

Gene Ewing Says Farewell to Klickitat PUD

By Lori Froehlich

Gene Ewing has been Klickitat PUD's materials manager for the past eight years. At the end of March, he placed his last order for the utility.

Gene has been responsible for all aspects of purchase, delivery and security of materials, equipment and supplies. This includes the day-to-day functions at the utility as well as for upcoming projects and contracts. Gene also has been in charge of maintaining the buildings and grounds in Goldendale and White Salmon.

Gene began in the aluminum industry, working at the foundry near John Day Dam under Martin Marietta. His career there spanned 30 years and included 20 years' experience as a purchasing agent.

After the aluminum plant closure, Gene worked for Innovative Composite Engineering in Bingen as a production manager. He started at Klickitat PUD in early 2007.

Gene had a loyal and faithful team supporting him in every part of purchasing at the utility, including inventory, warehousing and materials managing. Julius Robison (JR), Bill Rogers, Robbie Cacy and grounds-keepers Casey Sholdebrand and Blake Walker have been instrumental in Gene's success at the PUD. He has enjoyed all their laughs, hard work and the great team they created together.

Robbie worked closely with Gene through the years. She refers to his leadership style as a quiet authority that she respected and admired.

It is obvious Gene is going to be missed by all his employees. They each echoed the same sentiments about his exemplary leadership skills.

Bill Rogers says a few things made Gene stand out as a boss.

"He was open to our opinions and actually used our input," Bills says. "He honestly cared about our personal and professional growth."

"He wouldn't just tell you how to do the job, you'd get



The Klickitat PUD purchasing department staff, back row from left, Gene Ewing, Robbie Cacy and Bill Rogers; seated, Julius Robison.

to dig in and do it with him," JR says. "He would never ask you to do something he wouldn't do himself or hadn't thought through. In fact, he's probably out there doing it right now. It's been a pleasure working with him and for him. He always listened to us and was genuinely interested in helping us all do our jobs. Gene was a true leader to us because he led by example."

Gene and his wife, Delores, are longtime residents of Klickitat County, specifically Wishram, where Delores has worked for the school district for 28 years. They have two daughters and four grandchildren who live in East Wenatchee—who will be seeing much more of Grandma and Grandpa soon.

Gene's retirement plans also include spending more time on his hobbies, which include biking, hiking and enjoying all that the scenic Columbia River Gorge offers.

While he will be greatly missed, Klickitat PUD wishes Gene all the best in his retirement. ■



From left, the captain and commander's houses still stand at Fort Simcoe. Attend the Columbia Hills Trail Daze hike to see the Balsamroot and lupine in bloom.

What's New at Washington State Parks

Goldendale Observatory State Park

1602 Observatory Drive, Goldendale

If you have never gazed at the stars, this is your chance. The Goldendale Observatory is open for special hours to the public Saturday, April 4, from 1 to 6 a.m. for the total lunar eclipse.

For directions, maps or more information, check out www.parks.wa.gov/512/Goldendale-Observatory.

Fort Simcoe State Park

5150 Fort Simcoe State Park, White Swan

New to the Goldendale area management team—but not to Washington State Parks—is Fort Simcoe, a day-use park. The park is open Wednesdays through Sundays, April 1 through October 1, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fort Simcoe park tells the story of the mid-19th century Army life and provides insights into the way of life of the local American Indian culture. This historic park in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains is an old oak grove watered by natural springs.

Fort Simcoe was an 1850s-era military installation established to keep peace between the settlers and American Indians. Five original buildings still stand and are worth the trip to see: a commander's house, three captain's houses and a blockhouse, plus other various buildings that have been recreated to fit the era.

Group tours are offered for a fee. Tours the rest of the year may be made by appointment; call (509) 874-2372. Fort Simcoe also boasts a museum, two horseshoe pits, a volleyball field and large grassy areas for baseball, football, softball and soccer.

This park is one of the largest gathering areas in the Northwest for Lewis' woodpeckers. It is a bird lover's paradise.

Don't miss the Easter egg hunt Sunday, April 5, at 10 a.m. There will be 500 eggs to find.

For directions, maps or more information, check out www.parks.wa.gov/509/Fort-Simcoe.

Columbia Hills State Park

68 Horsethief Park Road, Dallesport

If you want to see wildflowers in bloom, be sure to make a reservation for the Columbia Hills Trail Daze hike at Dalles Mountain Ranch Saturday, May 2, at 10 a.m.

You also can make reservations for Friday and Saturday petroglyph tours starting in April. Call (509) 439-9032 to reserve. Crawford Oaks Trail is waiting for you. Get outside and enjoy a ride or hike.

For directions, maps or more information, go to www.parks.wa.gov/489/Columbia-Hills.

Additional Park News and Dates

- Discover passes are required at all Washington state parks except on posted free days.
- Check out improvements at the Goldendale Observatory.
- Brooks Memorial and Columbia Hills State Park campgrounds open April 1.
- Look for new products at park stores, including ice, ice cream, candy, postcards, books, T-shirts and mugs.
- The new tour phone number is (509) 439-9032.
- Campground reservations start May 16.
- Annual Discover Passes are available at all Goldendale-area state parks.
- For employment opportunities or to serve as volunteers or campground hosts, visit www.parks.wa.gov. ■