

PUD Commissioners Commend Employee for Life Saving Act



From left: Commissioner Dave Timmons, Customer Service Collector Helen Berglund, Commissioner Arie Callaghan and Commissioner Russ Skolrood.

The persistence and compassion of Grays Harbor PUD Customer Service Collector Helen Berglund may have been the difference between life and death for a woman in distress this summer. On September 20, the PUD Board of Commissioners commended Berglund's actions on a hot July day that saw her come to the aid on a woman whom Berglund found on the floor of her home.

"Helen went the extra mile for this woman and it may have saved her life," said Board President Arie Callaghan. "As soon as she heard a call for help, she jumped into action. That's heroic."

Berglund had arrived at the East Grays Harbor County home on the hot afternoon of July 26, but after knocking on the door and receiving no response was preparing to return to her vehicle when she heard the sounds of a woman calling for help from inside. Looking through the glass door, she saw the elderly resident of the home laying on the ground. Finding the door unlocked, Helen was able to enter the home and speak to the woman, who had been laying on the ground for several hours, unable to move. Helen immediately called 911 for emergency assistance and stayed with the woman for over 30 minutes until the ambulance arrived. During that time, Helen provided comfort to the woman, speaking to her, locating her cell phone and attempting to contact family who lived in the area.

"I truly believe Helen saved a life that day," said General Manager Dave Ward. "Given the remote location of the home, the woman's weakened state and the extreme heat that occurred over the following days; it is possible that without Helen's actions this story may have had a tragic end."

Commission Meeting Dates

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

October 2018

Monday - October 8
(rescheduled from Oct. 1)
Monday - October 22
(rescheduled from Oct. 15)

November 2018

Monday - November 5
Monday - November 19

Regular business meetings are scheduled to begin at 4:30 pm. A one hour workshop (3:30 to 4:30 pm) will precede each business meeting, unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome to attend all commission meetings, special meetings, workshops and public hearings. **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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Throwback: 80 Years Ago, the Campaign for Public Power Raged!!!

Today, the Grays Harbor PUD operates for the customers they serve. Those customers are represented by an elected board that meets in public and operates under requirements of transparency and openness. 80 years ago, opponents of public power used fear of the opposite situation in one of the most critical elections in Grays Harbor's history.

In November of 1938, the voters were asked if the formation of a public utility was in the best interests of the county. If approved, the new utility would purchase the operations of Grays Harbor Railway and Light, a private company that provided power in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Supporters campaigned for the local control that public power agencies provide, free of investor and stakeholder profit-seeking; while opponents saw the dissolution of a local company as a threat to local control. Ironically, even though both sides were seeking the same result, their campaigns were based on different strategies.

Ultimately, the Grays Harbor voters chose to go the route of public power and two years later the Grays Harbor PUD opened its doors. 80 years later, our customers continue to receive the benefits of that choice. Local control. Local leadership. Local elections. Local. It's what drives your PUD.

Local Assessment Districts. Any improvements or extensions of lines can be taxed against abutting property. Just like city L. I. D. Your home can be soaked to pay for an extension as the line then runs past it, and the commissioners can "levy and collect"—special assessments and reassessments—for paying the cost and expenses of the same". Of course you can protest, but will it help you? The district can never pay "more than 50 per cent of the cost" of these Local Improvements, so in spite of all the ballyhoo in papers to the contrary, you'll be stuck for local line betterments and extensions.

Who Fixes Rates? The three commissioners—nobody else. As the P. U. D. law so "aptly" provides, they have "full and exclusive authority to sell and regulate and control—the rates—free from jurisdiction and control of the Director of Public Works and the Department of Public Utilities, in all things."

Vote

Public Utility
District No. 1

NO...



—Home Owners Association.

State Auditor Issues PUD a Clean Report

A review of the Grays Harbor Public Utility District's accountability and financial statements resulted in no significant findings and a clean report from the Washington State Auditor's office.

At the audit exit conference on Sept. 25, the state reported to the utility that no significant issues were found in the area of accountability, following a review of utility insurance, procurement, net metering credits, open public meeting minutes, fuel mix disclosure and financial condition and fiscal sustainability.

The audit of the utility financial statements also resulted in a clean report, as the PUD was found to have "no instances of non-compliance or other matters that are required to be reported."

"This report makes me very proud of the work put in by our PUD staff," said Commissioner Dave Timmons, who attended the exit conference. "The public puts its faith in the utility to responsibly manage their PUD, and this report shows that their faith and trust is justified."



Celebrating Public Power Every Week

Every October, the American Public Power Association designate a seven-day period of appreciation and celebration of public power known as Public Power Week. Community events, customer outreach and proclamations issued throughout the over 2000 PUDs nationwide are all designed to remind member-communities of the importance of local control over utilities. In Grays Harbor, the PUD joins the celebration with the passage of a resolution recognizing Public Power Week and a customer appreciation event.



However, the recognition of public power in Grays Harbor goes far beyond a one week event. The Grays Harbor PUD is dedicated to the mission of public power and celebrating its value to our customers. The PUD staff celebrates public power when they visit schools, community events and meetings to tell the story of their utility. Every two years, public power is celebrated at the ballot box, with the election of a commissioner who, along with his or her two fellow commissioners, serves at the pleasure of their fellow customers. Twice a month, public power is celebrated in the Nichols Meeting Room where our Board of Commissioners meet in open session, ready to be questioned and to provide answers. Public power is celebrated when our staff assists customers and our crews head into the field.

Public power is celebrated every day the Grays Harbor PUD is there for our customers.

Energy Services Department Moving to New Location

The search for energy saving tips will have a new starting point at the Grays Harbor PUD. As of Monday, September 24, the PUD Energy Services Department will be housed in the PUD Dennis Nichols Building located at 220 Myrtle Street, Hoquiam.

The Energy Services Department addresses questions regarding energy conservation, residential and commercial energy efficiency rebates, appliance rebates, home weatherization, heat pumps, energy audits, and more, and is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, closed from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. daily for lunch.



As a part of this relocation, your PUD Board of Commissioners' offices will be moving into the Administration Department in the main building located at 2720 Sumner Ave, Aberdeen. Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners will continue to be held in the Nichols Building Meeting Room.



Commissioner Corner

by Dave Timmons, District Two

On September 14, an All Employee Meeting and Appreciation Event hosted by General Manager Dave Ward, was held at GHPUD. The event was an opportunity to thank our employees for all that they have accomplished over the last several years. Below are some of the many accomplishments that were highlighted during the meeting. The list is not 'all inclusive' because I don't have that much space; however, it does emphasize our Mission Statement: *"Serve Our Community With High Value Utility Services At the Lowest Practical Cost"*.



As I mentioned, I do not have the space to lay out every accomplishment at your utility, but please allow me to highlight a few of them. In the area of managing power and financial resources, the utility has brokered a long term power sale to Weyerhaeuser in Montana for the sale of surplus power. We have renegotiated the Sierra Pacific Industries contract and saved PUD customers hundreds of thousands of dollars. We have been granted state funds for the Harbor Paper clean up and the East County fiber project to assist businesses and schools. We have expanded low-income assistance programs through the PUD Energy Services department.

When it comes to our energy infrastructure, we have focused on the most impactful areas of our system, transmission and the main distribution circuits. With our limited budget, we support the best projects to benefit our customers for reliability and safety. This includes replacing substation transformers at Scott Street, Moclips and Westhaven Substations, replacing breakers at Copalis Crossing, Quinault, Westhaven, Ocean Shores, East Hoquiam and Montesano Substations and making sure our employees have the best safety equipment possible.

We have improved our customer experience with the complete conversion to NISC (National Information Solutions Cooperative) for new customer billing, finance and HR systems. Our goal was more transparency for our customers with SmartHub and other technology changes that allow our customer to have their information readily available. We provided more cross training for a better customer experience, helping our employees to see the big picture by working with other departments, and continue to grow our customer outreach via expanded social media presence and positive relationships with our local media.

Internally, we have worked on building teamwork across all departments, by encouraging communication and collaboration. We have focused on completing work by using almost no contract services, doing the work in-house, focusing on apprenticeships, expanding our own flagging and summer help positions, promoting from within to plan for the future and succession ... and getting the right people in the right roles.

Our General Manager says "we still have work to do" and I know that's true ... but I still can't help but feel a sense of accomplishment. Not for any one thing that Arie Callahan, Russ Skolrood, or I did, we were just a small part of the team, but for the hard work of our amazing employees. We watched as new goals were conceived and planned by our staff, then accomplished with their hard work. They are dedicated to make the GHPUD the best it can be for the people we work for.

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

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