

# Boardlines

News and views from your  
Central Lincoln Board Members



**Curt Abbott** President and  
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## Wouldn't It Be Nice....

We are so keenly aware of the challenges everyone is facing with the epidemic. Many are struggling with trying to keep the bills paid and staying healthy. Your PUD board has tried to keep costs down by pushing off any rate increase this year, suspending disconnects for five months and establishing a fund to help customers who are having the most difficulty at this time.

This was made possible by adjusting budget dollars and moving out needed capital projects until next year. We were also helped in this effort by BPA suspending a surcharge it had enacted this year to help improve its capital position. All that works together to be able to provide some help during these difficult times.

But what about the state of Oregon? We know it too is struggling with lower tax projections and having to make serious cuts — except for the Department of Energy (ODOE). As I have mentioned in years past, ODOE

is mostly funded by a separate tax it charges all of us ratepayers. Through legislation passed years ago, ODOE has the power to levy as much as it needs to operate. There is a limit, but it is not there yet. It just recently announced that it will be increasing its levy again for the coming year. As I've mentioned previously, PUDs in Oregon have sued to have the levy officially declared a tax. Then it would be subject to legislative oversight. We won, but the state has appealed, and the matter still sits in the courts. By the way, you also get charged for the costs the state encounters to fight the lawsuit. The PUD has been paying this levy under protest for the last several years.

And one more thing...

There needs to be a compromise between providing a nearly carbon-free power source for the Northwest, and tearing down dams. Unfortunately, much of the negotiation around fish provisions has ended up in court. This has certainly been the most expensive way to solve the problem. (See more on fish from my board colleagues Paul Davies and Jim Chambers in this issue.)

The BPA has been making a concerted effort to negotiate compromises. It has been able to get consensus amongst all the states and tribes except the Nez Perce and the state of Oregon. Given that remaining resistance, BPA added additional spill, which does cost money, to meet the requests still on the table. Finally, it appeared that we had a compromise that everyone could work with. But late last year, before COVID, we had the Governor's Natural Resources person at our state PUD meeting. There he announced he 'didn't think that BPA

was doing enough, and Oregon might well be back in court again.' When will enough be enough? Even though the dams provide flood control, irrigation, and recreation, only power generation gets the bill. Costs have risen dramatically to fund these efforts, and despite measurable success the battle goes on. Maybe they think that they will be able to price hydropower out of the market and we can replace that supply. But this will not be carbon-free. Is that really the better result?



**Paul Davies** Vice President

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## Generation to Generations

When I think of the Columbia Basin river system, I think of the majestic dams, the churning waters below the spillways and so many spawning salmon in the Wind River it was said you could walk across their backs. All of these memories were formed during the years I was in Boy Scouts travelling up the Columbia River Gorge and across the Bridge of the Gods to our Troop 41 campsite on the Wind River. That occurred in 1963-64 and I certainly had no thought of being



Davies' grandson Landon with his first trout catch.

caught up in discussions about how the capacity of the Columbia River would be divided among its many users over the ensuing 60 years. The Columbia Basin river system is used for nine primary uses<sup>1</sup>: flood

control, fish migration, fish and wildlife habitat, power generation, navigation, irrigation, water supply, water quality and cultural resources.

The Columbia River Basin has been in continuous tension between competing uses and seemingly endless capacity. From my position as an engineer, utility manager and now board member, the primary tension has been between the Columbia River Hydro system and all other uses. While the Columbia River Hydro system capacity is not endless, there were certainly skeptics, when it was conceived in the early 1930's, who thought there would never be use for all of the electricity that could be generated. The Second World War armaments' need for aluminum put a lot of that capacity to use. The economic boom after the war kept the demand going. While aluminum plants and much of the timber industry has vanished from the Northwest, server farms, high-tech industries and population growth have replaced that demand.

The Columbia River Hydro system is renewable and dispatchable (water can be stored behind dams for use when needed). While some of that management capacity has been reduced for fish mitigation, it must be remembered that there is a need for balance between these competing tensions. Most importantly, today the Columbia River Hydro system acts as a great management tool for integrating additional renewable energy resources: wind and solar.

As I remember myself as a child experiencing this great Columbia Basin river system my thoughts go to my five-year-old grandson, Landon, who caught his first trout in this same river system just this summer. We must preserve and prudently manage this wonderful resource for all of its competing uses for future generations.

<sup>1</sup> "nine primary uses": *The Columbia River Power System: Second Edition*; April 2001; Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers



**Judy Matheny** Treasurer

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## Doing Essential Work—and Staying Healthy—in a Pandemic

Electricity powers Americans' lives, but it is especially crucial these days

as so many shelter at home, or change their habits—not going out, and shopping less often.

When it became clear early this year that the U.S. could be hit with a new virus, our general manager met with his team to plan for keeping our workers as healthy as possible, and in March they implemented that plan.

I want to share with you how some of our employees are staying as safe as possible while continuing to keep the lights on:

### Face Covering

In March, our safety coordinator quickly ordered flame-resistant (FR) face masks, which must be made entirely with natural cotton or wool fibers, as synthetic fiber will melt and harm a worker in the extremely rare event of an electrical flash-over.

As masks muffle voices, they create

a communication barrier – it's harder to hear a foreman speaking, as an example. Our workers have to pause, and listen even more carefully. "PPE presents an extra challenge," says Engineering and Operations Director Ty Hillebrand. "If you're working hard and sucking in a lot of air, it's tough to breathe and can fog our safety glasses. We wear our masks when we can't social distance and they don't create an additional hazard for the work that we are performing."

### Physical Distancing

Our outdoor workers generally work in crews. While they can keep six feet or more away from each other during some of their work, in other cases this isn't possible. One example is work in underground vaults—there's no way a splice can be done six feet or more apart when inside them.



Our substation crew staying physically distanced while upgrading one of our substations in Toledo.

Customers often like to watch our crews work up close, and many of our employees enjoy sharing what we do. But now, our workers have to politely keep their distance, and we appreciate it when customers stay back too, limiting exposure.

### Keeping Contact to a Minimum

Normally, we rotate crew members. But during this time of Covid-19, we've waited four months to vary our crews, minimizing their exposure to multiple individuals. Even for outage responses, we've tried not to intermix crew members. Also, we've staggered the times crews start their shifts to limit their contact with coworkers outside of their crews.

### Sanitizing

We appreciate Rogue Ales in Newport stepping up and manufacturing an effective sanitizer. Bottles go with our crews so they can clean their hands, wipe down shared tools, vehicle interiors, and work areas. Our crews pack disinfecting wipes, too.

"The nature of our work is physical," Ty points out. "For a lot of it, as for other trades, it's impossible to do what we do and entirely avoid personal contact. Our people are doing the best they can to stay healthy, and to keep serving our customers."



**Jim Chambers** Secretary

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### The Boat Ramp

Having spent several years fishing on the Yaquina and Siletz Rivers for chinook and steelhead, I have seen the decline in the availability of fish and less takedowns. The discussion among fishermen at the boat ramp always seems to question: "Where are the fish? What is being done? Why can wild coho be caught in the ocean and not in the river?" They freely offer their own opinions on how to solve the problem.

You may be asking what this has to do with Central Lincoln PUD and electricity. Like most consumer-owned

utilities in the Northwest, Central Lincoln purchases most of its power from Bonneville Power Authority. A congressional act in 1980 created the "Northwest Power and Conservation Council" to oversee the BPA's fish and wildlife conservation efforts within the Columbia and Snake River basins and the impact of the dams on the fish population. These river basins include the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Montana and one Canadian province, British Columbia.

The act created an expense that was passed on to and collected from consumers at a rate of \$0.17 per dollar on your electric bill. Since 1980, BPA has spent more than \$17.7 billion on improvements to benefit fish. Direct fish costs have stabilized in the past eight years to around \$250 million per year. Bonneville's Power Business Line reports that the fish and wildlife program's direct and indirect costs were \$613 million— 23.94% of \$2.56 billion in total costs for fiscal year 2019.

Over the last three years, the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force has worked to establish goals for increased adult returns. This task force is composed of 80 fish and wildlife managers from state, tribal and federal agencies. The Task Force recognizes the hydro system is not fully responsible for meeting the numerical goals. More ocean research, climate impact research and predator controls are needed as well.

The Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (\$188.9 million) and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (\$138.9 million in lottery dollars) work with federal, state, tribal agencies and foundations on the rivers along the Oregon Coast to meet the goal of increasing the number of returning salmon and steelhead.

Yes, Central Lincoln PUD and you are also contributing. The questions at the boat ramp will be answered with all of us working together.



**Keith Tymchuk** Board Member

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### A Legacy of Service Lives On

My dad, former board member Tom Tymchuk, passed away peacefully just a few weeks ago at age 91. He was quite a guy who left my family and our CLPUD family with many great memories. I was 24 when my dad was first elected to this board – I was just wrapping up my first year of teaching. I remember how passionate he was about providing reliable and affordable power to Gardiner, Hauser, Lakeside, and Reedsport. He ended up serving this utility for more than eight terms—nearly half of its existence.

Community service is in Tymchuk DNA. Dad served as Reedsport's mayor for four terms, as a trustee

for the Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA), and on the board of the Oregon PUD Association. He served 35 years as a member of the board of Pacific Security Bank, nine of them as chair, was a 60+ year member of the Lions' Club of Reedsport, and a 50-year member of the Reedsport Masonic Lodge. Even after his "retirement," Dad was a dedicated volunteer for the Lower Umpqua Hospital, and Meals on Wheels. In recognition of Dad's significant volunteer work, three years ago the NWPPA selected him for its Paul J. Raver Award for community service and "superior leadership in the betterment of cities, locales, states, or regions." That certainly was my dad.

Dad and my mom Marlene, a teacher, raised my brother Kerry and I in Reedsport. Dad was appointed three times by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to the National Dunes Recreation Area Advisory Board. That

service ended only when the board was abolished by President Jimmy Carter. Dad loved telling people he 'was fired by Jimmy Carter, but got revenge four years later when Ronald Reagan defeated Carter!'

From my father and mother, my brother and I learned to value and love public service. It was impossible not to when we watched their devotion to community. My dad came to the U.S. from Canada on Nov. 9, 1948 as a logger. My brother has said that Dad essentially came with the shirt on his back and then spent the next 72 years trying to give away his shirt.

I love my current role as a Central Lincoln board member. I hope that I can meet the high standard set by my father. He was also a mentor and my best friend. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on, partly in his 30+ years of positive impact on what he believed was the best PUD in Oregon.



Advocating for the community: Former Central Lincoln PUD board member Tom Tymchuk, former Douglas County Commissioner Doug Robertson, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, and Central Lincoln PUD board member Keith Tymchuk (Tom's son) in a moment of levity in Reedsport.

**Call us** toll free at **1-877-265-3211** to report an outage, pay your bill, speak to a customer service representative and more. Your call will be answered by the first customer service representative available in Florence, Newport, or Reedsport.

**Pay By Phone:** 1-877-265-3211

**Report an Outage:** 1-877-265-3211

**Energy Efficiency Programs:** 1-888-883-9879

#### Office Hours: New!

Mondays-Thursdays 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (closed Fridays)

Florence: 966 Highway 101

Newport: 2129 N. Coast Highway

Reedsport: 440 Fir Avenue (Closed from 12:30-1 p.m.

Mondays-Thursdays, closed Fridays.)

**Website:** [clpud.org](http://clpud.org)

**Email:** [info@clpud.org](mailto:info@clpud.org)

Outage info, energy-saving tips, and latest news:

 [www.twitter.com/CLPUD](https://www.twitter.com/CLPUD)

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*Our mission is to ensure our communities have access to reliable and affordable energy products and services.*