

# Two Areas Impacted by High Wind Power Outage

KPUD crews restore power to Glenwood, Satus Pass

By Beth Schroder

An unexpected power outage is never high on the list of things anyone wants to experience. A well-maintained electrical infrastructure helps to significantly reduce those events. Sometimes Mother Nature challenges that infrastructure, and the result is a power outage.

Such was the case the weekend of February 6 when high winds swept through Klickitat County. The highest winds blew through upper elevations. Wind gusts near 85 mph were recorded at private weather stations outside Goldendale.

The high winds impacted two areas of Klickitat PUD's service territory. Glenwood and the surrounding area had power outages beginning around noon Saturday, February 6. Customers in Glenwood had power restored around 6 p.m. Saturday, with the remaining customers reconnected by 3 a.m. Sunday. The outage in the Glenwood area affected approximately 400 customers.

The other area impacted was near Satus Pass, north of Goldendale. Numerous issues were identified near Jenkins Creek, with the Box Canyon Road area seeing the most damage. Customers in these areas first began reporting power outages around 3 p.m. Saturday. Line patrols by KPUD engineering staff began finding issues within 15 minutes of the outage being reported and found the first of many healthy, green trees on a section of line 30 minutes later. These line patrols allowed KPUD operations personnel to begin directing resources to damaged areas of the system.



**Klickitat PUD crews work to repair lines on England Drive near Box Canyon Road during the windstorm February 6.** PHOTO BY GREG FAHLENKAMP

The continued high winds caused additional damage to lines as crews were working to repair the issues that had already been identified. All the trees that fell into power lines during this outage came from outside the KPUD right-of-way and were healthy, green trees uprooted or

broken by the high winds.

“Green or live trees outside of the right-of-way are usually left alone,” said Klickitat PUD board president Doug Miller. This policy is based on current laws that restrict removal of healthy, growing trees outside of utility rights-of-way.



**A green tree located outside the Klickitat PUD right-of-way, south of Jenkins Creek on Satus Pass, snapped off and fell into the line breaking two strands and pinning the remaining strands to the ground. PHOTO BY BRANDON JOHNSON**

Due to the unexpected tree falls, it became more dangerous for KPUD's line crews and line patrol personnel to be out working as the day progressed and the winds increased.

To avoid injuries, the call was made around 2 a.m. Sunday to bring the crews and line patrol out of the field. Approximately 320 customers were without power in the Satus Pass area overnight.

Engineering Manager Ron Schultz said that he only remembers a couple of times in the years that he's been with Klickitat PUD when crews had to be pulled from repairing damage due to hazardous conditions.

"The outage came on quick and was very hazardous for the crews," Schultz said. "They would get line repaired and additional trees would fall, and the line would come back down behind them."

At first light Sunday, engineering staff again began line patrols of the Satus Pass area. Due to the length of the outage and continued high winds overnight, the entire line had to be reassessed to locate any new damage. Additional areas were found that needed repair. The new information was relayed to line crews as they returned to the field. Tree removal and line repair continued through the afternoon, with many customers restored to power by around 12:30 p.m. Most customers had power restored by 4 p.m., with the last customer reconnected at 6:45 p.m.

"I want to thank our crews for their efforts in getting power restored quickly," Miller said. "And to our internal staffing for their assistance in helping coordinate the efforts of getting information out to our linemen and responding to our customers."

The work that has been done, and continues, to remove dead trees and to maintain the electrical infrastructure and rights-of-way proved effective at reducing the number of downed trees and damage done to the system during the windstorm.

"We work at keeping our rights-of-way cleared," said Miller. "We budget for clearing them."

During the outage, Klickitat PUD updated customers regarding the outage status via Facebook and the utility's website. Customers expressed appreciation for the updates, and there were reports from KPUD staff of customers checking on crews to make sure they were doing OK as they worked to restore power.

Customers are always encouraged to contact Klickitat PUD at 800-548-8357 to report a power outage. ■