

Between the Lines

Benton PUD Customer Newsletter Winter 2017



Introducing Benton PUD's New Outage Center

Smart Move for Benton PUD Customers

Since 2009, Benton PUD has strategically moved forward to modernize our electric distribution system by implementing an Advanced Metering Infrastructure. Advanced meters were installed systematically throughout our service area and they have improved operation efficiencies, reliability and overall customer service.

Our customers have directly benefited in many ways. Because meters are read remotely, customer privacy is improved and there is no longer a need to enter our customers' properties each month to read meters. Billing is more accurate and consistent since meter reads can be obtained on weekends and on holidays. Remote disconnect meters also offer faster service for connects and disconnects.



In March, we took the next step in leveraging the benefits of our advanced meters and implemented SmartHub®. Over a third of our customers have already enrolled in SmartHub® and are using it to manage their account, make payments and monitor their usage. This month, Benton PUD introduced our new Outage Center featuring a near-real-time outage map and enhanced outage notification capabilities.

Behind the scenes, the advanced meters coupled with SmartHub®, provides automatic outage detection. This enables a more proactive dispatch of crews and helps us predict where the cause of the outage may be located. We also have better insight on how our distribution system is performing which helps us prevent some problems before they occur. Overall, this helps us save time, money and improve our service to you. And we will continue to offer our Outage Line at 1-888-582-2176, available 24/7.

If you haven't enrolled in SmartHub® yet, try it and if you have enrolled, explore it. We think you will be pleased with all that it offers.

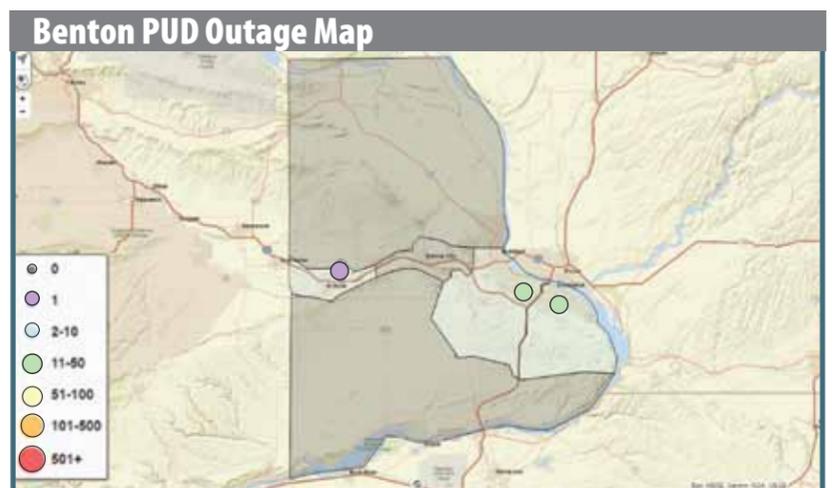
Two easy and quick ways to report an outage

Call our Outage Line at 1-888-582-2176 or use Benton PUD's SmartHub® application on your computer or mobile device. Both are available any time, day or night.

New Outage Map

Benton PUD strives to provide you safe and reliable service. But sometimes wild weather, distracted drivers and curious critters cause power outages.

Check out the new Outage Center on our website featuring an outage map. The near real-time map shows the general location of outages in Benton PUD's service area, if the outage is planned or unplanned and how many customers are impacted. The outage map uses color coded circles to indicate the number and general location of areas where Benton PUD is experiencing power outages. By clicking on the circle or the geographic area on the map you will be able to view the number of customers served in the area, the number of customers without power and if a crew has been assigned. Currently there is no estimated restoration time available on the outage map. A typical Benton PUD outage usually lasts about two hours.



The Outage Center also has information about how to be prepared for a storm, what to do during an outage and includes electrical safety tips.

If you haven't enrolled in SmartHub® visit BentonPUD.org or download the SmartHub® app to your mobile device. Once you are enrolled in SmartHub®, you can sign up for text or email alerts notifying you of an outage and when power has been restored.

Home Weatherization and Automation Workshop - Tuesday January 9

Interested in learning more about the latest technologies available to make your home more energy efficient? Come to Benton PUD's Home Weatherization and Automation Workshop where our energy experts will demonstrate how SmartHub® and home automation devices can help you make that happen. Learn about rebates available to you, ask questions about home weatherization and win door prizes.



The workshop will be held at the Benton PUD Auditorium in Kennewick at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday January 9.

Where Does Your Power Come From

The Benton PUD fuel mix as calculated by the Washington State Department of Commerce is:

Coal	2.7%
* Hydro	76.3%
Natural Gas	5.6%
* Nuclear	9.6%
* Solar	0.1%
* Wind	5.5%
Other	0.2%

* indicates carbon free

Solar Incentives Available

In July 2017, a new Washington State Renewable Energy System Incentive Program was adopted. As part of that program, Benton PUD's incentive cap increased. Projects certified after October 1, 2017 are eligible to receive state incentives. Go to BentonPUD.org or call us at (509) 582-1234 to learn more.

Charging Ahead for Electric Vehicles

Interest in electric vehicles is growing. Electric Vehicles are becoming more affordable, battery technology is improving, and there is a drive to decrease greenhouse gases caused by carbon emissions from vehicles. Benton PUD joined other local utilities, Energy Northwest and TRIDEC, to form the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Transportation Alliance (EVITA) to advocate for electric transportation infrastructure.

The first step for EVITA was to apply for a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) grant for a pilot project for electrical vehicle fast charging stations to be installed along Washington interstate and highways. WSDOT awarded a \$405,000 grant to the EVITA project. The proceeds of the grant will be combined with public and private matching funds and in-kind contributions to install nine fast charging stations linking eastern and western Washington. One of the charging stations will be served by Benton PUD located in the Southridge area.

"By participating in this pilot project, we will gain a better understanding of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the impact to our system," said Chad Bartram, Benton PUD General Manager. "We will be better prepared as customers shift to using electricity to power their vehicles."



Five Ways to Save \$5 or More this Holiday Season

5. Use less water – wash full loads of dishes or clothes and take shorter showers

4. Unplug electronics – even when they are turned off they still use energy

3. Turn it off – holiday lights don't need to be on during the day

2. Lower the thermostat a couple degrees - and wear that holiday sweater

1. SmartHub – enroll in SmartHub® and sign up for Paperless billing

For a limited time, when you enroll in SmartHub® and sign up for Paperless billing, you'll receive a one-time \$5 credit on your bill. Visit BentonPUD.org or download the SmartHub mobile app to enroll in SmartHub® and turn off paper bills. You'll be notified by email or text (your choice) when your bill is ready. No bills in your mailbox or paper to file and it's easy to use.

If you are already a SmartHub® user but haven't signed up for Paperless billing yet, you still can to receive the one-time \$5 credit.

With SmartHub® you can also manage your account information, review billing and payment history, track your energy usage, sign up for text and email alerts and report an outage.



Share a Little. Help a Lot.

There are times when our neighbors need a little extra help paying their electric bills, especially this time of year when the temperatures get cold and electric bills go up. Benton PUD's Helping Hands program provides you an opportunity to share a little and help a lot by adding \$1 or more each month to your electric bill or making a one-time donation.



To say thank you, customers who make a new monthly donation or increase their recurring donation by \$1 or more or make a one-time donation of \$20 or more through December will receive two LED lightbulbs, a low-flow showerhead and a home energy audit, while quantities last. Your home energy audit will be scheduled when your donation is made. A paper ornament

will also be placed on the "trees" located in our lobby in Kennewick and Prosser to display all donations.

Donations are accepted in person, by phone or through the mail. All donations are tax deductible and are distributed by Community Action Connections to Benton PUD customers who meet the program guidelines.



P. O. Box 6270 Kennewick, WA 99336

smart hub



Holiday Hours

From our family to yours, Benton PUD wishes you a warm and bright holiday season.

Our offices will be closed on:

December 22 at 3:00 pm

December 25 for Christmas

January 1 for New Year's Day

January 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

If you experience an outage call 1-888-582-2176 or report it through SmartHub®. Our crews are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Easy Ways to Pay Your Bill

We know your time is valuable and paying your electric bill should be quick and easy. To better serve you, Benton PUD offers many convenient ways to pay your bill. Payments made online or through our pay by phone system post to your account real time.

Pay Online with SmartHub

Enroll in SmartHub® and log in to make a payment. To enroll, you will need your Benton PUD account number, last name on the account and email address. You'll also need your five-digit mailing zip code or the amount of your last bill.

Or, if you don't want to enroll you can make a one-time payment with Pay Now. You will need your Benton PUD account number and last name on the account.

New & improved pay by phone system

If you choose to pay by phone, try using our automated self-service phone system by simply following the prompts when you call Benton PUD. All you need is your Benton PUD account number or phone number listed on your account, the last four digits of your social security number and your payment method (credit card, bank account). First time users will be prompted to establish a four-digit PIN.

Once you have made a payment in our pay by phone system, you will be offered the option of storing your payment method, making it easier to make phone payments in the future. The system also allows you to set up recurring payments. With recurring payments your future payments will be automatically deducted from the stored payment method.

