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## KPUD Water-Wastewater Upgrading

Klickitat PUD has started an aggressive construction revitalization campaign to modernize and upgrade most of our wastewater and many of our water facilities. The main impetus for these upgrades lies in the tougher clean water standards mandated by federal legislation.

Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act to eliminate contaminants from drinking water and our nation's rivers. I don't think Congress fully realized how significantly its actions would affect small rural systems. Although these systems have a relatively small impact on the overall problem, they are regulated to the same degree as mega water-wastewater systems such as Portland's.

It could take a lifetime of operation for one of our systems to equal one day's discharge from a mega system. Unfortunately, costs are not borne equally. What could mean pennies in rate increases to these big systems could significantly affect rates to small rural systems.

Many of the communities where KPUD operates water-wastewater systems question their residents' ability to absorb the mandated cost of compliance. State and federal agencies have helped reduce the impact with grants and low-interest loans, but in some cases, this funding is not adequate. Details about these water-wastewater upgrades have been well-chronicled in the Water Lines section in past issues of Ruralite.

Klickitat PUD has responded to the challenge of multiple large-impact water-wastewater construction projects in several ways. Most small utilities do not have water-wastewater department engineers. These utilities, like KPUD, have typically shared the expense of hiring professional registered engineers to provide this service.

KPUD engineers traditionally work on electric transmission and distribution. However, with the increasing requirements of our water-wastewater obligations, I turned to Engineering Manager Jim Smith and our engineering department, asking them to assist in managing these large projects. We will continue to hire consulting engineers for the design, but our in-house staff will do the overall bidding, procurement and construction inspection.

Timelines for completion of these water-wastewater projects are difficult to meet. Regulatory requirements make long-term planning impossible. Planning, review, procurement and construction must follow a demanding schedule. KPUD engineers have efficiently tackled this process.

At the appropriate time, KPUD will send the projects out to bid. In the past, engineering consultants have handled the bidding. I am confident we can get better results handling the bidding ourselves.

I cannot point to the success of this endeavor until the actual bids come in. I do know KPUD's engineering staff has a demonstrated track record for on-time and under-budget project completion. I have been impressed with our staff's diligence and performance in its added responsibilities.

**Tom Svendsen, General Manager**

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