

# Keep the Lines Clear

Klickitat PUD line crews work hard to restore power as quickly as possible when there is an outage. They need to find the issue, mend the damage and reenergize customers. Sometimes, their job is made harder by overgrown rights of way.

Rights of way are the areas of land where power lines run through. If a ROW is not kept clear of trees, shrubs and other plants, then the growth could damage the power lines, poles and other equipment. It can also make it harder for the crews to see and reach damaged parts.

When a ROW is blocked, crews must spend time and effort getting there by off-road vehicle or on foot. They also have to struggle to remove fallen lines from the vegetation under the power line. This slows down the repair process and affects customers for longer.

The power lines that run through a ROW are important for the electric system. They deliver power to hundreds

or thousands of customers at a time. If one tree knocks down a line, it can cause outages for many people and businesses.

“Removal of dead or dying hazard trees from within or outside of our right of way helps prevent trees from falling into the power line during winter storms and wind events, or when fire season is active,” says Engineering Supervisor Mark Garner.

When someone wants new electric service, KPUD’s staking engineers have to plan the best way to bring power to their property. They have to consider the cost, maintenance and emergency response. They must choose a route that uses existing utility easements or the shortest and easiest path. They also have to consider the future plans of the customer and KPUD.

Most customers understand and agree with the KPUD ROW requirements.

“During the on-site visit with a customer, they are made aware of the

importance of a clean, clear ROW and understand how it impacts both the customers and KPUD if a ROW does not meet the requirements,” says Nathaniel Hill, KPUD staking engineer.

A clear ROW makes it easier and faster for KPUD to inspect the lines and find any potential problems before they cause an outage. These requirements are not only for access to the power lines, but also for wildfire prevention. Klickitat County has hot and dry summers that increase the risk of fires.

The engineering department also uses drones to check the power lines regularly.

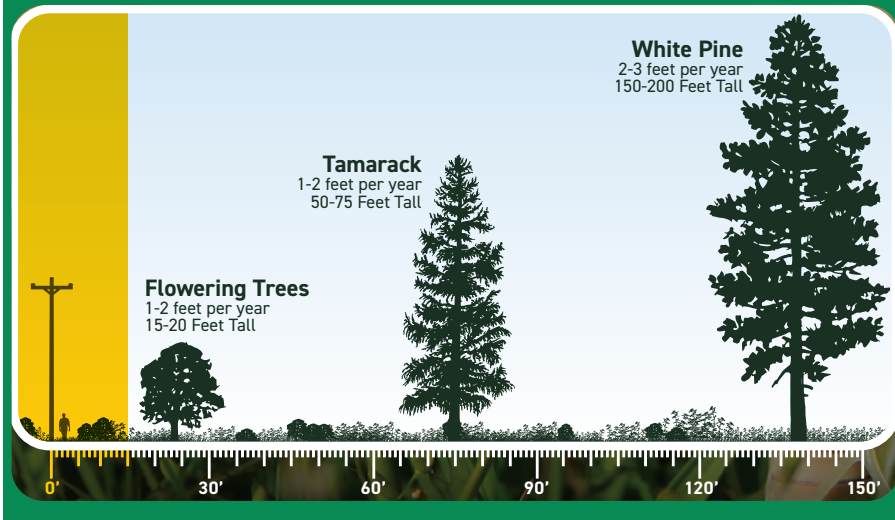
KPUD Line Superintendent John Starr oversees the KPUD tree crew and the annual contract crews. He says the PUD and Kemp West, the contractors who perform duties on behalf of the PUD, better maintain the power poles and lines during regular maintenance with clear access. He also asks customers to help KPUD keep the ROW clear of hazards.

To report vegetation issues, call the Operations department at 800-548-8357 or submit an inquiry via SmartHub. When a problem is reported, KPUD can send crews to those locations and take care of the problem.

Keeping ROWs clear is a team effort between KPUD and the customers. It helps KPUD provide reliable, safe and cost-effective power to the community. It also helps prevent outages, fires and other damage to the electric system. KPUD appreciates the cooperation and support of customers in maintaining the ROW. Together, we can make sure the power stays on for everyone. ■

## How Can Customers Help Keep ROW Clear?

- ▶ Call Operations department at 800-548-8357 to report vegetation issues, or submit via SmartHub.
- ▶ Prior to planting trees, look up and consider their growth.



Falling branches and trees can hit utility equipment and knock out power to KPUD customers.

