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www.klickitatpud.com

Goldendale Office

1313 S. Columbus Ave.

Goldendale, WA 98620

(509) 773-5891

(800) 548-8357

White Salmon Office

110 NE Estes Ave.

P.O. Box 187

White Salmon, WA 98672

(509) 493-2255

(800) 548-8358

WA-18

Our Amazing Communities

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 communities we live in. I know there are always issues and frustrations, but when something important comes from nowhere we often see how great we have it. Whether it was the fires of 2011 or major storm and outages in January 2012, folks responded.

Do you ever wonder why it takes a major issue to get us thinking about our communities? I was pondering this just the other day and thought, why wait? I want to talk about it now.

Don't think our county has a lot to offer? If you don't feel like you are a part of the community you live in, I suggest you take the time and make the effort to become involved.

There are countless ways to do this, whether it is through community service groups such as Kiwanis, Rotary and Jaycees, or seniors' groups, youth sports organizations, the fair, Maryhill Museum, New Hope Farms, our chambers of commerce—you get the idea. There are lots of ways to become involved, and if you take that step, I think you will see what I mean. We seldom give without getting something in return.

It is also that time of year when some of our neighbors' lives become a lot more difficult. It is getting colder and many people in our communities lack for food and warm clothing or struggle to heat their homes. You can support your local

food banks or contribute to our PUD's Operation Warm Heart and Round Up programs. Many local churches also accept clothing donations.



You also can become involved with programs that directly affect children in the communities. Mitten trees are around town (we have one at the PUD every year) and the Coats for Kids programs helps children get warm clothes to wear to school. The Back Pack for Kids program provides lunches for children in our communities who would otherwise go without.

You can contribute or help with the programs directly. I can't think of a better way to become part of your community than to help its children. If you need contacts to get in touch with these organizations, call us at the PUD and we will be glad to help you.

I am writing this to remind everyone that even when life seems complicated and hard, even when it seems overwhelming and stressful, there are people with bigger problems than our own. Many times, by helping others, we realize all we really have.

Our communities are amazing places to live, grow and raise a family. They are that 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