**PUD, Port Boards Come Together for Economic Development**

Businesses looking for a solid working relationship between commerce and utility interests were given a prime example in progress on Tuesday. For the first time in recent memory, the commission boards of the Port of Grays Harbor and the Grays Harbor PUD met in joint session to discuss a pair of economic development opportunities and their potential impact on the county.

“For Grays Harbor to succeed, cooperation between community, business and utility interests is critical,” said PUD Commission President Arie Callaghan. “The two projects that were discussed today at this joint meeting are a great example of what happens when two groups with a shared goal come together.”

The meeting included a report from Sound and Sea Technology on the financial and technical feasibility of landing a transoceanic telecommunication cable in Grays Harbor. The report indicated that the cable project, in conjunction with a Satsop Business Park-based data support center, could be a good fit for Grays Harbor.

“There’s land. There is power. There is potential. Grays Harbor can be a digital port,” said Sound and Sea Technologies Chelsea Meggitt.

The meeting concluded with a report from PUD Engineering Director Schuyler Burkhart on a joint effort by the Port and PUD to increase power capacity at the Satsop Business Park. The two groups are currently working with Grays Harbor County and the Bonneville Power Administration on a system study for a proposal, that when completed would immediately bring an additional 40 megawatts of power capacity to Satsop, with room for future capacity growth.

“The cooperation between the Port, PUD, Grays Harbor County and BPA is driving us to a position where we can make Satsop the hub for economic development we all envision it to be,” said Burkhart. “Partnerships and meetings like this one send a positive message about the business climate that exists in Grays Harbor.”
PUD Employee Honored by Washington PUD Association

On July 26 Grays Harbor PUD Customer Service Collector Helen Berglund heard a call for help. On December 6, her response to that call earned her the Washington Public Utility District Association’s Good Samaritan Award.

“The Washington PUD Association is proud to honor Helen Berglund with the Association’s Good Samaritan Award,” said George Caan, Executive Director of the Washington PUD Association. “Her quick life-saving actions to assist a woman in medical distress are a testament to her caring nature and commitment to serving others.”

Berglund had arrived at the East Grays Harbor County home on the hot July afternoon 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. Finding the door unlocked, Berglund entered the home, 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.

“We are very proud of Helen,” said PUD General Manager Dave Ward. “Given the woman’s condition, the remote location of the home and the hot weather that followed, I truly believe her actions saved a life and we are thrilled that WPUDA has honored her for the aid she rendered that day.”

Callaghan Sworn in for Second Term

PUD Commissioner Arie Callaghan has been sworn in for his second term in office. Callaghan took the oath of office from County Auditor Joe MacLean before friends, family and fellow commissioners Dave Timmons and Russ Skolrood on December 17. Callaghan will serve a second, six-year term as the representative for District #1, representing East Grays Harbor County.
Area Crews, Apprentices to Benefit From New Training Tool

Already a leader in the area of utility operations training, the Grays Harbor PUD has taken a huge step to increase that leadership platform. With the purchase and installation of a TransBanker Stationary Lab training facility, the PUD has added a piece of equipment that allows line crews and apprentices to get hands on work with active distribution systems.

Located in the PUD Operations Facility, the TransBanker is a replica of a pole mounted distribution system, complete with transformers, cutouts and all the equipment line crews work on in the field. Lowered to ground level, crews now have the opportunity to trouble shoot transformer malfunctions, load issues and loose neutrals; all training problems that before had to be specially constructed or visually displayed on a whiteboard.

The purchase of the TransBanker was jointly funded by Centralia City Light, Lakeview Light and Power, McCleary Light and Power, OHOP Mutual Light Company and the Grays Harbor, Clallam, Lewis, Pacific and Mason County (1 & 3) PUD’s.

PUD staff watch as the new utility Transbanker Stationary Lab is demonstrated.

PUD Opens Enrollment for Utility Academy

What makes up the PUD telecommunications infrastructure? How does the PUD purchase its power? How did the PUD come into existence? Who make up the PUD crews and how do they respond to an outage? Those and other questions will be answered as your Grays Harbor PUD proudly offers its 2019 Citizen Utility Academy. If you are interested in learning more about your PUD and are willing to attend four, two-hour classes, contact the PUD at (360) 532-4220. Names and phone numbers will be taken and as soon as we have reached enough interested participants to fill a class, you will be contacted with time and location for the events. Come learn about your PUD!!!
Manager’s Message
By Dave Ward, General Manager

It continues to be my very great pleasure to serve as the General Manager of your Grays Harbor Public Utility District. As we enter a new year, I truly feel that the utility is stronger than it has been in several years. Our mission of providing high quality services to our customers continues to guide us in all we do, and our staff continues to work hard for you, our customers.

Looking back on the past year, I am filled with tremendous pride in all that your utility has accomplished. The PUD’s financial position is growing stronger by the day. We continue to build reserves and to put our resources into hardening the system, which is the backbone of the service we provide to you. In 2018, our crews replaced over 700 poles and worked year round in all types of weather to make the utility infrastructure strong enough to withstand the harsh elements that come with living on the Pacific coast. When it comes to power outages, we urge our customers to “plan for the worst and hope for the best.” At the PUD, we work to build a system that can withstand the weather and still deliver the service our customers expect.

The telecommunications branch of your utility enjoyed a banner year in 2018. The wholesale telecom service we provide continues to show solid growth, thanks in part to our legislative partners in Olympia who approved funding for the expansion of telecommunications services in East County. In addition, 2018 saw the utility support a project to bring fiber connections to tribal facilities in Grays Harbor, Thurston and Jefferson counties, a partnership that when completed may benefit education, business and public safety at those facilities.

When it comes to partnerships, perhaps none has been greater than the ones the PUD has built with the individuals and organizations responsible for economic development in Grays Harbor County. Work with members of our Coastal Legislative Caucus has improved telecommunications and energy services in Grays Harbor and our relationships with Representative Derek Kilmer and Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray continue to serve our mission. Our work with Greater Grays Harbor Inc. has helped to boost the county’s profile and make it an attractive spot for businesses. Working with the Port of Grays Harbor, the PUD is taking steps to make the Satsop Business Park a hub of economic growth in our county. In December, for the first time in recent memory, the Board of Commissioners for the Port and PUD met in joint session to discuss that growth and the telecommunications and energy projects that will allow it to continue. It fills me with pride to see so many groups working together to make Grays Harbor a better place to live and work. With that vision and dedication, I know we will succeed.

The PUD also continues to be active in the community we are so fortunate to serve. Our staff visit schools and community organizations to let people know what the PUD is all about. Our Energy Services office distributed over 2000 Energy Efficiency Kits to our residential customers. Our Customer Service office distributed information on discounts and programs that helped eligible customers save over $1-million in energy costs. At the PUD, service to our customers takes on many forms and our staff are happy to deliver them to you.

Let me close by wishing you a very Happy New year and informing you that your PUD sits upon a firm foundation, one that is growing stronger by the day. Our staff is determined to fulfill the mission of your utility; one that made 2018 a success, and one I am certain will be repeated in 2019.