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WA-18

Help Make Our Community Great

I want to completely digress from my normal monthly discussions about your PUD. This month, I want to talk about you.

Specifically, I want to talk about the wonderful community we live in.

I know there are always issues and frustrations, but when something important comes from nowhere, we often see how good we have it.

Take my family, for example. When Jennifer and I first moved to Klickitat County, we were impressed with the friendliness and openness of everyone we met. We were welcomed and quickly became part of the community. It has proven to be a great place to raise our kids, and we love our friends and our home.

Unfortunately, not everyone feels this way about this area. I would suggest that if you don't feel a part of the community, take the time and make the effort to become involved.

There are countless ways to do this, whether it is through community service groups in your town—such as Kiwanis, Rotary, senior centers, the Jaycees, New Hope Farms, Maryhill Museum, chambers of commerce and the Klickitat County Fair—or just volunteering.

If you take a step to become more involved, I think you will see what I mean.

It also is that time of year when some peoples' lives become a lot more difficult. It is getting colder and many in our community lack for food, warm clothing

and—as I'm the power guy—heat for their homes.

You can support the local food banks in Bingen or Goldendale, or contribute to Klickitat PUD's Operation Warm Heart and Round-up programs. Many local churches in your community also accept clothing donations.

You also can become involved with programs that directly affect kids in the community. There are mitten trees around town—we have one at KPUD every year—and the Coats for Kids programs for helping kids get warm clothes to wear to school. The Backpacks for Kids program provides lunches for children in the community that would otherwise go without. See the feature on this program on pages 4-5.

Backpacks for Kids is designed to provide lunches that can go into children's backpacks at our schools in such a way that it is not obvious to the other kids. You can contribute or help with the programs directly. There is no better way to become part of the community than to help its children.

If you need contacts to get in touch with any of these programs, call us at KPUD and we will help you.

I am writing this to remind everyone that even when life seems complicated and hard, even when it seems overwhelming and stressful, stop and take a look around. Our community is an amazing place to live, to grow and to raise a family. It has become this way because of the efforts of all of you.

I am proud to live in Klickitat County and hope you feel the same.

Jim Smith, General Manager

