



# Between the Lines

## Public Power Pride

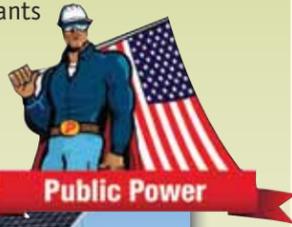
Each October, public power utilities across the nation celebrate the unique and numerous benefits public power offers to its customers. Public power utilities are locally owned and operated. Benton PUD employees take great pride in providing service to you, our customers. Whether helping a new customer start service, restoring power during a storm, answering billing questions or providing energy savings advice, they work hard to be your trusted energy partner.



Barry Bush  
Commissioner

With this in mind, when we became aware of customers' interest in solar, we responded by pursuing a community solar project funded by customer participants. Our Ely Community Solar project is a great example of Benton PUD's quest to be a trusted energy partner. I enjoyed meeting some of the participants at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in July.

*Barry Bush*  
Benton PUD Commissioner



## An American tradition that works

**Public Power Week, October 4 – 10**, celebrates the safe, reliable and affordable electricity served by more than 2,000 public power utilities across the country to over 48 million people.

**Benton PUD brings you public power benefits including:**

- **Local Control** – Benton PUD is governed by a commission of three elected officials who are accountable to customers who voted for them.
- **Customer Input** – Benton PUD encourages public input on its strategic priorities through open public meetings.
- **Lower Rates** – Public power utilities are not-for-profit. Rates are often lower than an investor owned utility that pays dividends to shareholders. Benton PUD rates are some of the lowest in the state and the nation. Benton PUD's average residential bill in 2014 was \$107 compared to the national average of \$181.
- **Safe and Reliable** - Benton PUD received the Diamond Reliable Power Provider (RP3) designation from the American Public Power Association. This award recognizes utilities that demonstrate high proficiency in reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement.
- **Fast Response** – Benton PUD is staffed by your neighbors. When an outage occurs, they are able to mobilize and respond quickly to minimize disruptions. Crews are familiar with the local electric system and can identify and correct problems quickly.
- **Community pride** – Benton PUD employees live, work and play in the same community as our customers.

## Q&A

### How much of our power is carbon-free and renewable?

**Benton PUD power is 91% carbon-free and 82% renewable.**  
The Benton PUD Fuel Mix as calculated by the Washington State Department of Commerce:

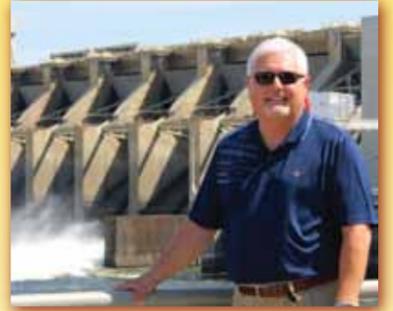
Biomass	0.12%	Nuclear	8.43%
Coal	5.86%	Waste	0.10%
Hydro	75.21%	Wind	2.40%
Natural Gas	7.80%	Other	0.08%

Benton PUD offers a "Green Power" program for customers who want to make a commitment to carbon-free energy. Participation in the "Green Power" program is 100% voluntary and you decide how much you want to be billed each month. For details visit [BentonPUD.org](http://BentonPUD.org)

## Utilities are changing

If you are like me, when you flip on a light switch you don't think twice about the light turning on. We expect reliable electric service, yet we rarely think of the magnificent energy grid that generates and delivers the electricity that powers our lives.

Many people may not realize that our nation's energy grid, consisting of centralized power stations, transmission towers, substations, and distribution systems, has not changed for decades. Certainly, there have been improvements in generating technologies and reliability enhancements, but at a fundamental level, the energy grid and the utility business model have stayed the same.



Chad Bartram  
General Manager

Ready or not, the electric utility business model is beginning to change in a very big way. So what's different? In one word, technology. Within the next few years, solar panels and electric vehicles will likely reach price points that make them more affordable to the general public. Energy storage will follow. Energy efficiency improvements will continue to drive down energy use. Using new technologies, non-utility providers will begin to present options to customers thereby impacting the way utilities charge for their services.

By way of comparison, some of us are old enough to remember the phone monopolies of the past: land lines, party lines, and long distance phone charges. Back then, none of us could have imagined how phone communications would change. But change they did, and over the next 10 to 20 years, the electric utility business will change as well.

At Benton PUD, we will continue in our efforts to manage our small part of the energy grid to the benefit of our customers. We are also prepared to adapt with our changing industry. Our first step was the Ely Community Solar project. There are more changes ahead. As we move into the new energy future together, we want to be your trusted energy partner.

*Chad Bartram*  
Benton PUD General Manager

## Ice Harbor Dam celebrates successful fish passage

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Walla Walla District, Northwest RiverPartners and others representing fish management and hydropower, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the installation of a spillway weir at Ice Harbor dam. The weir improves better passage through the dam for migrating fish. Spillway weirs have been installed in dams on the lower Snake and lower Columbia dams through the years since 2001.



Salmon and steelhead have returned in record or near record numbers over the last few years. The spillway weirs are one of the many programs and projects to protect fish. The total cost of the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) fish and wildlife program since inception (1978-2014) exceeds \$14.5 billion. This investment in fish restoration efforts has been funded through utility customer rates. For example, the average Benton PUD residential customer pays \$18 per month for fish and wildlife restoration efforts. Fish restoration in the Northwest will continue to be one of the largest wildlife recovery efforts in history.

## Fall tree planting

Fall is in the air. Leaves are starting to drop. Now is the time to get out and plant a tree. If you plant a hedge or natural border to provide a wind or dust barrier make sure to leave enough space – height and width - for your plant to grow to maturity. When planting near overhead power lines you'll want to pick a tree that is slow growing. Trees such as poplars and willows are fast growing (10-12 feet per year), have weak trunks and are prone to disease. These are not good choices around a power line. Visit [BentonPUD.org](http://BentonPUD.org) or ask a local nursery for suggestions. Making the right selection will result in a healthier tree, fewer outages and will help us control our tree trimming budget.



Above is an example of trees that will soon be reaching the power lines causing costly trimming and possible outages.



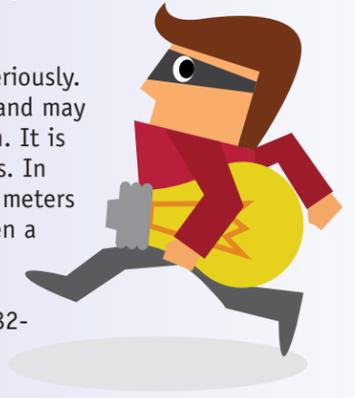
Better choices are low-growing bushes such as lilacs.

## Help us keep our customers and employees safe

The number of meter tampering and equipment theft incidents have grown. These activities are extremely dangerous, illegal and costly to our customers. When a person sets out to steal or tamper with equipment, they endanger themselves as well as our employees who work on the equipment. The cost of restoring the damages is an added expense that falls back on our customers.

Benton PUD takes meter tampering and power theft seriously. Meter tampering is classified as a gross misdemeanor and may be referred to the Benton County Prosecutor for action. It is also subject to a tampering fee of \$300 or actual costs. In addition to remote reading capabilities, Benton PUD's meters are equipped with a tamper alarm that notifies us when a meter is removed without authorization.

If you see a possible problem, please call us at 509-582-2175 and we will send a crew out to investigate.



### Fall safety tips:

- If pressure washing your home, make sure not to hit your meter with the high pressure spray.
- Look up and out when working near overhead power lines, especially if you are using a ladder.
- When pruning plants near transformers, you want to make sure to leave at least 12 feet from the front and 3 feet to either side.

# Senior Day

in Kennewick and Prosser

Wednesday October 21, 2015 9am to 1pm



**You're invited**

CAC will be available to answer questions and assist you in applying for a low income discount.

The following presentations will be given at the Kennewick Auditorium:

- Understanding Benton PUD Rates at 9:00 am
- Frauds, scams and how to protect yourself at 10:00 am

For more information:  
[www.bentonpud.org](http://www.bentonpud.org)  
or 509.582.2175



P. O. Box 6270 Kennewick, WA 99336



## Your bill changed September 1

As of September 1, 2015, residential customers' rates increased 4.6% based on an average bill of about \$100. The increase was reflected in the daily system charge. The kilowatt per hour rate of \$0.0684 for residential customers remained the same.

For residential customers, the new daily system charge is 52 cents per day. For example, the daily system charge for a 30-day month will be \$15.60. Previously, the monthly residential service charge was a fixed fee of \$11.05.

## Even Benton PUD loves a parade



## Customers helping others

"I give to Helping Hands because my mother brought me and my siblings up to do for others and to help our community. My parents always gave \$25 per month to Helping Hands and gave more when they could. My mother got me started on giving. It is important to me that I give to others and to pass on their spirit of giving." Leona Tucker, Benton PUD customer.



Thank you to Leona and our customers and employees...and to everyone else who made a donation during the July and August Beat the Heat Helping Hands promotion, which raised over \$11,000.

### Flapjack Breakfast for Helping Hands

We are already planning our next promotion – a Flapjack Breakfast at Applebee's for Helping Hands. Stop by Benton PUD to purchase a \$10 ticket for a great breakfast, which includes pancakes, sausages, scrambled eggs, coffee, milk, juice and soft drinks – all served by Benton PUD employees. For every ticket sold, \$6 will be donated to Helping Hands.



**Kennewick Applebee's**  
on Columbia Center Boulevard  
Saturday, November 7  
8:00 am – 10:00 am