

## Schuyler Burkhart Hired as Next PUD General Manager

The Grays Harbor PUD Board of Commissioners has completed the hiring process of the utility's next general manager. In January, the board passed a resolution officially naming Schuyler Burkhart to the office. Burkhart has served as the PUD Engineering Director since 2014 and will replace Dave Ward, who will retire from the PUD at the end of February.



"I am grateful to the board for their support and confidence and excited for the opportunity to serve the Grays Harbor community," said Burkhart. "Working together, we move into the PUD's 81<sup>st</sup> year, focusing on the safe and reliable delivery of power, telecommunications, and energy services."

Over the next month, Burkhart will serve as Assistant General Manager, working with Ward to transition into the leadership role that he will officially assume on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Audit Finds PUD is Exceeding Conservation Goals

For the fifth consecutive time, the Grays Harbor PUD has been found to be in compliance with the energy conservation requirements of the Energy Independence Act. In an examination by the Washington State Auditor's Office, it was reported that for the 2018-19 biennium, the PUD acquired "at least 14,708 MWh of energy conservation savings, exceeding the Commissioner-adopted 2018-2019 target of 12,790 MWh."



Passed by the voters in November of 2006, the Energy Independence Act requires utilities with more than 25,000 customers to meet targets for renewable energy and energy conservation. Working with residential, industrial and commercial customers, the PUD Energy Services staff help achieve conservation goals by identifying areas where equipment and structural improvements or better energy practices can contribute to more efficient energy use and cost savings.

## Commission Meeting Dates

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

### February 2021

Monday—February 1

Tuesday—February 16

(rescheduled from February 15)

### March 2021

Monday—March 8

Monday—March 22

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

Commission meetings may be cancelled and special meetings may be scheduled. Due to COVID-19 precautions, commission meetings are now being held via ZOOM. Please visit our website ([www.ghpud.org](http://www.ghpud.org)) for updated information.

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## A (Farewell) Manager's Message by Dave Ward

This is my last Manager's Message to you. After 36 years in the industry, I am retiring. It has been an honor serving my community as the General Manager of Grays Harbor PUD. I was born and raised in Grays Harbor and am a fourth generation Harborite. I grew up in South Aberdeen. My dad was a millworker, and my mom was a motel maid. I graduated from Weatherwax High School (Go Bobcats!), Grays Harbor College (Go Chokers!), and Washington State University (Go Cougs!). I put myself thru college by working at Swanson's through high school and college. I have deep Harbor roots, fond memories, and really enjoy and care about Grays Harbor. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would be given the opportunity to close out my career in this community – I am truly grateful.



When I became the General Manager in 2013, my focus for the PUD was: 1) Everyone needs to understand our mission (or why we come to work each day), 2) How does each employee contribute to our mission, and 3) Collaborate, communicate and coordinate to accomplish our work. In simple terms, get really good at the core business of operating a utility responsibly. I am so proud in the way our staff have responded. Each staff member understands our important role of providing an essential service to our community.

As I reflect on the PUD's accomplishments, I think of the replacement of 4000 poles since 2013, reliability improvement from tree trimming and electrical system improvements, the Harbor Paper clean-up, software system implementation, telecom expansion, low income energy service programs, and I could go on and on. But the one thing that stands out to me is the PUD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how our staff have worked together to keep our essential services functioning during a very challenging 2020.

Looking ahead, over the next decade, all of the PUD's power supply contracts expire, providing an excellent opportunity to eliminate high cost resources, and solidify a cost-effective resource mix for the future. I have known my successor, Schuyler Burkhart, for many years and I feel good knowing the PUD will be led by someone with his background, drive and principles. With Schuyler at the helm, a Board of Commissioners focused on the community, an outstanding management team and staff dedicated to serving you, the customers, I can assure you the PUD is in great hands.

Post retirement, my wife and I plan to stay in this wonderful community and enjoy the outdoor activities we love. I leave you with this thought:

"May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand."

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

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