

Storm and Tree Related Outages Increased in 2020

An increase in the number of storm and tree related outages in 2020 contributed to the increase in total power outages for the Grays Harbor PUD. PUD crews responded to 345 outages, impacting 59,068 customers for a total of 186,224 hours. Although all three totals represented an increase from 2019, the total number of hours and customers impacted fell well below the averages of the last five years.

The main cause of the increase were storm, wind and tree related outages, accounting for 69% of the outages in 2020. November proved to be one of the toughest months of the year, with three significant storm events accounting for 11,392 customers without power, or 19% of the yearly total.

"When you live on the coast of the Evergreen State, you need to take precautions for storms and falling trees, and these numbers show just how important those investments are," said PUD Commission President Russ Skolrood. "Outage totals would be significantly higher without the PUD's vegetation management efforts, the strength of our system and the skills of the professionals who respond to these outages and get the power back on as safely and as quickly as they can."

Commissioner Russ Skolrood Stepping Down

After 13 years of service, Grays Harbor PUD Board of Commissioners President Russ Skolrood has announced he will resign from office at the end of June. Skolrood was elected to serve a third term in November, however under state law, his retirement from the Hoquiam School District will prohibit him from drawing his retirement and salary as a PUD commissioner.



"I have loved every minute of my time with the utility and want to thank the voters for their trust and confidence, my fellow commissioners for their counsel and friendship, and the PUD staff for their hard work and service to the community."

Commission Meeting Dates

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

June 2021

Monday—June 7

Monday—June 21

July 2021

Monday—July 12

Monday—July 26

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) for updated information.

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2021 Session a Mix of Good and Questionable by Arie Callaghan, District One

This year's legislative session came to a close with some mandates and laws that could affect the Grays Harbor PUD in the future. The Commission and staff at the Grays Harbor PUD have an obligation to keep our customers informed, and to communicate how new laws could affect the rates we pay for our energy. We belong to trade organizations and the Washington PUD Association which will fight against laws and legislation that can have a negative impact on our customers.



There were a couple of broadband bills that should be helpful in getting better broadband service in rural areas. The need for high speed internet and better service has been made even more evident during the pandemic with many children attending school remotely. The PUD has been and will continue to apply for grants that may be made available to get our fiber extended out to help our customers in the rural parts of the county.

Another bill that was passed would have ended the sale of gas and diesel cars in Washington by 2030. While it is certainly an extreme idea, it follows many auto manufacturers, including GM, who have set similar deadlines. Although Governor Inslee vetoed the bill, it can't be denied that there will be more electric vehicles on the roads, and they seem to be working well for those who own them. My concern is, can the necessary infrastructure, such as charging stations, be in place to meet a deadline like that and will affordable and reliable models be ready by then? The veto gives more time to answer such questions, but it does show the desire for electric vehicles to begin taking their place on the roads. We know it will take some time to phase out the old small block Chevy, but can the EVs meet the needs for everyone? We are going to find out.

Another bill which passed is a cap and trade law that will put a value on carbon emissions and force industrial emitters to buy credits in order to stay in business. This is along the same lines as two previous ballot measures for cap and trade that were both defeated. I wonder why our representatives feel like they know more than the people that elect them and in spite of the voters, will push their agenda forward. Fortunately our PUD's energy is over 90% clean so this law probably won't have much of an impact on our customers. However, it may make it harder to attract industry to our state and county.

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

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