

2021 Budget: "Service, Affordability and Reliability"

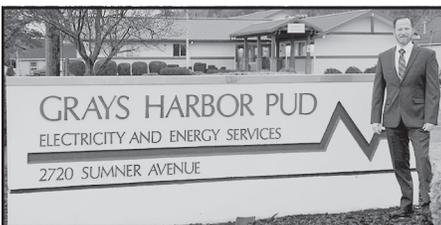
The Grays Harbor PUD begins 2021 with a \$127.6-million operating budget that invests \$10.5-million in the utility system and infrastructure and roughly \$70.8-million on the energy PUD customers rely on to power their homes and businesses.

"This budget really comes down to service, affordability and reliability," said PUD Board President Russ Skolrood.

Some of the standout projects in 2021 will include over \$1-million spent on improvements to the Central Park, Scott Street and Montesano substations, concluding work on the Chehalis River Crossing Towers, extending the utility fiber system and maintaining and replacing utility equipment. The 2021 budget will include a proposed 2% rate adjustment which will not be implemented until May. By waiting until the spring, the PUD staff have the time to assess utility finances and determine if the full adjustment is necessary.

The coming year will also begin with the PUD continuing the measures taken to protect staff and customers from COVID-19 while continuing to provide the critical services its customers rely on. This will include the closure of the customer service lobby, remote working and meetings where and when possible, and the isolation of utility operations and telecommunications crews.

Schuyler Burkhart Named Next PUD General Manager



A new but familiar face will be moving into the Grays Harbor PUD's General Managers office. This month, the Board of Commissioners will approve a resolution appointing PUD Engineering Director Schuyler Burkhart to the post. Burkhart will

replace current manager Dave Ward, who will retire at the end of February.

"The Grays Harbor PUD is headed in the right direction, and we have found the person to continue that and help the utility fulfill its mission to our customers," said PUD Board President Russ Skolrood. "Schuyler's leadership has helped put the PUD on a solid foundation. We're looking forward to working with him and the rest of the PUD team to maintain that foundation and build on it into the future."

Commission Meeting Dates

Meetings are held in the Nichols Building, 220 Myrtle Street, Hoquiam.

January 2021

Monday - January 4

Tuesday - January 19

(rescheduled from January 18)

February 2021

Monday - February 1

Tuesday - February 16

(rescheduled from February 15)

Utility workshops are held at 3:30 pm. Regular business meetings are scheduled to begin at 4:30 pm. Public comment periods are included at the open and close of every meeting.

Commission meetings may be cancelled and special meetings may be scheduled. Please visit our website (www.ghpud.org) for updated information.

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Big Change Ahead for 2021 By Russ Skolrood, District Three

What will the year 2021 bring? I am hoping it brings life back to the “normal” that we are all craving. After spending so much time isolated from people, travel, and excitement, I can only hope 2021 is a time when we all realize how great life can be if you have the chance to live “normal” again.

For the PUD, it will be a huge time of change. Our General Manager, Dave Ward, will move into the very well deserved retirement phase of his life. Dave has done great things for the people of Grays Harbor. He has been the ultimate leader for the PUD, and has put the utility on the right track in so many ways that it is hard to imagine losing him. He turned a struggling organization into an efficient, positive, team oriented, financially sound public utility. He has reminded all of us that above all else the PUD is here to serve the ratepayers of Grays Harbor. He has taught me that there are not really problems to be solved at the PUD but “opportunities” to challenge and help focus us on how to better serve the people of Grays Harbor. He has done all of that with an intelligent, calm and open style that will be extremely hard to match. He will be missed!



Along with Dave, we have numerous members of our leadership team that will also be retiring in the year 2021. While all of these great people will be extremely hard to replace and will be sorely missed, we have built a great culture at the PUD that has helped our younger employees to challenge themselves to be the future leaders that are needed. It will be an exciting time and I am sure as an organization we will all embrace the many “opportunities” ahead of us in 2021.

With the New Year ahead I also want to thank all of the employees at Grays Harbor PUD for fulfilling our mission and delivering great services to the ratepayers of Grays Harbor. From the linemen that run out into stormy weather to get the power back on, to all of the hardworking employees that work behind the scenes to make sure that when customers flip the switch you have confidence the lights will come on. It takes a great team to make our PUD safe, reliable and cost effective and I couldn't be more proud of our people.

I would also like to thank all of our customers that have put their faith in us to do our best for them. Grays Harbor PUD is a PUBLIC utility and as such we work for you. As you move into 2021 and the Covid situation improves I hope you get the chance to enjoy the simple things that we have all been missing. Hugs, high fives, parties and get-togethers with our friends and families, travel, shopping, going out to eat (and actually sitting down) etc. I imagine that even though 2020 has been tough, when we get back to “normal,” I for one will be a lot more thankful for all of what life has to offer. Let's make 2021 a great year for all of us!!!

State Auditor Compliments PUD Financials and Accountability



An annual examination and report from the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) has given the Grays Harbor PUD high marks on Financial Statements and Accountability. The report included no findings in the two areas and complimented the PUD for conducting the audit under rules set by the COVID response.

“I want to thank the Accounting Department and the PUD staff for their outstanding work. This report tells our customers that they can trust their PUD. As a public entity, trust and faith from the customers is vital,” said PUD Board President Russ Skolrood.

ENERGY, an informational newsletter, is published monthly for families and businesses energized by Grays Harbor PUD.

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