



Power Lines

A monthly newsletter from Columbia River People's Utility District

August 2008

Update on Electric Rates from General Manager Kevin Owens



Energy prices grab the headlines on a daily basis whether it be oil, natural gas or electricity. The Oregonian has reported that Portland General Electric and Northwest Natural Gas have submitted rate increase requests to the Oregon Public Utilities Commission in the amounts of 15% and 35-40% respectively.

Once their requests are approved, customers of those utilities will feel the impact of rate increases in 2009.

Our Goal - Keeping Rates Stable

These proposed increases have not gone unnoticed by Columbia River PUD's management and Board of Directors. We are keenly aware of the fragile Columbia County economy and the adverse effect that increased energy costs can have on all of our customers. With that in mind, PUD management will be entering into their 2009 budget process with the goal of keeping rates stable. We will do so while ensuring that the utility remains financially sound and the electrical distribution system remains safe and reliable so that we can continue to serve you well.

The PUD's Budget Setting Process

Our budget is set during a public process that begins each September. The PUD's Board and management

meets with a Budget Advisory Committee comprised of residential, commercial and industrial customer representatives along with low-income and senior advocates. Together, the Board, staff and committee members review projected revenues and expenses and the proposed capital improvement budget. Committee members provide the Board with feedback and direction on budget priorities. The process concludes in December when the Board of Directors approves the budget. Watch for more information about the budget process in future issues of the *Power Lines*.

Power Costs - Our Largest Budget Item

Power and delivery costs from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) are the largest single item in our budget, representing approximately 66% of the PUD's annual operating costs. One of the most important tasks undertaken by PUD management this year has been to work closely and diligently with BPA to ensure that power costs for 2009 will remain reasonable and affordable.

Over the past 24 years as your electricity provider, Columbia River PUD has kept rates stable without jeopardizing financial strength, system reliability, safety, programs or services. We are pleased to be able to provide you safe, reliable service at the lowest possible cost. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.



24 Hour Outage & Emergency Hot Line: (503) 397-1844 • Email: info@crpud.org
Website: www.crpud.net • Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday



The Pavilion Has A New Paint Job, thanks to the PUD and St. Helens Ace Hardware

If you've been to the Columbia County Fairgrounds recently you've probably noticed that the Pavilion Building has a beautiful new paint job. With the help of a generous donation of paint and supplies from Ace Hardware in St. Helens, and the volunteer efforts of many PUD employees, the building looked beautiful during this year's fair. Thanks, Ace Hardware! We couldn't have done it without you.

Billing System Upgrades to Take Place Within a Few Months

Over the past year, a team of PUD employees has been working with consultants from Harris Computer Systems to upgrade our customer information and billing system, which has been in use since 1989. The new system will streamline many of our daily processes, improve cost management and provide additional reporting functions.

We are now training employees on the use of the new system and expect to begin using it within the next few

months. We anticipate the transition will be seamless. The changes to your billing statement will be minor, so you may not even notice them. We will include more information about the new system in future issues of the *Power Lines*. We will also send a letter explaining any changes in payment options or billing programs to the customers who use those programs.

Incentives for ENERGY STAR Qualified Appliances



We offer rebates for ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers, dishwashers and refrigerators. Rebate amounts are:

- Clothes washer with electric hot water heater - \$75
- Clothes washer with gas, propane oil hot water heater - \$25
- Dishwasher - \$25
- Refrigerator or Freezer - \$25

Contact our Energy Experts at experts@crpud.org or (503) 366-5470 or visit our website at www.crpud.net for more information.

Tax credits also available

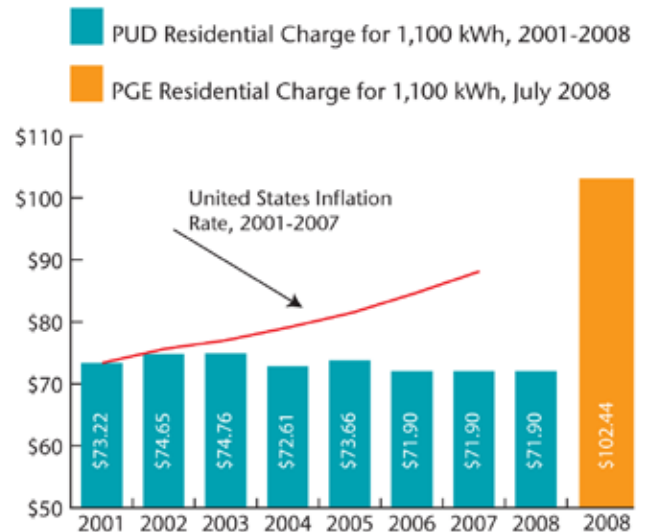
The state of Oregon also offers tax credits on energy-efficient appliances ranging from \$60 to \$180. Their qualification standards differ slightly from ours - for more information visit <http://www.oregon.gov/energy>.

We're Keeping Electric Rates Affordable and Stable for You

As a community owned utility, one of our goals is to keep rates affordable and stable for customers. We think we're doing pretty well. As the graph at right shows, our rates today are lower than they were eight years ago!

Our last rate change was a 4.65% overall decrease in October 2006. Currently, a PUD customer using 1,100 kWh pays \$30.54 less than a PGE customer using the same amount of electricity - a savings of almost 30%.

With the price of everything from eggs to gas on the rise, we're glad to be able to keep rates low for you. If you'd also like some tips on how to use less energy, contact our Energy Experts at experts@crpud.org or (503) 366-5470, or visit www.crpud.net.



Sign up for *Always Current*- Automatic Payment with Email Billing

Complete this form and return with payment or submit to: Columbia River PUD, PO Box 1193, St. Helens, OR 97051.

****Please include a voided blank check with this form.****

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

PUD Customer Number: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Choose a Password: _____

Bank Name: _____

Name on Account: _____

Bank Routing #: _____

Bank Account #: _____

Type of Account: Checking Savings

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Add Budget Pay option? (Equal monthly payments, amount calculated each March)

Yes No

