Between the Lines

Benton PUD Customer Newsletter





Message from Commission President

2016 has been an interesting year. There has been a lot in the news about the hydro system and the Snake River Dams. Recently, there were articles in the media regarding a study by WSU researchers that noted carbon emissions from dams and reservoirs are greater than previously believed.

Those who want our Snake River dams removed used this as an opportunity to say the study provided another reason to tear down or breach the dams. However, the study is not specifically about the Snake River Dams, but about dams and reservoirs of all kinds.

We have another opportunity to show our support for the Snake River dams. Please join me at the meeting scheduled on November 21 by the federal agencies who oversee the operations of the hydrosystem (see Chad's message). It's hard to



Lori Sanders

believe we still have to defend the dams – but we do. It's imperative that we have a great show of support from our community to reiterate why taking out the dams is not a solution and only a mistake. There are many reasons why we must protect the dams and more information is available at BentonPUD.org or CleanHydro.org. We appreciate your help.

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Fori Sanders Benton PUD Commissioner / President

Letter to the Editor, Tri-City Herald

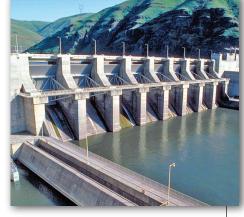
Thank Northwest Hydropower for Reducing Region's Carbon Emissions, Not Adding to Them

Lori Sanders, Benton PUD Commissioner- president

The Seattle Times article, Hydropower isn't carbon neutral after all (reprinted in Tri City Herald, October 1), gives the false impression that Northwest dams are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane. They are not.

According to the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE), methane gas production produced by dams depends on many factors including location, water temperature, river flow, depth, nutrient concentration, plant growth, climate and the process that uses dissolved oxygen.

USCOE goes on to say "For the relatively clean reservoirs of the Federal Columbia River Power System, which include the four lower Snake River dams, conditions



for low dissolved oxygen concentrations are not prevalent, thus methane gas is generally not an issue."

In fact, abundant hydropower is the primary reason why the Northwest's carbon footprint is half of other parts of the country. Hydropower accounts for nearly 60 percent of the Northwest's energy mix.

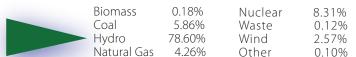
These dams provide tremendous environmental and economic benefits for families and businesses—and no measurable amounts of methane gas.

With the challenges of new carbon reduction policies and more being proposed, it is imperative the true cause carbon emissions in the northwest and the dams are not falsely portrayed.

Where your power comes from

Benton PUD power is nearly 90% carbon free and 81% renewable

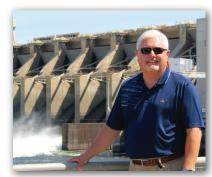
The Benton PUD Fuel Mix as calculated by the Washington State Department of Commerce:



Support the Snake River dams

For decades, the state of Washington has enjoyed some of the cheapest electric rates in the country. Why? In a word, hydropower.

The Columbia and Snake River dams provide reliable, low cost and environmentally responsible electric energy to you - our customer. The dams keep our lights on, significantly reduce our carbon footprint, power our businesses and economy, back up other renewables like wind and solar, support the Northwest's power grid in times of energy emergencies, and put food on our tables and those around the world by supporting both irrigation and navigation. They literally are economic and environmentallyfriendly powerhouses.



Chad Bartram

In May, a U.S. District Court ruled that the river management plan for the Federal Columbia River Power System (the Biological Opinion) was inadequate and requested federal agencies to review the operations of the hydro system. Moreover, the Court indicated that a proper analysis under federal law "may well require" considering breaching, bypassing or removing one or more of the four Lower Snake River dams.

The federal agencies - U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Federal Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration – have scheduled 16 "scoping" meetings in the Northwest to hear from residents about dam operations, benefits, and dams' impact on air, water, land and wildlife, including endangered salmon. The public input influences the scope of the agencies' review of the hydro system, also called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

We encourage you to attend and voice your opinion on the dams

Columbia River System Operations Review Meeting Monday, November 21, 4 pm to 7 pm Holiday Inn Express, Pasco WA

Comments may also be submitted online at comment@crso.info or mail to CRSO EIS, P.O. Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870 by January 17. Below are some facts about the Columbia-Snake River Hydropower system.



The Tremendous Value of Hydropower

Hydropower is the region's largest source of carbon-free, renewable electricity

- Nearly 60% of the energy produced in the Pacific Northwest is generated by the dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers.
- The majority (90%) of the Northwest's renewable, carbon-free electricity is hydropower.

Hydropower backs up other renewables; wind/solar that cannot replace hydro

- Hydropower is a vital partner for other renewables to be integrated into the power grid. Hydropower cannot be replaced by wind or solar power generators because they are
- intermittent resources. The technology doesn't yet exist to store energy from wind/solar on a scale that is operationally significant and cost effective.

The federal hydro system helps fuel the region's economy

- The Columbia-Snake River System supports shipping more than 42 million tons of commercial cargo, valued at over \$20 billion, every year.
- Low-cost hydropower keeps traditional jobs in the Northwest, including those at Boeing, wood and chemical companies and aluminum manufacturers, and has helped attract newer employers such as Intel, Google, Facebook, Amazon and BMW.

Salmon and dams are co-existing and thriving

- New salmon friendly technologies, such as fish slides, bypass systems, and fish-friendly turbines have vastly improved survival of salmon through the dams.
- Overall survival of young salmon through the hydro system is akin to that in free flowing rivers with no dams, according to NOAA Fisheries. An average 97% of young salmon make it past each of the 8 large federal dams, and on to the Pacific, according to BPA.
- Salmon and steelhead returned in record or near record numbers over the last few years. The fall chinook salmon return to Bonneville Dam in 2015 was over 1.3 million fish, which is the largest number observed since the dam was built in 1938.

The Snake Dams keep millions of tons of carbon dioxide out of our skies annually

- The four Snake River dams generate over 1,000 average megawatts of energy annually...enough for over 800,000 average U.S. homes...with no carbon emissions.
- It would take three coal-fired or six gas-fired power plants to replace the power produced by the Snake Dams, according to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPCC).
- Removing the Snake Dams would add 3 to 4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide to Northwest skies each year (NWPCC). That doesn't include the increased carbon emissions from the additional 43,610 railcars, or more than 167,000 semi-trucks, that would be needed to replace barges on the Lower Snake.

[Sources: Northwest RiverPartners, Bonneville Power Administration, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, NOAA Fisheries and the Energy Information Administration]

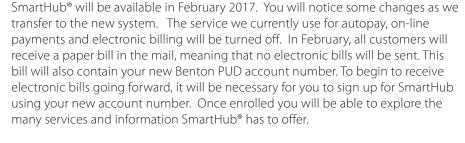
Countdown to SmartHub®

We are excited to announce that Benton PUD is preparing to transition to SmartHub®, National Information Solution Cooperative's (NISC) software that offers web and mobile applications for customers. As part of the transition, Benton PUD is also implementing other NISC applications that will fully integrate customer service, accounting, engineering and operations systems.

After going through an extensive evaluation of vendors, Benton PUD chose NISC to be its primary utility software provider. NISC software is used by hundreds of utilities across the nation with great success and positive reviews from their customers. NISC's integrated approach will provide Benton PUD efficiencies throughout the utility and reduce operating costs, while significantly enhancing customer service.

SmartHub® is a key benefit of the NISC system, and will improve all aspects of doing business with Benton PUD. Using the website or a cell phone, customers will be able to:

- Review billing and payment history
- Access detailed electric usage information
- Communicate with Benton PUD regarding an issue
- Pay their bill and manage payment methods
- Set up paperless billing and automatic payments
- View and report outages



As we get closer to implementation, customers currently enrolled in autopay and in electronic billing will receive a letter from Benton PUD with specific instructions regarding re-enrollment in the new system.



Help a neighbor in need

Benton PUD's Helping Hands program provides our customers an opportunity to help others with their electric bill. Customers can contribute with a one-time donation or by requesting an additional amount of \$1 or more be added to their electric bill each month.



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

Benton PUD holiday hours

November 23 - closed at 3:00 p.m. Thanksgiving, November 24 - closed Christmas, December 26 - closed New Year's Day, January 2 - closed Martin Luther King Day, January 16 - closed



P. O. Box 6270 Kennewick, WA 99336







New rebates available on washers & dryers

Clothes Washers - \$20 rebate: ENERGY STAR® qualified clothes washers use 50% less energy than standard washers.

Most ENERGY STAR® qualified washers extract more water from clothes during the spin cycle, reducing drying time. Water heating may be electric or gas. Top loading must have MEF >2.38.

Dryers - \$50 rebate: ENERGY STAR® qualified clothes dryers use 20% less energy than conventional models. Most ENERGY STAR® qualified dryers use energy saving technologies such



as moisture sensors that automatically shut off the dryer when clothes are dry reducing the drying time. Dryers must be electric.

Rebates are also available on heat pump water heaters, insulation, windows, doors, duct sealing, heat pumps and ductless heat pumps.

Watch out for phone scams

Scammers continue to target utility customers. In the most common scam, a caller will portray he or she is collecting a past due amount, demands immediate payment and threatens to disconnect service if payment is not made. The caller requests payment be made by money order, credit card or cash card and may even ask the customer to use a specific type of payment card.

Benton PUD does not contact customers by telephone and request immediate payment to avoid disconnection when an account is past due.

Please watch out:

- Callers are very convincing. They are persistent and ask questions to gain more information from the customer to be used in future calls.
- Don't be convinced the caller is from a utility because they are able to quote utility policies or procedures. Scammers obtain information so they may sound more official when they call.
- Scammers will quote bill amounts and due dates, when actually they use fictitious, untrue information to sound credible.
- Don't rely on caller ID as it can easily be spoofed.

The best way to confirm a call is legitimate is to hang up and call Benton PUD's Customer Service at 582-2175.



