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WA-18

## Your PUD Update

This winter sure turned out to be a bit more than we expected. December and January were relatively mild. However, February and the beginning of March were a different story. Numerous records were set for cold temperatures. On March 11, Goldendale set a record cold temperature of 8 degrees, beating the previous record of 16 degrees from 1905. Overall, temperatures were significantly below average and for much longer than normal.

With that being said, temperature isn't the preferred measurement to compare energy needs to environmental conditions. Instead, we use heating degree days. HDD is a measure of the heating requirement which, if you use electric heat, can show relative impacts of heating on your bills.

For example, December 2018 had an HDD of 818. December 2017 showed 902. That means we needed 9 percent less energy to heat our homes last December than in 2017. The late-winter HDD indicates we needed 15 percent more energy to heat our homes in January and 55 percent more in February compared to 2018.

All of this equates to an increased demand for electricity. While we are completing an electric rate proposal for the board to consider in April, keep in mind there have been no electric rate increases since 2016. If you noticed an increase in your electric bill, it's likely a result of more use due to the increase in HDDs.

This year, your higher bills likely will be in March and April as a result of the cold temperatures and higher heating use. Talk with KPOD Energy Specialist Anita Clever about our weatherization and conservation programs to help combat colder weather.

This leads me to additional tools for you all to think about. Our new customer information and billing system provides access to your accounts and energy use information that we did not have with the previous system. You can look at your use online, on your phone or on your computer. For those of us in rural areas, it is important to read your meter consistently to ensure the best information. You can enter your meter read while you're at the meter using the SmartHub app on your smartphone. This eliminates forgetting to call or send in your read.

I encourage you to enroll in our autopay program. This option pairs nicely with SmartHub, which provides bill notifications and lets you view your bills and use, and make inquiries all in the same place. It is the perfect time to consider our equal payment program that evens out your monthly bills to avoid seasonal impacts. Contact customer service to see if you qualify.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to recognize the dedication of our maintenance staff and their commitment to our maintenance and vegetation management programs. The reliability demonstrated during the cold and incredibly snowy past few months was not by accident. It is the result of that dedication and a cooperative Mother Nature. The cold weather was easier on our electric system than the freeze-thaw cycles, and rain and wind. Those weather events tear down limbs and trees, as you have all seen in previous years. I appreciate the efforts of our Klickitat PUD employees.

**Jim Smith**  
**General Manager**