

Mike Courtney Retires After Long Career

By Lori K Froehlich

Thirty years of dedicated service to Klickitat PUD ended on September 12, for Mike Courtney, who retired from Klickitat PUD (KPUD).



Mike's absence leaves a fracture in

the foundation of the KPUD work force and his happy demeanor already is missed by everyone.

"Mike had an extensive knowledge of the west end of our system, and he could do a mean crossword," says Bernie Predeek, White Salmon lineman and coworker.

Dan Charters, White Salmon customer service field representative, says he will have to find another NASCAR fan to discuss the races with now that Mike is gone.

After graduating as valedictorian from Trout Lake High School in 1968, Mike went to Everett Community College, where he studied English.

From there, Mike worked for the state of Washington as a warehouseman, a mechanic for Vancouver Datsun and as a counterman for Ray's Auto Parts in Bingen. While Mike worked at Ray's, Al Sanders—the White Salmon line crew foreman at the time—encouraged Mike to apply for the position of KPUD groundman that had just become vacant.

Mike began his career at KPUD in November 1978 as groundman to the White Salmon line crew, with a starting wage of \$4.25 an hour.

In a letter to John Budd, KPUD general manager in 1980, White Salmon Branch Manager Norman

Bargabus wrote, "Michael J. Courtney, Groundman, P.U.D. No. 1 of Klickitat County, has been selected to fill the Apprentice Lineman position at White Salmon, effective January 16, 1980."

After three years as an apprentice, Mike took and passed his International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers journeyman exam in December 1982.

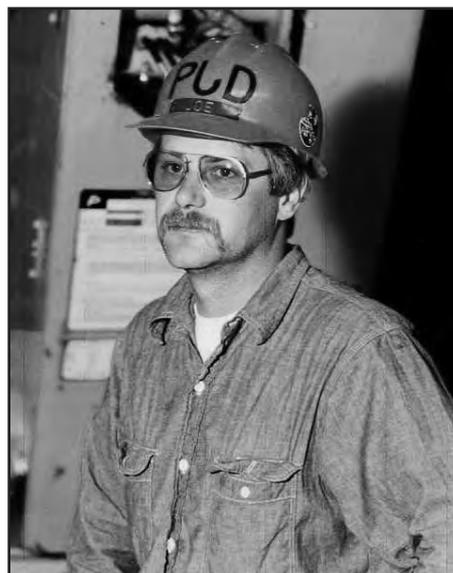
Mike worked on the White Salmon crew until December 2001, when he took the position of serviceman for the White Salmon office. Mike's duties included initiating requisitions for meters and metering equipment, and stocking line materials and supplies to ensure adequate levels were maintained.

He also was responsible for responding daily to service orders consisting of connecting, disconnecting, installing and removing meters, investigating and resolving complaints relating to voltage and metering, and locating underground power lines.

While serviceman, Mike completed about 2,000 service orders a year.

He continued as serviceman until his recent retirement.

Throughout his long career, Mike



Above, Mike Courtney works on a project for KPUD. Mike is retiring after 30 years of service to the district. He plans to spend more time hunting and working on motorcycles during retirement. Below, Mike in his younger days on the job.

remained on the on-call standby list on a rotational basis with the other linemen, depended on to respond to calls for overhead and underground outages.

In a 10-year span, from 1997 to 2007, KPUD calculated that Mike worked 2,050 hours of overtime.

Mike also contributed 27 years to the White Salmon Volunteer Fire Department in a variety of capacities. He retired recently from the department, as well.

Mike and his wife, Elaine, make their home in White Salmon. They have four children: Justin, Erin, Paul and Amy.

Now that Mike has free time on his hands, he can be found hunting or tinkering in his garage with motorcycles. ■