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WA-18

Klickitat PUD Updates

A few years ago, I reported that “with the slowdown in the economy over the past several years, we have seen a decline in new electrical service installations for new customers throughout Klickitat County. As a result, our crews have had the opportunity to focus more of their time on maintaining our systems than is possible during peak construction times.”

Well, things continue to change. This year, we are seeing a turnaround that has resulted in increased new electrical installations for residential and commercial on both ends of the county. However, we want to assure you we are doing everything we can to ensure reliability by doing maintenance where we know it’s needed, and upgrading some of our existing facilities and systems.

During 2016, we are increasing focus on our Bingen Substation near Skyline Hospital in White Salmon. With continued increase in customer load in the west end of the county, we are running the existing transformer at near capacity. We recently awarded the bid for procurement of a new, larger transformer to Virginia Transformer of Pocatello, Idaho. We plan to install a parallel system in the existing Bingen Substation yard, which will give us the ability to serve additional customer load, as well as shut down one transformer to perform maintenance while the other continues to serve load with minimal disruption of service to our customers. The expansion work is planned for this fall, with completion expected in spring 2017.

We also continue to focus on our transmission system. We have been trying to acquire an operating agreement or ownership of the Condit to Bingen transmission line for many years. This line—which serves our Bingen Substation—is owned by PacifiCorp. In the past, when there have been line failures, we have waited for restoration of the line and power to the Bingen Substation while PacifiCorp crews are dispatched from remote locations. With the removal of the Condit and Powerdale dams—Powerdale was on the Oregon side—PacifiCorp no longer needs this line. PacifiCorp recently confirmed it is willing to sell us the line.

We are working diligently to make the purchase by the end of this year. We would gain full operational control of this line and be able to use our own local crews. We should significantly shorten the response time during outages on this line.

Water and wastewater system improvements this year include drilling a new well for Lyle and planning for a new well in Wishram. Both of these new facilities will be partially funded by grants. We recently completed a new water system for the residents of Bickleton, which also used primarily grant funds with a small percentage of loans. This new system includes a new well, controls and the distribution pipeline system.

As always, we continue to plan and put in place the systems necessary to continue offering reliable and efficient services to our customers.

Ron Schultz
Chief Engineer