



Helicopters can save considerable time in performing line inspections and with cutting back tree branches. (Photo courtesy Heli-Dunn)

Seeing the Forest – and the Trees

The Oregon Coast is famous for its beauty. Emerald green trees towering over our jagged coastline have made vacations memorable for millions.

But those same trees, fir, hemlock, alder, spruce, and others, grow quickly here, and so tall they sometimes fall on lines, knocking out power. Like most of you, we hate outages, and are constantly trimming trees and underbrush to prevent them. And with some rocky hillsides that are almost vertical, getting to those trees safely requires creativity.

One unusual solution is helicopters. One day, once a year, a hired ‘helo’ takes a Central Lincoln team up to look for broken or damaged transmission equipment, and trees or other vegetation threatening lines. “Using a helicopter this way is one of the quickest, most cost-effective ways to inspect many miles of line, giving us a unique perspective and identifying areas that need attention,” says Operations Supervisor Isaac.

This year, Heli-Dunn, a helicopter company based in Medford (Oregon) that specializes in utility work, flew our team over most of our 111 miles of transmission line, and some distribution lines, too. “We found we have some high-priority areas needing our attention, as well as a couple of transmission structures that need work,” Isaac reports.

Another unusual and occasional utility use of helos is the heli-saw – eight fast-rotating saw blades hung on a vertical pole – to cut branches growing in the rights-of-way along high-powered transmission lines. Flying while operating a heli-saw requires a very skilled, sharp-eyed pilot, and excellent weather conditions. Wind or rain will ground a helicopter and heli-saw.

Some customers in our very rural areas may remember getting a postcard from us two years ago, letting them know we were having heli-saw work done near their homes, and we would be turning off power during that time. A helo with heli-saw in operation is very noisy, but is really interesting to watch. (Due to flying branches, we ask anyone nearby to view the work from at least 100 feet away for safety’s sake.) Heli-sawing also can do in a few days what a human tree crew takes weeks, providing cost savings. Still, we use the heli-saw only for the toughest jobs, and this year, we have no plans to use this method.

The trees and underbrush in our service area grow so thickly, four full-time tree trimming crews spread from Lincoln Beach to North Bend are kept busy year-round.



A heli-saw in action—eight 30” blades quickly trim away tree branches from power lines. Some trees next to our lines can be 150 feet tall or more. (Photo courtesy Heli-Dunn)



A raptor nest spotted by our inspection team last month. Nests built on power structures are risky for birds, and can cause outages.



Please Help Central Lincoln – and Oregon’s Headcount – by Going Online and Completing a 2020 U.S. Census Form

ORS 261 (Oregon Revised Statutes) requires every PUD in the state to balance its board of directors’ subdivisions (the area each director represents) by population as equally as possible “after each decennial United States Census.” So Census results are very important to us.

Unfortunately this year, invitations to participate in the 2020 Census weren’t sent to post office boxes, only physical addresses. And we know many of our customers only receive mail in a post office box. So if you didn’t get an invitation to fill out the Census form online, please do – it’s very important, and it’s easy. Federal representation is based on population numbers; federal funds can sometimes be parceled out based on population as well.

On a computer, mobile phone, or tablet, go to:

1. 2020census.gov and click “Respond”
2. Complete the online form. Be sure to include everyone who lives in your household.
3. You’re done!

(If you’re asked for a Census ID code, no problem – just click “I do not have a Census ID.”)

Households that don’t respond by the end of this month will receive a visit from a census taker. You can prevent this by going online and following the steps above.

Thanks for your help – we want every resident of our District to be counted.

No Rate Increase for 2020-2021 Fiscal Year

While we were anticipating a 3% rate increase this year largely due to some needed upgrades to our infrastructure, due to the economic hardship caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we sharpened our pencils, identified some projects that could be put on hold, and cut them from our budget.

“We know many of our customers are unemployed and struggling financially,” says General Manager Randy Grove. “We want to do what we can to help, including our Job Loss Assistance program, and now a rate freeze for the next twelve months.”

Central Lincoln’s board members strongly supported these efforts, and unanimously approved the proposed 2020-21 budget with no rate increase at their May board meeting.

Is That Call Really From Us?

One significant trend during the worldwide pandemic is an increase in scam calls. Scammers have been calling and claiming they are with Medicare, or claiming they are calling about an unemployment claim, and wanting bank account information. Some scammers have even programmed Caller ID to say a call is from Central Lincoln when it is not!



We make calls to customers to let them know if we have to temporarily shut off their power to make repairs or improvements, and have been making courtesy calls to let past due customers know about the assistance and arrangements that may be available to them. How can you be sure the call is legitimately from Central Lincoln?

1. If you are concerned the caller isn’t really a Central Lincoln employee, hang up and call us at 877-265-3211.
2. We will not ask for or accept debit or credit card or bank information over the phone. (Our computerized payment system only receives phone calls – it doesn’t make them.)

If you receive a call from someone who is demanding personal info or financial information from you, simply hang up. High-pressure tactics are the mark of a scam.

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

Email: info@clpud.org

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

 www.twitter.com/CLPUD

 [Central Lincoln PUD](#)



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