Yakima PUD would eventually be dissolved, while the Lincoln PUD remains inactive.

Twice now, in 1978 and again last fall, voters in Skagit County have rejected efforts to restore electric authority to their PUD. There has also been talk over the years about returning electric authority to the PUDs in Kitsap and Thurston counties, but those efforts have never made it onto the ballot.

Asotin PUD, the only PUD created since 1969, is primarily a water utility.

But it preserved its electric authority by purchasing a three-mile distribution line from a small power company before the 10-year grace period expired and now serves a single customer, the Quail Ridge Golf Course.

Ironically, the law that stripped those PUDs of their electric authority was proposed by the late Ken Billington, who was then executive director of the Washington Public Utility Districts Association.

Ever since Washington voters approved Initiative No. 1 in 1930, giving communities the right to form public utility districts, for-profit utilities in the state had tried to weaken the law. In his memoir, "People, Politics & Public Power," Billington recalled that 1969 was shaping up to be a particularly difficult year for public power.

One bill introduced that year would have abolished all PUDs except those that were already operating as electric utilities and would have prevented any future electric PUDs.

"It was," Billington wrote, "truly the most vicious anti-PUD measure I had read since coming here as a lobbyist."

To make matters worse, Billington's assessment was that the bill was likely to pass.

"It looked as if private power had launched an all-out attack against public power and, according to every political analysis,

private power appeared to have the votes to seriously damage us," Billington recalled.

If anything, the investor-owned utilities were more nervous about the inactive and water-service PUDs than they were about the PUDs that were already in the power business.

The existing electric-service PUDs provided a yardstick for customers of investor-owned utilities to gauge the quality of the service they were getting and the rates they paid. But the water-service PUDs presented a more direct threat – the prospect that they could one day take over service territories from the private utilities. There were reports that investor-owned utilities that operated in counties with inactive or water-service PUDs were finding it more difficult to secure financing for system improvements because of wary bankers.

Billington's answer to the "all-out attack" on public power was to propose a compromise: existing water-service PUDs would lose their electric authority and new PUDs would have 10 years to become power providers. It would take a second vote to restore their electric authority. But there would be no forced dissolution of the inactive or water-service PUDs, as envisioned by the investor-owned utilities.

The language he proposed, including the specific wording for future ballot measures to grant electric authority, was substituted for the "vicious anti-PUD measure" that had been introduced in the House. The revised bill sailed through the Legislature, passing

the House 88-6, and passing the Senate 46-1.

It's clear from Billington's memoirs that he felt the bill was more positive than negative for public power.

In addition to the language on electric authority, which he ultimately concluded was "truly in the public interest," the bill gave PUDs the specific right to advertise and promote the sale and distribution of electricity and water, something else the investor-owned utilities had objected to. It also authorized the PUDs to participate in regional studies and established that PUD commissioner salaries were to be set by the Legislature.

Billington was also hopeful that those water-service PUDs that lost electric authority would still be able to pursue becoming electric utilities in the future. In his notes dictated at the time he added, "I hope we will see moves for some activation votes."

It has taken 39 years, but in November, Jefferson County voters approved a ballot measure reauthorizing the Jefferson PUD, a small water-service PUD with about 3,000 customers, to "construct or acquire electric facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power."

The PUD still has a long way to go before it becomes an electric utility, but just getting to this point is considered a major achievement for public power supporters.

– Dean Boyer

It has taken 39 years, but in November, Jefferson County voters approved a ballot measure reauthorizing the Jefferson PUD, a small water-service PUD with about 3,000 customers, to "construct or acquire electric facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power." The PUD still has a long way to go before it becomes an electric utility, but just getting to this point is considered a major achievement for public power supporters.

GRASSROOTS ... continued from page 5

voters turned against PSE.

This little county of 28,000 citizens was the only one willing to end its century-old relationship with PSE (or its private utility ancestors) in favor of authorizing a shift towards public power.

Jefferson County's Proposition 1 was approved by a 53.3 percent majority, with 46.6 percent against. It authorized the existing Jefferson County Public Utility District, which currently operates rural community water systems and a handful of neighborhood septic systems, to become an electrical power utility and possibly to replace PSE by purchasing its hundreds of miles of wires and transformers, substations and possibly transmission lines.

What happened in Jefferson County? Why was the outcome different than on Whidbey Island or in Skagit county during the election of 2008?

"When we looked at it, we thought probably from our perspective the politics of the Jefferson County PUD was going to be more challenging than the other two counties," said Ron Dotzauer, the president of Strategies 360.

"We pretty much knew it was going on. We figured we could win in Whidbey and Skagit, and were less certain in Jefferson."

Dotzauer, whose firm has many large-scale political campaigns, hired EMC Co., a polling outfit, to do extensive telephone polling in all three areas.

EMC polled Jefferson County two or three times, Dotzauer said, and the results were consistent. "Two weeks before the election I told the CEO of PSE (Reynolds) where it was going to end up and that's where it ended up," he said.

What the polling found, according to both Dotzauer and an analysis of election results, is that voters in and around liberal Port Townsend went so strongly for public power that they pulled the rest of Jefferson County along. A slight majority of voters in rural Jefferson County precincts actually rejected Proposition 1.

"In Port Townsend, (Presidential candidate Barack) Obama won about 75 percent"

of the general election vote, Dotzauer said. "Port Townsend had more liberal, more pro-government kind of voters."

On the surface, all three measured were similar. The primary motivating factor was the late 2007 announcement that PSE had negotiated the company's sale to an international investment consortium led by the Macquarie Group of Australia. The rallying cry of the pro-public power advocates in all three counties was "no foreign ownership" of the local utility. The end game sought by all three measures was also the same – to give local public utility districts the right to acquire PSE assets and become the commu-



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nity power provider.

But pro-public power advocates on Whidbey Island faced an added challenge. While the Snohomish County PUD serves Camano Island, the smaller of the two islands that make up Island County, there is no PUD on Whidbey Island.

The ballot measure before Whidbey Island voters was to establish a new government entity, elect its first commissioners, and give that entity the right to replace PSE. "Here's a whole community that maybe doesn't understand what a PUD is, and then elect a new set of commissioners," said Bill Wise, a retired electrical engineer who became the face of the pro-public power campaign in Jefferson County.

Kasia Pierzga, editor and publisher of the Whidbey Examiner newspaper, agreed it was a stretch for Island County voters. "People would have had to establish a new government agency in an area where there are lots

of conservative views in voting," she said. "Just the idea of creating a new entity was a big thing."

Pierzga noted that the conservative north part of Whidbey Island, home of a large Navy air station, politically dominates the more liberal pockets of South Whidbey, which was the base of the citizens' group that pushed for the measure. The economic downturn also played a role, she said. "There was somewhat bad economic news, and people were just afraid it would cost them more money," she said.

Skagit County was more similar to Jefferson County in that both had existing water PUDs. The key differences were in scale and approach.

The Skagit measure was put on the ballot directly by a vote of the Skagit PUD commission, and members of that commission were among its most vocal proponents. "It opened them up to the criticism of a government takeover" that marked the PSE campaign in all three counties, said Wise. "That probably carried more weight there than here."

Dotzauer noted that PSE had also been engaged in an extensive public process in Skagit County the past two years in its effort to obtain a new 50-year federal license to operate its Baker River Hydroelectric Project. "PSE had a really good process that was appreciated by a lot of the community members," he said. "The goodwill in Skagit because of that was advantageous."

The proposal in Skagit County also included the possibility that the PUD could take over the Baker River project, which became an issue in the campaign. That prospect drove up the potential cost of taking over the PSE system, which in turn, raised the stakes for ratepayers, who may have questioned the ability of the Skagit PUD to not only provide electricity, but also to operate a power-generating dam.

"It made that proposition much larger," said Reynolds.

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A report by PSE's consulting firm, UtiliPoint, estimated the cost of acquiring the company's assets in Skagit County, including the hydro project, would be almost \$1 billion. In contrast, UtiliPoint put the figure for acquiring PSE's Jefferson County infrastructure at between \$77 million and \$100 million. Estimates from consultants hired by the PUDs were about half the UtiliPoint figures.

From a political perspective, the Skagit PUD's decision to seek a vote on the matter also came the last week of July, enough time to get it on the ballot, but considered late in the political season.

By contrast, Wise and other public power proponents approached the Jefferson County PUD in the spring of 2007. At that time the PUD told them it would remain neutral in a public power debate, but would welcome an initiative-based election. Public power advocates Wise, Steve Hamm and Chris Hollingshead had already been active on the energy issue for several years. They took up the challenge and launched the initiative in January 2008.

That brought them and their clipboards out at both Democratic and Republican caucuses, the Earth Day fair, the Farmers Market, Safeway and other grocery stores for months. A dozen volunteers conducted the drive, with six at the heart of the effort, said Wise.

Wise noted the political wisdom of the initiative process.

"We collected over 2,100 signatures, which means we had at least 4,000 conversations with people," he said. "That's a lot of conversations" that occurred locally long before Strategies 360 operatives arrived with their polling data and advertising budgets.

It played a role in generating an endorsement of Proposition 1 by the Jefferson County Democrats, and enough differing views within the county Republicans to take no position. It also helped generate an endorsement from the Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader.

With a single home-based weekly newspaper and no locally-based commercial electronic media in Jefferson County, PSE's ability to buy advertising to overcome the early grass-roots work of the public power movement was limited.

Strategies 360 innovated by buying bus signs and signs at gasoline station fuel pumps, hiring a truck to act as a rolling billboard, and sent out several direct mail

flyers, three of which arrived after residents had begun to vote.

PSE's advertising called on voters to "Say No a Government Takeover." But in Jefferson County the public power measure was put forth by citizen initiative and the PUD was neutral.

PSE said: "Stop: No higher taxes and Electric Rates." But PSE opponents countered that taxes are limited by state law to a 1 percent increase, and PSE itself was then pursuing a 9 percent rate increase.

PSE argued that it was regulated by the state UTC and a PUD would not be. But, as Wise countered, most people in a small county feel they have more sway with their locally elected PUD commissioners than they do with either PSE or the UTC.

Dotzauer set up pro-PSE committees in each of the three counties, each with a different name but each with the same officers – people connected to Strategies 360. All of the money donated to the three campaigns came from PSE: \$426,344 in Skagit County, \$283,040 on Whidbey Island, and \$249,565 in Jefferson County.

Such committees are called "astro-turf" efforts in campaign jargon, which contrasts them to genuine grassroots efforts like the one that propelled the pro-Proposition 1 effort led by Wise. As even PSE's local representative Tim Caldwell acknowledged, the core group had been active on public power questions for four years before the election.

The scale of the PSE campaign in Jefferson County was unprecedented. No local initiative and no strictly local contest had ever generated anywhere near that amount of funding. Some of the campaign technologies – robo-calls, or automated calls from local citizens who supported PSE, the rolling billboards, the extensive polling – were new to the county and they became a campaign issue themselves.

"We're a small county," said PUD Manager Jim Parker, who grew up in Port Townsend where his dad was the basketball coach. "People know each other. The other counties are larger. Here it's small enough where you can talk to people."

PSE's Reynolds acknowledged that the rural character of Jefferson County played a role in the outcome.

"Jefferson County is a relatively small, cohesive county," he said. Proponents of public power "seem to have put together a

PUD
NON-PROFIT ELECTRICITY
LOCAL JOBS
NO FOREIGN OWNERSHIP

cohesive argument that said, 'Let's look at this'."

Reynolds made a visit to Port Townsend during the campaign. He said then, and repeated recently, that the PSE office in downtown Port Townsend is here to stay, and that he expects PSE will remain as well.

For Reynolds, the three-county election process was a wake-up call for PSE. He said in an earlier interview that he was genuinely surprised at the level of reaction to the purchase of PSE by Macquarie.

"You never feel good if there is a groundswell of people" who want to leave the company, he said. "We have certainly not been as effective in certain counties in how we provide services. It has been a humbling lesson for us."

Parker said he expects the PUD to proceed cautiously and studiously now that it has the authority to become an electric provider, perhaps through an appointed advisory group. "We don't want to be spinning our wheels," he said. Much depends on the level of cooperation or resistance from PSE, he added.

Wise, the successful public power activist, said he thinks Jefferson County will now move ahead, on its own terms. "We want to be supportive of the PUD," he said. "We want to see them move forward on this." □

Scott Wilson is publisher of The Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader. The article was adapted from an article published in The Leader and reprinted with permission.

WIND POWER

blows into Pacific County

By Rochelle Olson

A number of wind-energy projects have cropped up in Eastern Washington the past few years. Now, Energy Northwest is planning to build the first large-scale wind project in Western Washington, in the gusty Willapa Hills of Pacific County.

Energy Northwest, which also owns and operates the Nine Canyon Wind Project in Benton County, has leased land for a new wind site on Radar Ridge, named for a Cold War-era early-warning radar installation that operated from 1951 to 1966.

The agency says the wind project could produce as much as 82 megawatts of renewable electricity, which would help meet a state mandate that utilities with 25,000 customers get at least three percent of their power from renewable resources by 2013.

The Radar Ridge wind project could be in operation by late 2011. Four of Energy Northwest's members – Grays Harbor County PUD, Pacific County PUD, Mason County PUD No. 3, and Clallam County PUD – have expressed interest in the project, which is now fully subscribed.

The Radar Ridge project would be built on managed timber and recreation land leased from the state Department of Natural Resources. There are currently four communications towers (one state and three

privately owned) on the nearly 2,000-foot high ridge, also known as Naselle Ridge for the nearby pioneer community of Naselle.

"Radar Ridge will not be as easy to develop as some Eastern Washington sites,

but it's a good, solid project that will deliver good value for our members and their ratepayers," said Dave Kobus, Energy Northwest Radar Ridge Project Manager.

While the treeless expanses of Eastern Washington have attracted the most attention from wind-power developers, Energy Northwest began looking at Radar Ridge several years ago, in large part because of its proximity to Western Washington population centers and existing transmission facilities.

"We are working closely with state and federal agencies as this project will set the precedent for similar development efforts in the future," Kobus said. "The forested, coastal location requires additional efforts to protect sensitive bird species that other Washington wind developments have not dealt with previously."

Pacific Northwest coastal areas are

inhabited by the Marbled Murrelet, a small native seabird listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. Studies will be performed to assure an appropriate habitat conservation plan is prepared along with all

necessary federal and state agency consultations.

The number and size of the turbines ultimately used at the site won't be decided until early 2010, based in part on permitting and physical constraints of the site.

"Following permitting, the participating utilities will determine when the project is built based on their power demand needs," Kobus added. "The earliest timeframe the project could be in operation is late 2011."

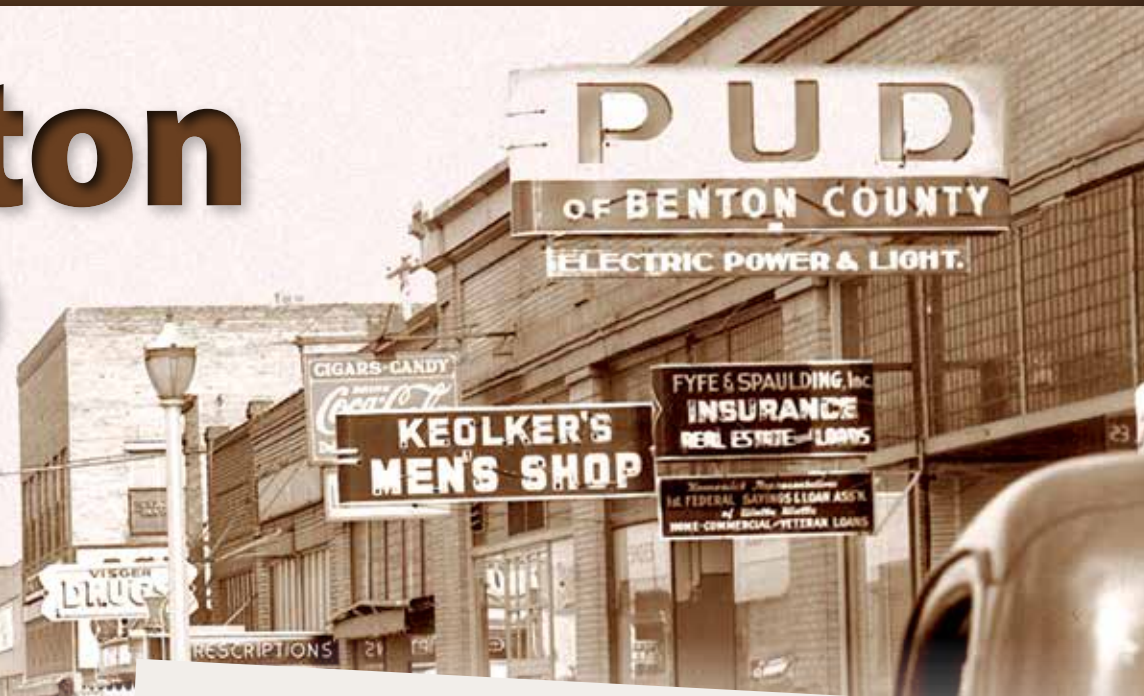
According to the American Wind Industry Association, Washington currently has 1,366 megawatts of installed wind-energy capacity, which places it fifth among all states. Texas is the industry leader with 6,297 megawatts of installed capacity and another 2,469 megawatts under construction. ■

Rochelle Olson is Public Information Officer for Energy Northwest.

The agency says the wind project could produce as much as 82 megawatts of renewable electricity, which would help meet a state mandate that utilities with 25,000 customers get at least three percent of their power from renewable resources by 2013.

Benton PUD

By Dean Boyer



Owen Hurd, left, became Benton PUD manager in 1947. To his right are PUD Commissioners Robert Johanson, Willard Campbell and Preston Royer.

Benton County voters approved the formation of a public utility district in 1934, but it wasn't until 1946 that the PUD began providing service. Along the way, the PUD also helped create the Benton Rural Electric Association and played a major role in affirming the right of Washington communities to own and operate their own public power utilities.

Today, Benton PUD serves nearly 40,000 residential customers, or about two-thirds of all households in the county, including the communities of Kennewick, Benton City, Finley and the county seat of Prosser. It also serves more than 5,000 commercial customers and more than 700 irrigated farms.

Electricity came to the area in the early 1900s, when the Prosser Falls Land and Power Company received a seven-year franchise to serve the town of Prosser Falls (now Prosser) and installed a 200-kilowatt generator at the site of the Hinzerling flour mill on the Yakima River.

Not long afterwards, Benton County – named for Missouri Sen. Thomas Hart Benton – was carved out of Klickitat County. Benton, who once shot then future-President Andrew Jackson in the

shoulder during a duel, was a believer in Manifest Destiny and a champion of western expansion who wrote the first homestead act.

Before long, the newly formed Pacific Power & Light Company began buying up small electric providers, including the Prosser Falls Land and Power Co., to form a regional power company. PP&L extended the first power lines to other rural communities in the Yakima Valley, including Grandview, Granger, Selah, Moxie and Union Gap. But by the 1930s, Pacific Power & Light (now PacifiCorp) was facing a revolt.

For the most part, the company refused to provide power to outlying areas unless there were at least four customers per mile, which meant most farms were without electricity and modern conveniences such as radios, vacuum cleaners, washing machines and, important for dryland farmers, electric water pumps. Expansion had also been curtailed

by the Great Depression.

In addition, the country was increasingly turning against what was referred to as the "Power Trust," large holding companies that controlled all aspects of the electric industry, from power generation and distribution to the making of electric appliances and light bulbs. By 1932, eight large holding companies controlled 73 percent of the investor-owned electric industry in the country. One of the largest was Electric Bond & Share, created by the General Electric Company, which owned, among others, Pacific Power & Light, American Power & Light, Idaho Power, Pennsylvania Power & Light, Texas Power & Light, Montana Power and Florida Power & Light.

Following the collapse of the Middle West Utilities Corporation in 1932, which wiped out the investment of 600,000 shareholders, Congress began looking for ways to regulate the industry, and in 1935, enacted the

Public Utility Holding Company Act, which limited the geographic reach of individual companies. Electric Bond & Share eventually became the target of a famous test case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the holding company to register with the

Works Administration to survey the electrical needs of the county. The PUD also put in a request to the Bureau of Reclamation, which was responsible for Grand Coulee Dam, for 130 kilowatts of electricity to be delivered to Prosser.



Central Washington farmer and artist Suzanne Matthews painted this view of rural Benton County, entitled Aunt Norma's Prosser.

When Pacific Power & Light was unwilling to enter into negotiations to sell or lease its distribution system in Benton County, the PUD considered – then dropped – the idea of filing a condemnation suit. Instead, the PUD requested a \$45,000 loan from the newly created Rural Electrification Administration for planning and construction of electric lines in unserved portions of the county.

Unfortunately, according to E. Lewis Towne's "Electricity Comes to Benton

federal Security Exchange Commission or be enjoined from interstate business.

Meanwhile, the voters in Washington had also taken action. In 1929, the Grange submitted an initiative to the state Legislature to allow communities to form their own nonprofit public utility districts. When the state Senate defeated the bill 20-17, the measure, known as Initiative No. 1, went to a vote of the people. The measure was approved in 1930. Four years later, with the prospect of low-cost power from Grand Coulee Dam, then under construction in Eastern Washington, voters in Franklin and Benton counties approved the first two countywide public utility districts under the new law.

The newly elected Benton PUD commissioners – John B. Whitehead, H.W. Gill, and Carl C. Williams – met in January 1935 to get organized. A month later, Whitehead resigned as commissioner to become the PUD's first manager. Gill also stepped down in March when he moved to pursue business interests. He was replaced by Preston Royer, who would soon put his name on a friendly lawsuit before the state Supreme Court testing the constitutionality of the PUD law. In a major victory for proponents of public power, in April 1936 the court upheld the law 7-1.

In August 1935, the Benton PUD requested \$375 from the federal Public

County," there was some disagreement over whether the PUD planned to use some of the money to serve areas of Yakima and Lewis counties, which its charter didn't allow. To satisfy its loan agreement, the Benton PUD helped form the Benton Rural Electric Association in 1937 and transferred the funds to the new cooperative. The Benton REA used the funds to build 43 miles of distribution lines, providing power for the first time in May 1938 to 89 farms in Benton and Yakima counties. Whitehead served as manager of both the Benton REA and the Benton PUD for the next 10 years.

Meanwhile, J.D. Ross, the former head of Seattle City Light who was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to lead the new Bonneville Power Administration, tried to broker a deal between the Benton PUD and Pacific Power & Light. Dr. Paul Raver, who became BPA administration following Ross' death in 1939, continued that effort. Raver eventually put together a proposal that would allow the PUD to buy PP&L facilities in Benton County, while a new federal corporation would purchase the rest of PP&L's assets, but negotiations came to a stop with the start of World War II.

Finally, in May 1945, the Benton PUD voted 2-1 to proceed with the acquisition of PP&L's distribution system in the county – through condemnation if necessary. PUD Commissioner Guy Story, who was elected

in 1935, opposed the move and stopped attending PUD meetings in protest. His seat was declared vacant after 13 months and Willard Campbell was appointed to replace him.

After an abortive attempt by several PUDs and cooperatives in Washington and Oregon to form a nonprofit corporation to acquire the entire PL&L system, Benton PUD proceeded with filing for condemnation. In June 1946, the U.S. District Court in Yakima issued a verdict that set the price at \$1,265,000, plus court costs. The PUD sold \$1,550,000 in bonds to cover the cost and presented a cashier's check to PP&L. The Benton PUD finally got into the electric business at midnight on Sept. 12, 1946, serving 3,754 customers.

The area served by the Benton PUD was much smaller than originally envisioned. First, the Benton REA had continued to

continued on page 12

Like most public utility districts, Benton PUD is governed by a three-member board of locally elected commissioners. Those commissioners serve six-year terms, with one seat up for election every two years.

Current commissioners are Lori Kays-Sanders, serving as board president this year; Bob Bertsch, vice president, and Jim Hall, secretary.

Kays-Sanders was elected to the commission in November 2004.

A Kennewick native, she is the owner and president of Energy Incentives, Inc., a consulting firm on conservation and renewable energy. She will serve as president of the commission for 2009.

Bertsch was appointed to the commission in February 2005, following the resignation of long-time Commissioner Bob Graves due to poor health. He stood for election the following year and was unopposed. Bertsch is president of Ashley-Bertsch Group, Inc, a construction management company.

Hall, former owner/manager of an automobile dealership in Prosser, was appointed to the commission in January 2002, following the death of then-Commissioner Francis Moore. He was elected to a six-year term in November 2002, and re-elected in November 2008.

grow while the PUD dealt with PP&L. Second, the federal government had taken over a large part of the county – and some of PL&L's distribution system – when it created the Hanford Engineer Works. It didn't take long, however, for Benton PUD's new customers to be rewarded. On Jan. 2, 1947, the PUD – which was then buying its power from PL&L – reduced its residential rates by 13 percent and its commercial rates by as much as 18 percent.

That fall, the Benton PUD and Benton REA mutually agreed to end their joint management relationship. F. W. Day, who had been office manager for the PUD was named acting manager, while Whitehead continued with the REA until he resigned in 1949. Before the end of the year, the Benton PUD hired Owen Wilson Hurd, an electrical engineer with the Bonneville Power Administration, to be manager. Hurd would later become the first managing director of the Washington Public Power Supply System, now known as Energy Northwest, and served as president of the American Public Power Association in 1957-58.

Meanwhile, construction was proceeding on McNary Dam, which would provide Benton PUD with an immediate source of

federal hydropower and extend navigation on the Columbia River to the Tri-Cities and the mouth of the Snake River.

The Open River Navigation Association began to lobby for a dam near the Umatilla Rapids as early as 1911, and the U.S. Reclamation Service (now the Bureau of Reclamation) began studying the site in 1923. Then in 1928, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a complete study of potential dams on the Columbia. The Corps later recommended 10 sites, including Umatilla Rapids.

HistoryLink notes that critics initially ridiculed the idea of a hydroelectric dam in such a sparsely populated location, wondering who would use electricity. Nevertheless, Congress authorized the dam, named for Oregon Sen. Charles L. McNary, in 1941, and construction got underway in 1947. On Sept. 23, 1954, an estimated 30,000 people crowded the powerhouse to hear President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicate the dam, which had begun delivering power to the Bonneville Power Administra-

tion earlier that year.

Today, Benton PUD buys most of its power from BPA, which markets electricity generated by the Federal Columbia River Power System. That means most of the PUD's power comes from clean, renewable hydroelectric resources. In addition, the PUD has purchase agreements for renewable energy

Today, Benton PUD buys most of its power from BPA, which markets electricity generated by the Federal Columbia River Power System.

from the Nine Canyon Wind Project, White Creek Wind Project, Packwood Lake Hydroelectric Project, and the H.W. Hill Landfill Gas Power Plant in Klickitat County. In 2007, it delivered more than 1.6 million megawatt-hours of power to its customers.

Five years ago, the Benton PUD also began building a fiber-optic network to provide high-speed communications to retail Internet providers, primarily in Kennewick and Prosser. The PUD network is linked to the Northwest Open Access Network, formed by several public utility districts across the state. NoaNet is one of the largest advanced telecommunications networks serving the Northwest. ☐



FIRST SALMON

PUD outreach stresses protection of water resources

By Jim Boldt

Every fall, Debbie Thomas takes small groups of Kitsap County fourth graders to Dogfish Creek where they wait patiently to catch a glimpse of chum salmon returning to spawn.

Though the stream is just a few miles from a busy state highway, there are no sounds of traffic. The nearby cities are also quiet. Very little light penetrates the shrubs and trees. On this trip, the overcast sky contributes to the subdued quality of light and sound.

After 15 years, Thomas knows her students will stay patient only so long. They will become restless if the fish don't appear. She watches their faces as much as she does the shallow bend in the waterway to see which one of the kids will spot the first salmon.

Then, almost in slow motion, the water begins to foam as a salmon struggles against the current on its way upstream. The tail whips back and forth. The first small finger points in the direction of the salmon and a high pitched voice shouts out "there's one." A dozen heads turn in the same direction.

Thomas, water education and conservation manager for the Kitsap County PUD, is again rewarded by the smiles, the big eyes, and the youthful curiosity.

"It never gets old," Thomas says, flashing a smile of her own. "I love to see it every

fall. The look on their faces ... and then they break into telling each other descriptions of the swimming salmon."

It is Thomas' personal version of the traditional First Salmon ceremonies that many Northwest tribes held to celebrate the return of the salmon and show their thanks for all the benefits that came from the fish.

Chum salmon – also known as dogfish for the canine-like teeth in the males – are the only wild salmon that still spawn on the Kitsap Peninsula. With their hooked jaws and the greenish yellow color acquired before spawning, they

look "beat up" by the time they reach the creek, according to Thomas. Male salmon also engage in ritualized fights for the right to spawn with the females. Chum salmon were prized by Native Americans because their flesh is well-suited for smoking.

Thomas was a volunteer with the Kitsap County Water Watchers, a now defunct group whose original purpose was to protect the water resources of the county, when she started a program for "junior water watchers." Two years later, Kitsap PUD offered her a job to continue her work with the Kitsap schools and manage the PUD's water conservation program.



Debbie Thomas studies a butterfly with Jonathon Rider (left) and Evan Neims.

"I didn't hear the word 'stewardship' or 'conservation' until I was out of high school," Thomas said, sitting in an office now crowded with brochures and class outlines from more than a decade of teaching. "I figured if I could do something to foster civic responsibility, particularly in young people, the kids would grow up knowing the importance of caring about their world and who and what lives in it," she added. "I also knew that they would go home and share that concern with others, including their parents, and their parents are the PUD's customers."

Kitsap PUD Manager Dave Siburg said the education program fits well with the PUD's broader effort to help manage the county's water resources. As a water utility, the PUD relies on groundwater resources to serve more than 12,000 households and

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nearly 900 commercial customers. Siburg noted that Kitsap is one of just two counties in Washington, that doesn't get any fresh-water resources from mountain snowmelt. The other is Island County.

"I think that has heightened our awareness of the need to monitor and manage the resources that we have," Siburg said.

With the support of the PUD, Thomas has expanded her original volunteer work with the "junior water watchers" into a science curriculum – known as the "Water-shed Kit" – that has been adopted by most of the county's grade schools.



Debbie Thomas

Working with other water utilities, she also took a lead role in creating an annual "Water Wonders" day camp for elementary school

students and the annual "Kitsap Water Festival" at Olympic College, again targeting fourth graders. Thomas, a graduate of Western Washington University in Bellingham, also teaches other classes, from pre-school to high school, and adult programs, such as Master Gardeners, and serves on the state Department of Health's Water Use Efficiency Advisory Committee.


"It's all about connections," Thomas said. "It's important to show how our water resources are connected – streams, wells, our drinking water, even Puget Sound. It's also about demonstrating the connection between human activities and the quality of their drinking water, so people will value their water and not waste it."

As for her work with children, she said it was important from the start to get them "out in nature." "I knew if it was just a class, or just a science project inside the room, it

would not stick," Thomas said. "They had to see it, and feel it, and get wet and muddy and walk with me through the leaves and wait there on the bank."

Once the kids actually see the salmon for themselves, "I can go back to the classroom and pull it all together," she said. "After that first look, I can start with the rain and show them where it goes into the ground and how it forms a stream and heads for the Puget Sound. I know they get it then."

Last year, Thomas received a special award for her efforts from the Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts,

the first time that group has ever recognized someone outside a water or sewer program. The award was presented in December at the Washington PUD Association annual meeting. 

Jim Boldt is Communications Manager for the Kitsap PUD

Working with other water utilities, she also took a lead role in creating an annual "Water Wonders" day camp for elementary school students and the annual "Kitsap Water Festival" at Olympic College, again targeting fourth graders.



By Liz Anderson

Artist's conception shows wind turbines as they would appear rising over a cranberry bog in Grayland.

If you are a visionary like Craig Dublanko, chief financial officer for the Coastal Community Action Program, you can already see the wind turbines on a hill overlooking the cranberry bogs in Grayland.

That image represents a commitment by the Grays Harbor Public Utility District to provide renewable energy and a whole lot more. It represents CCAP's commitment to help those in need.

CCAP, which is building the wind project, plans to sell the energy to the Grays Harbor PUD and use the revenues to heat the homes of low-income and needy residents, provide warm meals for home-bound senior citizens, help care for the disabled and elderly, and provide emergency assistance for families in need in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties.

Initially, the nonprofit CCAP, which serves Grays Harbor and Pacific counties, thought about installing small wind turbines on government-owned, low-income housing to take advantage of Grays Harbor PUD's net metering program.

Net metering allows customers with small, renewable generating facilities to sell their excess electricity back to the utility.

When a customer's generating equipment is producing more electricity than is being used, the customer's meter will literally spin backwards, sending power back into the grid. Created in 2002, Grays Harbor PUD's program reimburses customers for net excess generation at the end of each year, at 50 percent of the utility's retail rate.

In the end, net metering didn't pencil

out economically for CCAP, but Dublanko refused to let the concept die. Instead, he came up with an even more ambitious plan for a full-blown wind project – four 1.5 megawatt wind turbines erected on a hilltop near the coastal community of Grayland, known for its miles of ocean beaches and cranberry bogs.

"At the beginning everyone would pat me on the head and say, 'nice idea Craig' but there was a lot of skepticism that it could be done," Dublanko said.

But now, armed with a \$5 million grant from the state and a power purchase agreement in the works with the Grays Harbor PUD, Dublanko's "nice idea" could be a reality by this fall.

"That funding took us from really cool idea to a real project," said Dublanko.

The other piece of the financial puzzle came together with more than \$6 million in federal tax credits, including \$2.7 million from the New Markets Tax Credit Program and \$3.5 million in renewable energy tax credits. The project is expected to cost between \$13 million and \$14 million.

Money was one problem, but the project also faced another challenge – CCAP needed help understanding wind energy. Dublanko says that is where Chinook Wind, a wind-consulting firm in Everson, Wash., and the local PUD stepped in to

lend a hand.

"Grays Harbor PUD was like a big brother to us," Dublanko said. "From early on in the process they were happy to help, answering our questions and providing direction."

"We look at this as a win-win opportunity," said Doug Smith, assistant general manager for the PUD, who has been involved in discussions with CCAP since the project's inception.

"It helps us meet our requirements for renewable resources, benefits the needy in our community and supports economic development in our

county," Smith said. "We are proud to be able to work with CCAP on this project and applaud their dedication to coming up with creative solutions to meet the needs of our community and the needs of our customers."

The state Energy Independence Act, adopted by the voters two years ago as Initiative 937, requires electric utilities with at least 25,000 customers to get 15 percent of their energy from renewable resources by 2020. Grays Harbor PUD serves about 41,000 residential and commercial customers.

In addition to the CCAP project, Grays Harbor PUD purchases wind-generated

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energy from the Nine Canyon Wind Project in Franklin County owned and operated by Energy Northwest, a consortium of public power utilities that includes 20 PUDs, and is participating in another Energy Northwest project to develop the first large-scale wind farm in Western Washington on Radar Ridge in Pacific County.

While there are other small community wind projects in the country, Dublanko said he isn't aware of any like the CCAP project that are dedicated to supporting programs for low-income people. The project is expected to generate as much as \$720,000 annually during the 25-year lifespan of the turbines.

The project cleared its last permitting hurdle in December, when the Pacific County Board of Adjustments gave its approval. The proposed wind project is on 29 acres of privately owned land that straddles the line between Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. CCAP also has a contract with General Electric, which is expected to deliver the four 256-foot tall turbines this summer. The project should be up and running two months later.

It has been a long road for Dublanko, who first proposed putting small turbines

on rooftops nine years ago, and he's looking ahead with excitement and a sense of pride to the day the CCAP wind project produces its first electricity. As the project comes to life, and others can finally see the turbines he has envisioned for so long, he knows it

will be a special moment. "I am sure there will be some tears when that happens." ☐

Liz Anderson is community relations manager for the Grays Harbor PUD. For more information about the Coastal Community Action Program, go to www.coastalcap.org.

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Farmer, hydropower advocate to lead WPUDA in 2009

Tom Flint, a commissioner for the Grant County Public Utility District since 2001, was elected president of the Washington Utility Districts Association for 2009.



Tom Flint

WPUDA is a trade association representing 27 PUDs that provide electricity, water and sewer services, and wholesale broadband communications.

Grant PUD provides power to more than 40,000 business and residential customers and operates a fiber-optics communications network that reaches more than 4,500 retail subscribers.

The PUD also owns and operates the Priest Rapids and Wanapum hydroelectric projects on the Columbia River, which produce nearly 8.5 million megawatt-hours of electricity a year. That power is used to meet the needs of the PUD's local customers and sold to other utilities across the Northwest.

Flint, who will chair the WPUDA Board of Directors, with representatives from each of the member PUDs, is a second-generation Columbia Basin farmer, raising a variety of row crops and wheat for seed.

His family moved from Nebraska to Washington in 1955, when Flint was six, because of the low-cost power and water for irrigation made possible by hydroelectric dams on the Columbia River.

In the late 1990s, Flint founded "Save Our Dams," a grassroots organization dedicated to defending four hydroelectric dams on the

SNAKE River from calls to tear them down, eventually gathering more than 880,000 signatures. It was his work with "Save Our Dams" that led to his running for an at-large seat on the Grant

from 29 federal dams in the Northwest. One worry is that PUDs could be forced to sell or forgo the use of hydropower and replace it with more expensive electricity generated by wind or other renewable resources.

"Hydropower is clean, it's renewable and it's the foundation of our Northwest power supply," Flint said. "We need to preserve and protect our low-cost hydropower for the people of Washington state. We need more hydropower, not less."

PUD commission in 2000.

As president of WPUDA, Flint says one of his goals is to get hydropower recognized as a renewable resource under state law.

In 2006, voters approved Initiative 937, requiring utilities with more than 25,000 customers to get 15 percent of their electricity from renewable resources by 2020. The law recognizes incremental increases in hydropower production – for example, from improved turbine efficiency – as renewable, but the bulk of the state's hydropower generation is not considered a renewable resource.

PUDs currently get more than 80 percent of their power from hydropower, either from their own hydroelectric projects, like Grant PUD, or from the Bonneville Power Administration, which markets the power

Flint, 59, served four years in the U.S. Air Force as an electronic communications specialist and was a safety inspector for the state Department of Labor and Industries. He holds degrees in industrial technology and secondary education from Central Washington University.

Flint also serves on the board of the Blacksands Irrigation District and founded AgFarmation, a nonprofit organization that operates an electronic billboard and low-powered radio station to provide information about farming in Central Washington to motorists on Interstate 90. The group is also responsible for placing crop signs along I-90.

Flint and his wife, Cathy, have three grown children and six adopted children from Russia, now ages 16 to 18. ☐



Skagit County PUD Commissioner Robbie Robertson, who served as secretary/treasurer of the Washington PUD Association in 2008, was elected vice president at the organization's annual meeting in December. He is in line to become president in 2010.

Benton County PUD Commissioner Jeff Hall was elected to serve as secretary/treasurer in 2009.

WPUDA is a trade association that represents 27 public utility districts. Each PUD appoints one commissioner to serve on the board of directors.

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An Unfolding Legacy

The Wanapum band of Priest Rapids and Grant PUD

By Kathy Kiefer

In February 1953, when Glen Smothers, manager of the Grant County Public Utility District, received a copy of a letter addressed to Leon Fuquay, secretary of the Federal Power Commission, that was signed with an X alongside the name Puck Hyah Toot, he was taken by complete surprise.

The two-page letter described the Wanapum Indians and pointed out that they had never signed a treaty with the federal government because it would have violated their religious beliefs. It gave brief details about their life and indigenous claims to artifacts and places in the immediate vicinity of Grant PUD's proposed Priest Rapids dam site. The author of the letter wrote:

"...the petition is made that no permit for construction of a dam be granted, unless the guarantee is made that protection and haven be provided to these people, who excepting for intervening friends, are without means of protection and protecting ..."

The word Wanapum means "river people" and Grant PUD's fast-tracked plans to build a dam on the Columbia River near their ancestral winter village site briefly came to a crawl.

One of the intervening friends, and interlocutor for the letter to the FPC, was Click Relander, a reporter for the *Yakima*

Herald Republic. A prolific writer, sculptor, and consummate advocate of native people in Washington state, Relander played a key role in negotiating the 1957 agreement between the Wanapum and Grant PUD that ultimately gave the Wanapum their long-sought-after home site at Priest Rapids and assured that Grant PUD could complete Priest Rapids Dam, one of two dams which the utility eventually built.

On May 12, 1955, the Grant PUD Board of Commissioners passed a resolution giving the name Wanapum to the second dam they would build on the river upstream of Priest Rapids. The resolution acknowledged the Wanapum by recognizing their ancestral traditions and stating that their friendship and cooperation had been of the utmost encouragement in the development of the river. Several Wanapum were even employed during construction of both dams.

The 1957 agreement was negotiated between Relander, Puck Hyah Toot (a.k.a. Johnny Buck), and Grant PUD attorney Nat Washington. In subsequent interviews, Washington made it clear that when the terms of the agreement were established, he

had not considered the possibility of future generations of Wanapum being born and continuing to live at Priest Rapids. The original agreement was written for Puck Hyah Toot and the commissioners of Grant PUD to sign; however, when Puck Hyah Toot died before that happened, it was re-written and signed by two of his sons and two other male relatives, and included provisions for them to live at Priest Rapids.

Shortly after the agreement was signed, Relander's book, *Drummers and Dreamers*, was published. The book provides a detailed

accounting of the Wanapum story as seen from his perspective. The book has sold out of several print runs since, and pristine copies of the original hard-bound version can be found for upwards of \$300; a signed copy would be worth more. The book propelled the story of the Wanapum and their relationship with the PUD into the public spotlight.

In 1965, Grant PUD Public Affairs Officer Jack Park led an effort to design and construct a visitor's center at Wanapum Dam to house some of the historic memorabilia and objects of cultural patrimony that the utility had acquired on behalf of the Wanapum. The new facility also became the repository for several donated and purchased artifact collections, material remains from archaeological excavations within the project, and several of Relander's bronze sculptures, including a bust of Puck Hyah Toot. For decades, the facility, now called the Wanapum Dam Heritage Center, has hosted thousands of visitors and school bus tours.

Over the half century since the agreement was signed with Grant PUD, two generations of Wanapum have stepped forward to orchestrate the relationship. Theirs is a hands-on approach to cultural resource

management and cultural resource protection. Wanapum are involved in every aspect of the cultural resources program, and Puck Hyah Toot's grandson, granddaughter, and great-grandson attend meetings with other tribes and agencies, ensuring that Wanapum issues are represented. In December 2001, the last of the four Wanapum men who signed the agreement died at home in the village located alongside the tailrace of Priest Rapids Dam.

The Wanapum now operate a museum on wheels that visits local schools and public events, they participate in the annual Grant County Fair, and play a huge role each year educating others during Washington State Archaeology Days. In 2008, 486 students, chaperones, and teachers attended Archaeology Days activities organized by the Wanapum and Grant PUD. For many students who come from distant schools, this is the first time they are introduced to indigenous cultures.

The repository at the Wanapum Dam Heritage Center has grown over the last 15 years to include ethnographic objects donated by other Wanapum to be cared for in perpetuity for the benefit of future generations. Individual Wanapum have

participated in collections management and curatorial practices to ensure the repository meets federal standards and guidelines.

The Wanapum are sought-after speakers and presenters who have gone a long way with their public outreach programs to endear the local communities to their culture and character. But this is nothing new for the Wanapum. Puck Hyah Toot and his sons were gifted orators in their language, which was often translated by

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Arlene Buck, in traditional root digger garb, with former Grant PUD Commissioner Vera Clausen.



Examining a Whale Island petroglyph site are, l-r, Johnny Buck, Frank Buck, Grant PUD engineer Ken Crow, Yakima Herald-Republic reporter Click Relander, and Bobby Tomanawash.

Wanapum Indians pose in front of a tule mat longhouse, circa late 1940s.



Lenora Seelatsee, left, with Nat Washington, who served as Grant PUD attorney.

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Alba Shawaway, a relative from the Yakama Tribe, during negotiations with Grant PUD.

The history of Wanapum fishing rights contains another example of an individual who sought to help acquire a treaty-like right that technically they did not qualify for because they never signed a treaty. This was because Snowhalla, the leader/prophet of the Wanapum who lived in the mid-1800s, emphatically declared that the land, water, and natural resources of the earth were a gift from the creator and was not theirs to bargain for, trade, or exchange. They lived in relative poverty from treaty times

(mid-1800s) and thereafter at the little village called P'na near Priest Rapids.

L. V. McWhorter, like Relander, had a deep and abiding appreciation for Native Americans. He was also a writer, living in the nearby Yakima Valley, who devoted his time

to fighting for Native American land and water rights. Some time in the early 1930s he became acquainted with Johnny Buck from Priest Rapids. Around this period of time, the state Department of Fisheries was working to curtail Indian fishing because of



Kenny Buck, left, with Lighting Paul, Clarice Paul and, front, Sterling Paul.

its perceived threat to the commercial fisheries on the Columbia River. McWhorter proceeded to draft, promote, and get signed a petition on behalf of the Wanapum that would give them the right to fish at Priest Rapids. People from White Bluffs, south of Priest Rapids, all the way to Ellensburg to the northwest signed the petition. McWhorter enticed state Sen. Dowe McQuesten of Yakima to sponsor

House Bill 327, which passed in 1939, giving the "Priest Rapids band of Indians" the right to fish at their traditional fishing ground. The story, however, does not end there.

In 1981, Frank Buck (Johnny Buck's son) was arrested while fishing at Priest Rapids. As

it turns out, the 1939 law was removed from the books in 1949 when it was deemed it was archaic and no longer applicable. Grant PUD Manager Larry Peterson and PUD Commissioner Vera Claussen were instrumental in working with the Legislature and the state Department of Fish and Wildlife on behalf of the Wanapum. In March 1981, Substitute Senate Bill 3024 was signed into law by Gov. John Spellman and the Wanapum had their fishing rights restored.

Grant PUD played a significant role in the protection of archaeological sites and burial grounds on project lands, both of which have been targets for relic collectors over the years. Grant PUD organized archaeological resource training programs for regional law enforcement officers, posted signs, and continued to monitor sensitive areas. The utility has published brochures, developed public education and outreach programs, and assisted with investigations of several cases of vandalism on project lands. The Wanapum participate in a reservoir patrol program which places them on the project year-round to monitor known archaeology sites. ☐

Kathy Kiefer is public affairs officer for Grant PUD. This article originally appeared in the November 2008 issue of Bulletin, published by the Northwest Public Power Association, and is reprinted with permission.

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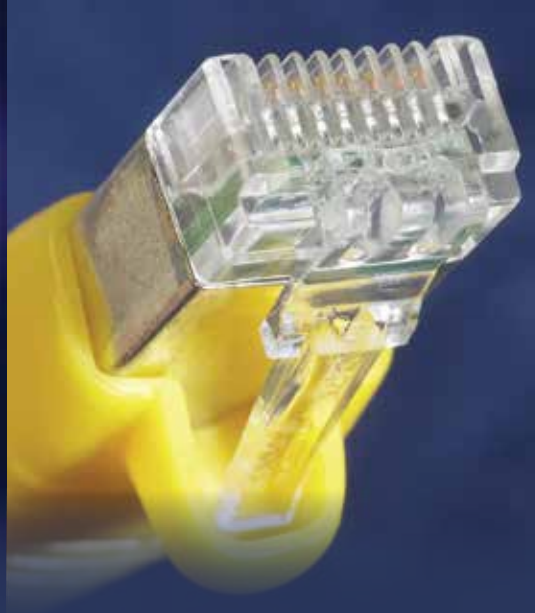
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