

Be Prepared: Generator Safety

By Ron Schultz

It is that time of year when the weather starts changing. We all should be thinking about having a plan and an outage kit available in the event of a power outage.

Klickitat PUD works hard to keep outages to a minimum and restore power quickly. However, widespread outages resulting from severe storms may prevent power restoration from being done without unforeseen delays.

Many customers have portable generators or fixed generators at their homes and businesses to use in the event of a power outage or emergency. Using and installing a generator correctly and safely protects not only you, but also the PUD's line crews.

A generator without a properly installed transfer switch can back-feed along the power line and electrocute or injure anyone coming into contact with it, including our line workers who might be making repairs.

Klickitat PUD's distribution lines carry voltages of 12,470 volts between phases, and 7,200 volts if measured to ground. When a generator connected to the supply voltage source is unintentionally connected to the PUD system, the same transformer that steps down the voltage to your home or business steps the voltage up to the PUD delivery voltage. This would create a dangerous—and possibly deadly—situation should someone contact that line.

Klickitat PUD recommends that you have any generator transfer switch installation done by a licensed and bonded electrical contractor. The installation must be inspected and approved by the state electrical inspector.

Other tips to remember:

- Make sure extension cords connected to the generator are in good



Portable generators come in handy during power outages, but come with their own risks. Use a generator safely and correctly to protect both yourself and KPUD's line crews.

condition and are rated for the load they are intended to carry. The cord should have a grounding plug.

- Connect only essential equipment and appliances to the generator, and prevent overloading it.
- Only use the generator in a well-ventilated environment, as high carbon-monoxide levels can be produced quickly and can be deadly.
- Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter to prevent electrical shocks and electrocution.
- Keep children away from the generator at all times.
- Store fuel safely away from the generator, living areas and any sources of combustion. Make sure the fuel is in properly labeled containers that are suitable for the type of fuel contained.
- Before refueling the generator, always make sure it is turned off and cooled down.

- Have a fully charged fire extinguisher near the generator. Make sure the extinguisher is properly rated to extinguish any fuel sources that could ignite.

Did You Know?

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 600 carbon-monoxide poisoning deaths associated with portable generators were reported from 1999 to 2010. Recently, the average deaths per year increased to 81.

About 40 percent of all portable generator-related deaths occurred during the winter when homeowners often use them during weather-related outages.

Almost 70 percent of deaths related to portable power generators occur at home, often with the generator operating in the basement, crawl space, garage or enclosed carport of owners seeking convenience without considering safety. ■



Tamra Erhardt, left, and Karyn Hart propel Spooky Inc.'s coffin race entry during Goldendale's 2015 Community Days parade. The coffin race, part of Trunk or Treat festivities, is Saturday, October 24.

Hold Your Hearses!

By James Spainhower

Actress Sarah Bernhardt was said to have slept in one. Edgar Allan Poe feared resting in one prematurely.

On Saturday, October 24, Goldendale hosts a race for wheeled coffins to compete for the fastest time.

Such a unique competition seemed a natural fit for Goldendale's traditional Trunk or Treat festivities. This year's theme is Nightmare on Main Street.

Jack and Kim Methe host the annual event and manage The General Store where festivities are held.

Coffin race teams consist of five members: one to drive the coffin and four to propel the coffin across the course on Goldendale's Main Street. The wheeled coffins must conform to strict specifications, but can be creatively configured and decorated. The races feature two coffin heats, and contestants are encouraged to dress in costume.

Check-in on the day of the event begins at 11 a.m. Entries participate in a parade of coffins prior to the race, slated to

begin at 1:30 p.m. Entries are judged on originality prior to the race.

"We have, in addition to the coffin race and the Parade of Coffins, carnival games; live musical entertainment; karaoke; a costume and car-decorating contest; various food vendors, such as pizza and Mexican food; hot dogs and pop for a buck; a free family-friendly film on a big screen; free hayride; and carnival foods, like popcorn and cotton candy," Kim says. "We will also have an expanded, new and improved haunted house attraction."

Trunk or Treat also will showcase some of the region's premier winemakers and craft breweries, dubbed Spooky's Spirits, across from The General Store.

"By having Spooky's Spirits, some parents now have an additional activity to participate in," Kim says. "The venue also allows a central site for children to locate their parents who are afforded a place to sit down, relax and chat with one another."

For more information on how to support this community event, or for more information about the coffin races, call Kim or Jack at (509) 773-4941. ■

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2015

- 1-4**—Portland Fall Home and Garden Show, Expo Center, Portland
- 2-31**—Renken Farms' Pumpkin Patch, 3050 Three Mile Road, The Dalles; (541) 296-3024
- 3**—Fall Music Festival, TRAC Center, Pasco
- 3**—Maryhill Museum of Art events: open car show, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; art festival, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., drive Maryhill Loops Road, noon to 2 p.m.; dining with local food vendors onsite, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Goldendale
- 3**—Oktoberfest for Scholars, www.troutlakewashington.com/trout-lake-oktoberfest, Trout Lake
- 3-31**—FrightTown, 7 p.m., Memorial Coliseum, Portland
- 4**—Maryhill Museum of Art events: Maryhill Loops Hill Climb, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; arts festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; art under the tent, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; dining with local food vendors onsite, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Goldendale
- 9-11**—Annual Shaniko Ragtime and Vintage Music Festival, Shaniko; (541) 489-3434
- 9-11**—Jurassic Quest—Dinosaurs Are Coming! TRAC Center, Pasco
- 16-18**—Washington State Annual Quilters Show, Spokane Fair & Expo Center, Spokane
- 17**—Ranch Sorting at Hood River County Fairgrounds, Odell
- 17**—Guards, Guns & Guitars Rock-n-Roll Camo Party, New Readiness Center, The Dalles
- 17-18**—Gorge Fruit and Craft Fair, Hood River County Fairgrounds, Odell
- 17-18**—Blossom Craft Show, Hood River County Fairgrounds, Odell
- 17-18**—Apple Valley Fall Harvest Celebration and Country Barbecue, 2363 Tucker Road, Hood River
- 18**—Cowboy Poetry and Music Contest, 4 to 6 p.m., Bingen Theater
- 22-26**—Disney on Ice presents "Frozen," Moda Center, Portland
- 23-25**—America's Largest Antique and Collectible Show, Expo Center, Portland
- 24**—Trunk or Treat, Main Street, Goldendale
- 25**—Columbia Gorge Marathon and Half Marathon, Hood River; www.columbiagorgemarathon.com
- 27 and 29**—Pumpkin Patch, Skamania County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Stevenson; www.skamaniacountyparks.com
- 30**—Downtown Trick or Treat, 3 to 5 p.m., The Dalles; www.thedallescchamber.com
- 31**—Community Halloween Street Fair, 5:30 to 8 p.m., Downtown White Salmon