

# Hotline



## SmartHub

A new and enhanced online payment system

**\*Coming February 2017\***



### 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
- Sign up to receive notifications via e-mail or text messaging concerning activity on your account
- Report a power outage



On February 13, 2017 Franklin PUD will be converting to National Information Solutions Cooperative's (NISC) integrated software system. By doing so, we will be able to improve your customer experience and give you access to more information regarding your electric account. How? Through leveraging technology and integration.

As the industry grows and technology becomes a bigger part of everyday life for utility employees and customers, it's essential that our employees have the tools they need to serve our customers as quickly and efficiently as possible.

One key element of the software is called SmartHub, which provides customers with real-time account access online and via mobile devices such as Android or Apple smartphones and tablets.

SmartHub allows customers several options such as making a one-time electronic bill payment without being required to register

for an account. Customers who do register and set up an online account are able to pay their bills and monitor their electric usage.

Customers can also set up recurring payments, receive paperless bill statements and sign up to receive e-mails or texts about power outages or planned service disconnects for system maintenance.

Another feature of the new software is a comprehensive interactive voice response program that will allow Franklin PUD to send phone messages to specific groups of customers — such as those who face disconnects for non payment.

We know this new software will make customer interactions easier and more productive, and as always, it will allow us to continue to enhance our processes to provide the best possible customer service to you, our customers.

## Consider a Donation to Helping Hands

Look for our new Round Up Program launching in 2017



Franklin PUD's Helping Hands program is designed to help low income families in our service territory pay their electric bill. This program would not be possible without the generous donations from our community.

As the weather gets colder, more electricity is needed to keep homes warm, the lights on and appliances running. This creates a hardship for low income families.

All Helping Hands funds are administered by Community Action Connections (CAC) in Pasco. Recipients must meet income guidelines. For information on receiving assistance from Helping Hands, contact CAC at 509-545-4042, or visit their office located

at 720 W. Court Street, Pasco.

We would like to thank you for your donations during the last year, and once again ask you to consider making a donation to Helping Hands.

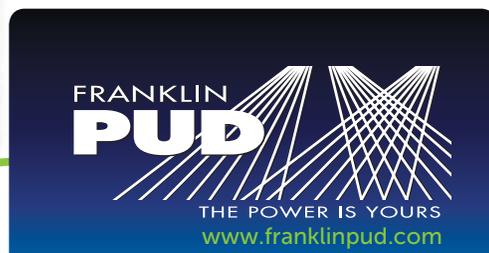
### How to make a donation:

- Check the appropriate box on your billing stub to add a donation to your monthly bill payment.
- Stop by our office at 1411 W. Clark Street.
- Mail a check made out to Franklin PUD with "Helping Hands Donation" boldly written on the memo line.

### Coming Soon...

### "Round Up" for Helping Hands

Beginning in early 2017, we're starting a new "Round Up" program. Whenever you make a payment, you'll be able to "round up" to the nearest dollar to provide a contribution to Helping Hands. This is a fast and easy way to make a donation and create a positive impact for your community. More details coming after the first of the year.



Issue: Nov - Dec 2016

## Working for You

### Commissioners:

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Bill Gordon, *Vice President*  
Stu Nelson, *Secretary*

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## Holiday Hours

Thanksgiving Holiday  
CLOSED November 24 & 25

Christmas Holiday  
CLOSED December 26

New Year's Holiday  
CLOSED January 2

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*



## Local Utilities Earn Communication Award

The Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA) awarded a group of Tri-City utilities and partnering organizations with the association's 2016 1st Place Excellence in Communications Award for the Energy Experience event that was held at the Richland, Washington REACH Museum in 2015. The first place Wild Card Excellence in Communications Award was a joint submittal on behalf of Franklin PUD, Benton PUD, Richland Energy Services, Benton REA, Energy Northwest, and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The Energy Experience was the culmination of a group of Tri-City utility employees whose vision was to have a Mid-Columbia regional educational event targeting middle school students to create awareness and transfer knowledge about energy generation, production, safety, efficiency, conservation and public power.



Commissioner's Corner

# Why Public Power?



Stu Nelson  
2016 Secretary

As we complete another year of service to our customers, it's always good to refresh and remember why we are a public utility. Put in the simplest terms, public ownership of electric utilities is a service, and the purpose of that service is to provide electricity, at the least cost, for the customers of that utility. Public utilities like Franklin PUD, are non-profit organizations whose facilities are owned by, and operated for their customers. We are governed by a locally-elected Board of Commissioners and for Franklin PUD, we have three districts, therefore we have three elected Commissioners, one for each district.

Private or investor-owned utilities (IOUs) are for-profit corporations, whose facilities are owned by shareholders, and whose private

Boards operate solely to provide a profit for those shareholders. Private ownership of electric utilities is a business, and the purpose of any business is to make a profit for the owners or stockholders. Shareholders have little or no direct stake in the quality of service provided.

Local control and the lack of a profit motive are the defining characteristics that separate public power from the private utility industry. Because members of the public can buy shares of private utilities, IOUs are sometimes referred to as being 'publicly held' or as "public utilities," but the term "public" is more appropriately applied to consumer or customer-owned utilities like Franklin PUD. Consumer-owned utilities can be Public Utility Districts, municipal Utilities (cities), or electric co-operatives, like Big Bend to our north or Benton REA to our west.

Nationwide, public power rates are generally lower than IOU rates, sometimes by 20-25%. Couple that with local control, and it's easy to see why public power is so popular.

## Temporary Change Regarding Credit Card Payments By Phone

Effective now through February 13, 2017, Customer Service Representatives will not be able to take credit payments over the phone. We ask that you please call our automated payment system at 1-877-695-7488 to make your credit card payment.

During this time, we also cannot take credit card payments in the drive-thru at our Administration office - you must come inside. Representatives can still accept your cash or check payment in the drive thru.

We are sorry for this temporary inconvenience, but by law and to maintain your security, we must make this change until we complete the transition to our new software system.



## Winter Energy Saving Tips

Follow these simple tips to stay warm and conserve as much energy as possible to help reduce your electric bill.

- Caulk and weatherstrip drafts around doors and windows.
- Keep fireplace dampers closed when not in use.
- Close crawlspace vents.
- Replace furnace filters monthly to keep your system running efficiently.
- Have your duct system checked for leaks.
- Consider a new smart thermostat to gain the most efficiency out of your heating system.

For more information on energy conservation programs and rebates, call our energy experts at 509.546.5967 or e-mail us at [conservation@franklinpud.com](mailto:conservation@franklinpud.com).

## Protect Your Valuable Electronics with Surge Protectors

Due to a number of factors inside and outside your home, the voltage of your electric service can vary slightly. Most of the time you won't even notice these voltage variations, but modern electronic equipment can be very sensitive to even small, split-second electrical fluctuations. That's why it's important for you to use surge protectors in your home on all sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, TV's, and entertainment center components.

Remember that a power strip and a surge protector are not the same. When choosing a surge protector, consider how many outlets



you will need for your devices and the length of cord required to reach your home's electrical outlet. Also, choose one that has an indicator light so you know it's functioning properly.

It's important to know that different kinds of surge protectors may be needed for different types of equipment. Look to your local electronic or home improvement stores for assistance and buying guides to help point you to the best equipment for your needs.

## Our Meter Readers

Working hard in your neighborhoods

To ensure the safety of our customers and employees, our meter readers are required to wear clothing with a visible Franklin PUD logo on them while working out in the field. You will always be able to recognize our meter readers, and if in doubt, they also carry a photo ID badge with them.

It is our practice to rarely ever ask to go through a customer's home to get to their electric meter. Meters can be read from a fence line if necessary, but typically, we'll enter a backyard to read the meter.



Left to Right: Charlie Reyes, Brian Shook, Ana Rivera, Alex Esperiqueta, Carlos Candanoza, Lance Kostoff, Troy Fulton



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 included in Franklin PUD rates.**

For more information on this program, visit our website at [www.franklinpud.com](http://www.franklinpud.com) and click on conservation, then generation green.

## Medical Alert Designation



If your residence has medical life support equipment that relies on electricity, please contact a Customer Service Representative to update your records. More information on Medical Alert Designation can be found on our website under "Programs & Services".

