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Owned By Those It Serves

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## Operation Warm Heart Offers Many Ways to Help

One thing is certain during winter: higher energy bills to keep warm when weather gets extreme and unpredictable. For many low-income families, these seasonally higher bills can be more than an inconvenience or irritation. They can be a hardship.

Klickitat PUD has several ways to help those who need assistance:

- We offer a low-income senior discount during the winter, which ranges from 10 to 40 percent depending on income. Customers who are at least 62 years old and have household annual incomes below \$20,000 are eligible.

- We offer a budget plan to help you prepare for the winter months. This plan spreads the anticipated power usage across a 12-month period. This is a good option for customers on a fixed income, who are frequently out of the area, or for those who have trouble affording winter heating bills.

There are ways you can help people with their power bills.

- Each year about 500 KPUD customers contribute to our Operation Warm Heart fund. It helps local families having problems with their electric bills, generally because of a health or employment emergency. To be eligible to receive funds the household must earn below 125 percent of the federal poverty level and must be certified as eligible by the Klickitat Skamania Development Council.

- A couple years ago we expanded the Operation Warm Heart Program to include Operation Round-Up. The funds are distributed in the same manner as Operation Warm Heart. Almost 300 KPUD customers have signed up for this donation program.

To contribute to either program, contact the customer service department and tell us how you would like to give: a one-time donation, a monthly amount added to your bill, or rounding up your bill to the nearest whole number and adding the difference to the fund.

We also offer gift certificates throughout the year. If you would like to make a contribution directly to a friend or family member's account as a Christmas or birthday present—or just because—we can provide you with a certificate to include in your card. In some cases, customers would like the contribution to remain confidential, and we are happy to comply.

We are always looking for new and innovative ways to help fund Operation Warm Heart. This year at the county fair we sold hearts for a dollar that people could sign or dedicate to others, showing they care. We raised more than \$100. We also are working on an innovative idea to combine renewable energy and energy assistance. On page 29 of this issue, we have an article about a wind project we are participating in, which produces power to support Operation Warm Heart.

These programs reflect the true holiday spirit and the essence of public power: neighbor helping neighbor, especially in time of need. I hope you will join me and others this season in helping our neighbors in need.

**Tom D. Svendsen, General Manager**

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