

Say Hello to the 2021 KPUD College Interns

KPUD has offered summer internship opportunities for more than 40 years, with a brief hold for the past few years.

This year's summer intern program has a fresh approach. Over the past two years, KPUD's customer communication methods have evolved, using new technology and platforms. This brought to light the need to understand the perspective of future customers.

There are three types of internships. Office support interns take turns rotating through the various departments to gain exposure to all aspects of the office administration. The warehouse position works directly with the mechanics and warehousemen, and is often tasked with keeping the fleet looking good. An engineering internship was created through a partnership with Energy Northwest Engineering. Applications were open to any college or college-bound student in the Pacific Northwest.

This year's KPUD intern program is geared to exchange perspectives. The program is focused on providing an overview of the utility as a whole. Instead of staying within in one department, interns receive an overview of the whole

utility. They may go with staking engineers on customer site visits and inspect lines with line superintendents, and learn in the office how to begin service for new customers.

Just like the utility, interns' experiences are not limited to poles and wires. Interns work with and are educated about most of KPUD's departments, including: the renewable natural gas program, water-wastewater systems, the transmission system and hydroelectric generation.

Students are encouraged to meet with staff, including the general manager, to ask questions and understand different business and management philosophies.

The program, run by Customer Service Supervisor Brandy Myers and Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board Luann Mata, is laying the groundwork to encourage future high-school and college graduates to learn more about the utility and serving our community.

"We are proud of what our utility stands for and are excited to provide guidance and real life discussion relating to employer expectation, business function and career paths. We are learning a lot from these talented young individuals," Luann says. ■



Courtney Tatro

Courtney Tatro is a summer customer service representative and is helping with some accounting tasks.

She has lived in Centerville her whole life, and graduated from Lyle High School in 2020. Courtney is a rising junior at Lower Columbia College in Longview, and is majoring in business management. She hopes to own her own coffee shop business.

Courtney learned about this opportunity through word of mouth. So far, Courtney has learned how to be more confident when people are upset about a situation and not to take it to heart. She also has learned how to use copy machines and other office equipment.



Felicity Mains

Felicity Mains works primarily in the warehouse with the mechanics and warehousemen. She grew up in Goldendale and graduated from high school last year. Felicity attends Columbia Basin College in the Tri-Cities and is majoring in dental hygiene.

She heard about the opportunity from Jeff Thayer, a board member at Goldendale Golf Club, where she previously worked. Jeff is also the KPUD materials manager.

“Everyone has been very nice and a lot of fun to work with,” Felicity says.



Jacob Espinosa

Jacob Espinosa received his engineering internship through a new partnership with Energy Northwest Engineering.

Jacob learned about the opportunity through a career fair at Oregon State University, where he is a rising junior majoring in electrical and computer engineering. Jacob grew up in Hillsboro, Oregon, and graduated high school there in 2017.

He learned a lot from his first few weeks at KPUD, including AUTOCAD, understanding various components of a substation and simple substation design. Jacob is excited to see what else he will learn at KPUD.



Shelby Gilman

Shelby Gilman is one of two office clerks rotating between the departments within KPUD.

She grew up in The Dalles, Oregon, but moved to Centerville, the summer of her eighth-grade year. Shelby graduated from Goldendale High School this year and plans to attend the University of Idaho this fall. Her major is accounting.

Shelby found the KPUD internship through her high school guidance counselor, Mrs. Lee.

So far, Shelby has learned how to use Excel, Word and other computer programs. The departments she will work with are water and wastewater, engineering, operations, customer service, administration and accounting.



Kaitlynn Spino

Kaitlynn Spino is rotating between KPUD’s business departments.

Kaitlynn grew up in Klickitat and graduated high school there in 2020. She attends the University of Oregon in Eugene, majoring in marine biology and Native American studies. She hopes to help tribes create better solutions to the declining salmon populations.

Kaitlynn learned about this internship through word of mouth. She believes the opportunity will help provide a better perspective on how the county operates, and how the PUD is interconnected with different aspects of the county. Kaitlynn has gained knowledge in the Microsoft programs and the enterprise systems used by KPUD.