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Klickitat PUD is in Good Hands

A little more than 32 years ago, in the summer of 1976, Western Zirconium was working on a proposed new facility at Dallesport, and Pacific Power was working on a nuclear power plant in Roosevelt.

It also was the year I joined Klickitat PUD (KPUD).

As I retire, Winston Low takes over the reins this month as KPUD's sixth general manager.

In the course of my career, change has been the overarching theme. In 1976, the PUD had 6,500 customers—roughly half of what we have today. The focus of the PUD was on expanding the electric system to serve the rural areas. Klickitat County had been deemed electrified in 1955, when the last resident living without electricity had been served, but there were many areas where power simply was not available. We worked hard to extend lines wherever people needed electricity.

The defining shift in KPUD's mission came with the addition of generation at McNary Dam. KPUD partnered with Northern Wasco PUD across the river to complete a hydro project on the fish attraction water at the north shore fishway. Then came the landfill gas project at Roosevelt. Klickitat went it alone to turn the captured methane gas from the landfill into electricity. Five huge engines use the methane to spin generators—enough to power more than 6,000 homes.

Next, we again teamed up to develop the White Creek Wind Project in eastern Klickitat County. It's the largest public power developed wind project in the nation.

KPUD still relies on the Bonneville Power Administration to supply low-cost hydropower to our customers. The renewable power we have developed is sold to other utilities at a premium. The proceeds are used to keep costs down. The power can be recalled for our county's use when the need arises.

The future is bright and in good hands. KPUD is in the center of renewable power development. We are working with wind power developers to make an integrated transmission system. We are working on developing infrastructure and processes that will make Klickitat County the center of renewable energy for our region.

With the new presidential administration, renewable energy is the centerpiece of the nation's agenda. KPUD's commission and staff have the vision, expertise and drive to keep our county moving toward this goal. We are in good hands.



Tom Svendsen

Tom Svendsen, General Manager 2003-2009

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