

# Hotline



Issue: March - April 2020

## Working for You

Commissioners:

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Roger Wright, *Secretary*

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*Senior Manager, Public Affairs*



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**Earth Day is April 22**  
*You can make a difference in our community!*



**Know What's Below**  
**Call Before You Dig**



In the next couple months, many of you will start getting your yard in shape for spring and summer. Before picking up a shovel, pick up the phone. Anytime you dig deeper than 12 inches - whether to plant a tree, install a fence, or build a deck - you must call 811. Even on your own private property. Electric lines are often buried underground and digging into them can result in loss of power, costly repair bills, severe injury, or even death.

**Call 8-1-1 at least two business days before you plan to dig. Calling ahead is not only common sense, its the law.**

## Scammers Getting More Sophisticated When Targeting Customers

Nothing gets Franklin PUD Customer Service Manager Abby Borchers more upset than when she hears someone is trying to scam customers. "Customers come into our office and say they received a call that sounded like a legitimate Franklin PUD employee, but after checking their account status, it turns out to be a scammer."

In the last few years scammers have gotten more sophisticated in their use of technology. They can go as far as placing automated calls and can falsify the caller ID so it looks like the call is actually coming from Franklin PUD. Scammers will put extra pressure on customers and demand payment right then, or threaten to disconnect your service within a short amount of time (45 minutes) unless you pay over the phone with a credit or debit card. Often times customers will be targeted right before a holiday or long weekend. "Although we do place automated calls after hours - we do not disconnect customers outside of our regular business hours," said Borchers.

If you ever receive a call from Franklin PUD and you are suspicious it could be a scam, hang up and call our Customer Service Department directly at 509-547-5591. You can also check your account balance online



Abby Borchers (right) with Customer Service staff, Toni & Juan

using Smart Hub, our online payment system. If you don't already use SmartHub, here's how to get started:

- Go to our website at [www.franklinpud.com](http://www.franklinpud.com) and in the SmartHub login box click on "New user? Register to Use SmartHub!". You will need your Franklin PUD account number and a valid e-mail address to sign up.
- Go to your mobile device App Store or Google Play and search for SmartHub. Download the app and when registering choose Franklin PUD as your provider. You will need your account number and a valid e-mail address to sign up. The app will allow you to view your account status and usage history.

You can never be too careful. If you have any doubts give us a call. We are here to help!

## Franklin PUD Receives Tree Line USA Award From Arbor Day Foundation



The Arbor Day Foundation has named Franklin PUD as a 2020 Tree Line USA® Award recipient in honor of our commitment to proper tree pruning, planting and care in our service area.

Tree Line USA, a partnership between the Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters, recognizes public and private utilities for pursuing practices that protect and enhance America's urban trees. Tree Line USA promotes the dual goals of delivering safe and reliable electricity while maintaining

healthy community forests.

"Trees are a critical part of urban landscapes all across the United States," said Dan Lambe, president of the Arbor Day Foundation. "They provide important benefits to residents, including clean air, clean water and a tolerable climate. Service providers like Franklin PUD demonstrate that it's possible for trees and utilities to co-exist for the benefit of communities and citizens."

Franklin PUD achieved Tree Line USA status by meeting five program standards. Utilities must follow industry standards for quality tree care; provide annual worker training in best tree care practices; sponsor a tree planting and public education program; maintain a tree-based energy conservation program; and participate in an Arbor Day celebration.

Be on the lookout for details about our next Arbor Day event, in partnership with the City of Pasco, taking place this spring!

## Pay with SmartHub on your mobile device.

Download the App! Available for Apple and Android devices

**With SmartHub, you can:**

- Pay your bill immediately with secure online payments
- View monthly electricity usage and history
- Manage account information directly and track payment history from mobile devices or the web



Search for "SmartHub" in the App Store or Google Play  
**Manage your account anytime, anywhere!**

Commissioner's Corner

# System Reliability the Number One Threat to Utilities



**Stu Nelson**  
2020 Vice President

I have seen a lot of energy issues come and go. The most recent one being dubbed "system reliability" is something we shouldn't ignore.

In 2019 the Washington State Legislature passed the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). That means our energy supply has to be 100 percent free of carbon emissions by 2045. In 2025 all coal fired plants have to be retired. Now the state wants to get rid of natural gas generation plants. The big fear amongst utilities is how to make up for all the power we're losing.

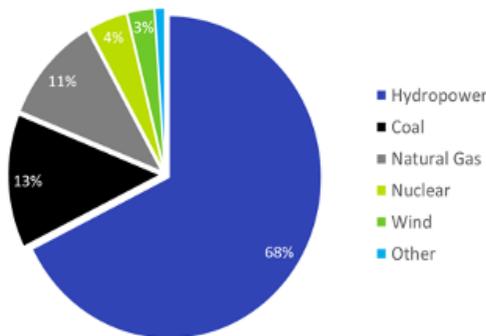
In Washington State hydropower makes up nearly 70 percent of the electricity mix, followed by coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind and solar. With environmentalist eyeing the lower Snake River dams for removal, this is even more cause for concern.

Dams are of major importance to the Tri-Cities. They not only offer a backup generation system during high energy usage

– they provide irrigation for our farmers and allow barges to carry millions of dollars worth of commodities up and down the river everyday. Breaching or removing those dams is just out of the question.

Washington State Senator Tim Sheldon, who is a former public utility district commissioner and a board member for Energy Northwest, introduced Senate Bill 6135, which would speed up a planning effort by the state Department of Commerce. He stated "The utility community is in a state of alarm."

## Washington State's Electricity Mix



Retiring coal, stopping natural gas generation, and removing the lower Snake River dams would leave the northwest short on reliable energy. What would we do if the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing?



## Notice to Residential Solar Customers

If you have a solar power system on your home, we want to inform you of a recent change to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The revision to RCW 80.60.030 includes a reset of unused credits for kilowatt-hours accumulated during the previous year to occur on March 31st of each calendar year instead of the previous date of April 30th. You can review all changes to the RCW at <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>.



## Welcome Mike Gonzalez Senior Manager of Public Affairs

Franklin PUD welcomes Mike Gonzalez as the new Senior Manager of Public Affairs. Gonzalez will be responsible for advocating our policy positions, developing and maintaining positive customer relationships and identifying and promoting priorities important to the electric industry today. He will also be responsible for developing and carrying out our communication strategy to ensure the needs of our diverse customer base are met.

Gonzalez was most recently a news anchor in Phoenix, Arizona. However, he has strong ties to the Tri-Cities where he was the news director at KVEW ABC where he managed daily operations as well as branding and marketing for the news department in their Tri-Cities and Yakima bureaus.

If you see Mike around town, give him a warm welcome.

## On a Tight Budget? These Programs & Services Can Help You Out

### Budget Payment Plan

The budget payment plan gives you the ease of knowing how much your bill will be each month. Your payment is based on an average of the last 12 months of billing at your current address. Once your payment is calculated and you sign up for the Budget Payment Plan, your account is evaluated every March and September, and your payment amount is adjusted if necessary. A zero balance on your account is required to sign up for the plan.

To find out how much your budget payment would be, call our Customer Service Department at 509-547-5591 or go to our website at [www.franklinpud.com](http://www.franklinpud.com), click on Programs & Services, and go to the Budget Payment Plan page. There you can submit the online form.

### Low Income Senior & Low Income Disabled Discount

We offer a discount to our qualifying low-income senior and low-income disabled customers. The disability discount is 30% and the senior discount is either 15% or 30% depending on your income.

To apply, please schedule an appointment by calling our office at 509-547-5591, Monday-Friday between 8:30a.m. and 5:00p.m.

### Payment Arrangements through our Credit Department

If you are having a hard time paying your bill – let us know. Our credit department can make payment arrangements with you to get your account back up to date. We can also recommend some other services that may be available to help you.



Franklin PUD offers Generation Green, a "green power" program to give our customers an opportunity to purchase renewable energy generated from qualified alternative energy resources. This program, which provides a **voluntary option** to customers, is mandated by the State

of Washington through RCW 19.29A.090.

**The amount you pay is above and beyond what you already pay for renewable energy already included in Franklin PUD rates.**

For more information on this program, go to our website at [www.franklinpud.com/energy-efficiency/generation-green/](http://www.franklinpud.com/energy-efficiency/generation-green/).

## Fuel Mix Disclosure

A report of where your power comes from.

Generation Type	% of Total Generation
COAL	-
HYDRO	85%
NATURAL GAS	5%
NUCLEAR	8%
OTHER	2%

**TOTAL 100%**

OTHER may include, but not limited to the following types of generation: Biomass; geothermal; landfill gas; oil; solar; wind, or waste incineration.

\*Source: WA State 2017 Fuel Mix Disclosure Report, WA State Dept. of Commerce

