

# THE PUBLIC POWER NEWSLINE



Photo behind: Crews work on Jackass Butte above Okanogan after the Cold Springs Fire.

PUD No. 1 of Okanogan County

September 2020

## Public Power Week offers giveaways

### Events include booths, coloring contest, efficiency kits, drawing

Although COVID-19 poses challenges for Public Power Week, we are getting ready for different events to celebrate our public power communities during the week of Oct. 5!

**FREE ENERGY EFFICIENCY KITS** - starting Sept. 10 and while supplies last, any PUD customer can claim a kit for free thanks to BPA's incentive funding (one per address). The kit includes 8 LED light bulbs (75-watt equivalent), two showerheads and two faucet aerators (see photo bottom right).

Claim online at:

<https://okanogapud.gpfulfillment.net> (or scan the QR code at right with your smartphone camera).

**COLORING CONTEST** - on page 3, we have included a coloring sheet for all children K-5. We will name one winner from each grade. Extra copies of the coloring sheet are at our offices and website.

Have your kiddos color it and return it to us in any PUD office drop box (Brewster, Okanogan, Omak, Oroville, Tonasket, Twisp) **by Sept. 29**.

Our six winners will get fun gear - a water bottle, pop-up LED lantern, pencil, pen, stickers and more.

**DRIVE-UP BOOTHS** - we will visit a few of our communities and hand out bags of kids' items (activity books, crayons, pencils, pens, etc.), as well as some goodies for grown-ups, too (energy saving tips, magnets, etc.). The booths will be drive-thru ONLY

in accordance with public health guidelines.

**DRAWING** - from Oct. 5-9, we will have a drawing for a hand-crank, solar radio with a USB charger slot, along with a water bottle, LED lantern and other goodies.

To enter, go to our website Oct. 5-9 ONLY and fill out the entry form. One entry per residence, please. A random drawing will be held the following Monday, Oct. 12.

Hope to see you safely soon! Get more details on our website, [www.okanogapud.org](http://www.okanogapud.org), or on our Facebook page, @OkanoganPUD.



Now available: Scan the QR code above to claim a free energy efficiency kit that includes the 8 LED light bulbs, two shower heads and two faucet aerators pictured above.

In this issue: **COLORING CONTEST PAGE 3!** Plus info on the 2021 budget process

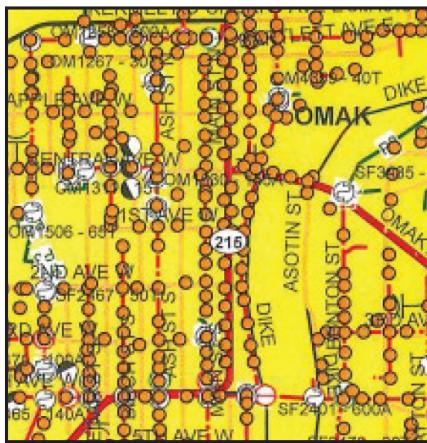
# CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR 2021 BUDGET

## 2020 revenue increase canceled; 2021 budget workshops planned

With the 2020 revenue increase canceled due to COVID-19 hardships, the PUD staff and commissioners are looking at other options to get through 2020 and get prepared for 2021.

Commissioners had originally planned a 2% revenue increase for April 1, but as financial hardship struck customers due to COVID-19, that increase was suspended. It was finally canceled entirely Aug. 24, and commissioners are now considering tapping

**Right: A graphic shows the number of poles more than 50 years old (orange dots) in downtown Omak. Cities and communities throughout the county look similar. To replace all aged poles in Omak alone would cost about \$2.7 million. Below: Damage from the Cold Springs Fire will require even more funds to completely restore.**



### MEETING SCHEDULE

Oct. 12, 3 p.m.

Oct. 26, 3 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Nov. 9, 3 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Nov. 23, 3 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Dec. 7, 3 p.m.

Dec. 21, 3 p.m.

into the rate stabilization fund to cover the resulting \$623,000 revenue shortfall.

In the meantime, the district must prepare for 2021. The various PUD departments will present their proposed budgets over the next few months, until commissioners approve a budget in December. As information becomes available, it will be posted on the district's website, [www.okanoganpud.org](http://www.okanoganpud.org).

The canceled revenue increase was meant to fund capital projects, as the district needs to replace major pieces of equipment, as well as increase its regular maintenance budget to catch up to just on aging poles that are well beyond average lifespans.

And now with the still-unknown total of damages from the Cold Springs Fire, the financial need is even more critical.

Read more about **INFRASTRUCTURE** on Page 4.

**CHECK FOR UPDATES ON OUR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK!  
OUR OFFICES ARE OPEN MON-THURS 7:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.**

## Help with bills

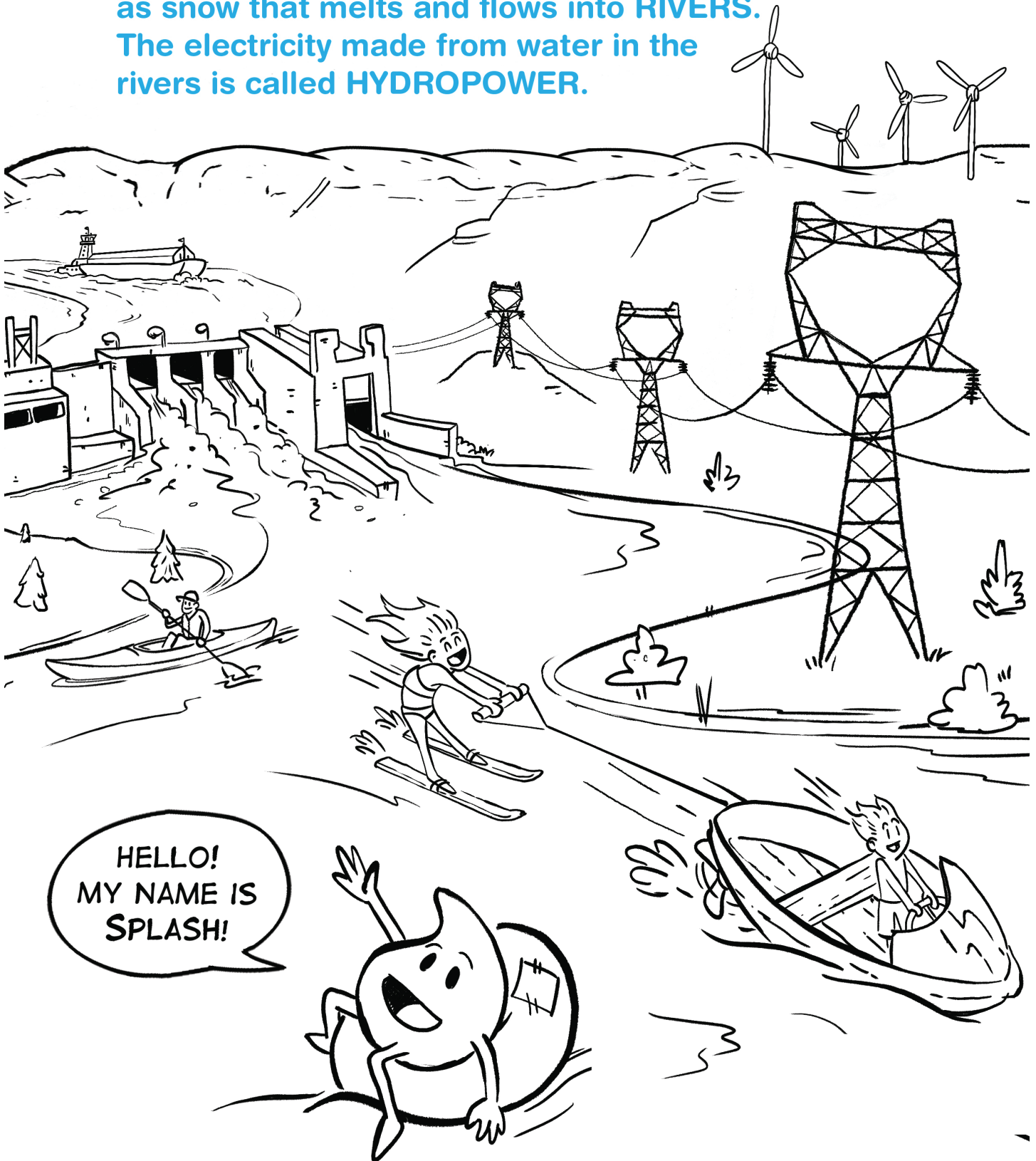
We aren't disconnecting for non-payment. We aren't charging late fees.

Customers still will need to arrange payments for past-due bills. But don't worry - there's help!

Not only will we work with you on payment plans to take care of that balance, but there are other agencies ready to distribute funds to eligible customers to knock that balance down as well.

Okanogan County Community Action Council, Colville Confederated Tribes and others have resources to help. Check out more details on our website, [www.okanoganpud.org](http://www.okanoganpud.org).

In the Northwest, most electricity comes from WATER. It starts off high in the mountains as snow that melts and flows into RIVERS. The electricity made from water in the rivers is called HYDROPOWER.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN TO ANY OKANOGAN COUNTY PUD OFFICE BY SEPT. 29**

# Okanogan County PUD

PO Box 912 • 1331 N. Second Ave.

Okanogan, WA 98840

[www.okanoganpud.org](http://www.okanoganpud.org)

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## RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

### INFRASTRUCTURE

In the 1950s and 1960s, Okanogan County PUD was still a young utility, and they were expanding electric services across the county. Those linemen have long since retired, but our current linemen are still working on some of the same pieces of equipment.

Our infrastructure is built to last, which also means it's expensive. For example, a power transformer (pictured at right) at one of our 16 substations, with an industry average replacement age of 44 years, is about a half million dollars. And we have eight (out of 22) that are at or beyond that age.

What piece of equipment in our homes has been running faithfully 24/7 since the 1970s? We really wouldn't expect that from any of our major appliances.

We have nearly 13,000 wooden poles that are 50 years old or older (typical lifespan), which cost an average of \$3,500 each. How many wooden fence posts last that long?

As infrastructure continues to age, the PUD continues to strive to get ahead of failures. With regular testing, a solid replacement plan and the funding to make it possible, the system can be updated and upgraded to better serve for the next 50-plus years.

Our 2020 revenue increase was meant to cover the expenses of these types of projects, but COVID-19 led us to delay that. However, the grid's needs for repairs and replacements hasn't gone away.

In order to continue to provide reliable electricity and to expand our broadband services, our infrastructure needs to come into sharper focus.

We will continue to share more information at:  
[www.okanoganpud.org](http://www.okanoganpud.org)



**Top photo: Power transformers like this one recently installed at Ellisforde are among top priorities for the capital project. Bottom left: Infrastructure also affects broadband opportunities, as the infrastructure has to support new equipment. Bottom right: Ever seen a stubbed pole like this in your area? Stubbing is used to increase the lifespan of poles that need to be replaced soon.**

#### PUD board of commissioners:

**Jerry Asmussen (North)**

486-1962, [jerrya@okpud.org](mailto:jerrya@okpud.org)

**Bill Colyar (South)**

923-9233, [billc@okpud.org](mailto:billc@okpud.org)

**Scott Vejraska (Central)**

826-7088, [scottv@okpud.org](mailto:scottv@okpud.org)

#### PUD offices:

**Brewster** • 101 S. Bridge St. • 689-2502  
**Okanogan** • 1331 2nd Ave. N. • 422-3310  
**Omak** • 18 W. First St. • drop box only  
**Oroville** • 1500 Main St. • 476-3531  
**Tonasket** • 17 W. Third St. • 486-2131  
**Twisp** • 201 Highway 20 S. • 997-2526

Send any comments, questions or suggestions for newsletter articles to Public Relations Coordinator Sheila Corson, [sheillac@okpud.org](mailto:sheillac@okpud.org), 422-8427.

[www.okanoganpud.org](http://www.okanoganpud.org)

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