



# Power Lines

A monthly newsletter from Columbia River People's Utility District

April 2010

## Dry Winter May Impact Future Power Costs for PUD

An unusually dry winter and low snow pack in the Cascades will cause abnormally low river flows in the Columbia Basin this year, according to the Northwest River Forecast Center. Low water levels reduce hydropower generation, and that increases wholesale power costs for the PUD and other public power utilities in the northwest.

### Rain, Snow = Lower Rates

The PUD's wholesale power provider, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), is the agency that sells the hydropower generated by the dams in the Federal Columbia River Hydropower System. Most of the electricity that BPA sells goes to public utilities in the Pacific Northwest, including the PUD. When colder, wetter winters increase snow pack in the mountains, river levels rise and hydropower generation increases. Extra electricity is then sold on the wholesale market, potentially earning hundreds of millions of dollars for BPA. This increased revenue helps BPA keep wholesale electric rates low for public power utilities by offsetting operating costs.

This year, river levels are projected to be 33 percent below the 30-year average. BPA will have enough generation to meet the needs of its customers, but it won't have much extra electricity to sell on the wholesale market. As a result, BPA has already reduced its expectations for 2010 hydropower revenues by \$200 million.

### PUD Rates May be Affected in 2012

What does this all mean for PUD customers? At the moment, not much. PUD rates have remained steady



The Dalles Dam, pictured above, is one of 31 hydroelectric dams in the Federal Columbia River Power System. These dams generate low-cost, renewable hydropower for PUD customers.

since 2006, when they decreased by an average of 4.65%. (The PUD last raised base rates in 2002.) When the PUD Board adopted the 2010 budget last December, it did not plan any rate increases this year. Holding rates steady this year is still the plan.

"At this point, we're just praying for a wet spring," said PUD General Manager Kevin Owens. "Our customers probably won't see rate increases as a result of this year's poor snow pack until 2012, when the PUD's next rate period with BPA begins. Between now and then, both BPA and the PUD will be doing everything we can to reduce the impact of the drought on customer rates."



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



## GLOW Book Sale

April 1 - 30, 2010

At the PUD Office in Deer Island  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

Proceeds benefit the Neighbor's GLOW Fund, which provides emergency bill payment assistance to PUD customers.

# Ductless Heat Pumps

## Enjoy Summer A/C & Lower Winter Heat Bills

PUD customer Sarah Woodall loves her new ductless heat pump.

"We're warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and our electric bill has gone down," said Woodall.

### What is a Ductless Heat Pump?

Ductless heat pumps, popular in Europe and Asia for decades, are just catching on in the United States. They are small, easily installed and energy-efficient systems that provide summer cooling and winter heating.

Ductless systems have two parts: An indoor air distribution unit, called a "head", is mounted high on a wall, usually above a window. A small outdoor unit sits on the ground and is connected to the indoor head by a sealed three-inch opening in the wall. Systems can have multiple indoor heads; each one serves a specific zone in the home.

In the past year, 36 PUD customers have upgraded to ductless heat pumps from their existing baseboard, wall heater or ceiling cable systems. Like Woodall, other customers have praised their new ductless systems for their lower heat bills and year-round comfort. Others note that the systems excel in quiet operation and operating convenience.

Several local contractors now sell ductless systems. Costs for single head systems range from \$3,200 to \$5,000. Installation usually takes one day.

### Up to \$2,800 in PUD Rebates & Tax Credits Available

During 2010, increased federal tax credits, combined with the \$1,500 PUD rebate and existing state tax credits, can save homeowners up to \$2,800 on ductless system installations in qualifying homes. For complete eligibility requirements, visit [www.crpud.net](http://www.crpud.net) or contact our Energy Experts at (503) 366-5470 or [experts@crpud.org](mailto:experts@crpud.org).

To learn more about ductless systems, visit [www.goingductless.com](http://www.goingductless.com).



The indoor head of a ductless system sits unobtrusively above the window.



The outdoor unit is connected to the indoor unit by a small opening in an exterior wall.

## Expert Help for Home Improvement

If you're planning a home improvement project like adding insulation, replacing windows or upgrading to a ductless heat pump, get Expert help.

Our Energy Experts are here to help you get the most out of your efficiency improvements. Call (503) 366-5470 or visit [www.crpud.net](http://www.crpud.net) for help choosing projects, for lists of area contractors, or for information on PUD rebates for efficiency improvements. And remember, it's always a good idea to get at least two quotes before selecting a contractor.

## Energy Efficiency Programs & Services for Homeowners

(503) 366-5470

[experts@crpud.org](mailto:experts@crpud.org)

[www.crpud.net](http://www.crpud.net)

Free Home Energy Use Evaluations

ENERGY STAR® Appliance Rebates

Duct Sealing Rebates

Ductless Heat Pump Rebates

Heat Pump Rebates

Marathon® Water Heater Rebates

ENERGY STAR® Manufactured Homes

ENERGY STAR® New Homes

Home Weatherization Rebates

Thermostat Rebates

# GLOW Donation Form

Please add  \$1  \$3  \$5  \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my bill each month.

My one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Please add my one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my next bill.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ PUD Customer #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Donations to the Neighbor's GLOW Fund are tax-deductible.

**COLUMBIA RIVER**  
**PUD**  
A COMMUNITY-OWNED UTILITY

