

Operation Warm Heart: A Giving Tradition

Winter for Klickitat County residents can mean many different things.

For some it is the joy of snow and the opportunity to spend time with family during the holidays. For others it can mean a higher electricity bill that can be a burden on many struggling families in the area.

Klickitat PUD (KPUD) has a program called "Operation Warm Heart," which allows the citizens of Klickitat County to help others in need to stay warm during the cold winter when budgets are tight.

Operation Warm Heart began in 1989. There are now 447 customers who contribute money to the good cause. In 2005 alone, more than \$15,000 was added to the Operation Warm Heart fund by customers who donated as little as \$1 extra on their monthly bills.

Other customers participate in the program by making a one-time annual donation or by electing to take part in the Operation Round-

Up program.

Operation Round-Up now has 218 KPUD customers participating. They have their monthly bills rounded up to the nearest dollar amount. All of the money collected through the program is deposited into the Operation Warm Heart fund and helps pay a bill or two for families in need.

Thanks to the participants who donated to these funds, credits were provided to families in need last winter totaling \$11,210.

To illustrate how effective and beneficial the program is, a local family of four had never been late on a payment. They had been customers for four years and had such a good payment history with KPUD they received their deposit back after the first year, with interest.

Then, the father became unemployed and it was hard for them to manage bills—especially during the winter—relying on unemployment



benefits to meet their monthly obligations.

The family applied for Operation Warm Heart assistance and was able to use the funds to help pay electricity bills for two months. The heat stayed on and they stayed warm, thanks to their neighbors in Klickitat County who gave a little bit of money to a big cause.

To be eligible for Operation Warm Heart assistance, a family must be in danger of having their utilities disconnected for nonpayment.

They can receive up to \$250 every other year to help pay for bills between December and April.

To donate to the Operation Warm Heart fund, contact KPUD and tell us you want to make a contribution to make a difference for someone in need during the winter.

All contributions are tax deductible and allow you to give the gift of warmth! ■

It's Easy as Clockwork to Read Your Meter

Customers who live out of town in the rural areas are being reminded to read their meters monthly. Without an accurate monthly reading, our computer "guesses" how much electricity you have used and produces an estimated billing.

Reading your meter is simple. Write down the numbers showing on your meter, left to right, the same way you read the odometer in your car.

Submit your reading to Klickitat PUD monthly, choosing one of the following options:

- Record the date and meter reading on your bill stub and return it with your payment.
- Call in your meter reading to the PUD's 24-hour phone service at (509) 773-7618 in Goldendale or (509) 493-9552 in White Salmon.
- Submit your reading electronically on the KPUD Web site at: www.klickipud.com.

If you have any questions about reading your meter, recording or submitting the reading, call (509) 773-5891 or (800) 548-8357. ■

