



Braving the Storm

Klickitat PUD overcomes winter storm challenges

Klickitat Public Utility District customers experienced several power outages during a winter storm that lasted from January 9 to January 23. The storm brought strong winds, heavy snow and freezing rain, which damaged the transmission lines and other equipment that deliver electricity to the county.

KPUD faced many difficulties in restoring power, as the weather conditions and the terrain made it hard to access and

repair the affected areas.

The storm affected nearly 57,000 electric meters across the county. On January 11, the wind blew power lines together, which tripped a substation offline and cut off power to eastern Goldendale. KPUD crews worked in sub-zero temperatures to separate the lines and prevent further contact.

On January 13, another outage occurred on the west side of the county due to damage to the Bonneville Power Administration's transmission line that feeds into BPA's Bald Mountain Substation in White Salmon. This affected the Bingen, Husum, Gilmer and Glenwood substations.

KPUD tried to restore power by backfeeding power toward the Bingen Substation from PacifiCorp in Hood River, Oregon, but faced challenges that required a careful approach to reenergizing the circuits one by one.

The storm continued to cause more outages in the region. On January 18, KPUD was hit by another BPA transmission outage on its Bald Mountain Substation. KPUD crews quickly responded and prepared to engage switching protocols, but BPA was able to clear the line and reenergize the transmission line.

Later that evening, one of the Lyle



Klickitat PUD crews worked hard to maintain customers' power during the January storm that froze many power lines and substations.

Substation's feeds, which provides power to the town of Lyle and the Appleton area, opened up due to a vehicle accident.

At nearly midnight on January 18, the Goldendale transmission interconnection between BPA and KPUD in Goldendale tripped due to a fault on the transmission line. This outage affected the Goldendale, Darland, Klickitat, Wishram, Goodnoe and Cleveland substations.

All available crew and staff were used to patrol the different transmission lines between substations, allowing the crew to restore power to those without damage. However, some substations were without power through the night as crews

completed patrols and made repairs.

The water department crews faced many hardships during the winter storm, as they had to deal with frozen lines that affected the water supply. They had to work in harsh conditions—often in remote and inaccessible areas—to locate and thaw frozen lines. They also had to monitor and repair leaks or breaks that could cause water loss.

Crews played a crucial role in ensuring the safety of the water and wastewater systems. They alerted customers to possible water leaks and advised them how to prevent or fix them. They also responded to issues experienced by losses of power to

their water and wastewater systems, such as pumps, valves or meters. They worked tirelessly to restore the normal operation of the systems and to provide service to the customers.

The snow accumulation—covered in layers of freezing rain—posed extensive issues with loaded, sagging power lines and various equipment breakers. However, KPUD sustained little damage related to downed trees, broken poles or critically damaged infrastructure. KPUD credited the tree-trimming efforts during the past several years for reducing the extent of damages during inclement weather.

The Advanced Metering Infrastructure meters helped KPUD quickly pinpoint open devices and direct patrollers to begin troubleshooting. They improved the speed at which crews were able to confirm restoration and move on to the next outage.

During the Board of Commissioners meeting on January 23, KPUD commissioners approved staff to waive late fees for one billing cycle, understanding that customers were affected by the storm.

KPUD thanks its customers for their patience and cooperation during the storm, and praises the crews and staff for their hard work and dedication. The PUD asks customers to report vegetation concerns to the operations department at 800-548-8357 or via their SmartHub account to help KPUD keep the rights-of-way clear and prevent future outages. KPUD is committed to providing reliable, safe and cost-effective power to the community. ■