Skagit PUD Wins State Water-Quality Award
The Washington Department of Health’s Office of Drinking Water recently included Skagit PUD in its list of top-performing water utilities that draw from surface-water sources. Surface water, taken from streams and rivers, typically requires more filtration and treatment than groundwater withdrawn by wells because of surface water’s greater susceptibility to runoff and other forms of pollution.

Skagit PUD won Health’s Platinum Award for 15 or more consecutive years of optimal performance of the PUD’s Judy Reservoir water supply system. The award recognizes Skagit’s achievement of optimal water quality since 2001.

Health determines the award-winners by assessing how well surface-water utilities use filtration to remove turbidity (particles) from their water before it goes to customers. Maintaining low turbidity is a key part of protecting consumers from microbial contaminants and safeguarding public health.

Water and You
How is water used in your home? On average, 17% goes toward showering, 27% is used by the toilet, your faucet drains 15%, your clothes washer another 22%, miscellaneous needs take up 5%, and those pesky leaks steal another 14%.

7 Steps to Avoid Frozen Pipes: How to Prevent Expensive Repair Bills This Winter Season
Frozen and burst water pipes can ruin your whole day. The best strategy in combating the cold winter months is a defensive one. By taking preventive measures to winterize your homes, you can not only save money but also save water and reduce energy usage.

1. Know what areas of your home—like basements, crawl spaces, unheated rooms, and outside walls—are most vulnerable to freezing.
2. Search for pipes which are uninsulated or pass through unheated areas. Wrap them with pipe insulation available at hardware stores.
3. If you have heat tape installed on exposed pipes, make sure the tape is still operational and installed according to manufacturer’s specifications. Inspect the tape for cracks or fraying.
4. Everyone in your household should know where the main water shut-off valve is. Check the shut-off valve annually to make sure it’s working properly. If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut off the water immediately.

Frozen Pipes > SEE BACK PAGE
What is the Value of Water?

2020 Budget Establishes Financial Plan for Delivery of Safe, Reliable and Clean Drinking Water

Essential. Reliable. Invaluable.

Water—it’s the thread that weaves together our daily lives. It keeps our communities healthy, our cities running, and our economies growing. While essential, water infrastructure is largely invisible. Few people realize what it takes to treat and deliver drinking water every day. The high quality of life we enjoy in Skagit County would not be possible without water and the infrastructure that fuels it.

In order to continue providing safe, reliable and clean drinking water, while maintaining and replacing the PUD’s existing assets, a rate increase of 5% or approximately $2.37 per month for the typical residential customer is proposed for 2020.

This past year, Skagit PUD engaged the services of FCS Group to complete a cost-of-service analysis and water utility rate study. The study provides the PUD with a sustainable, multi-year financial management plan that meets the projected total financial needs of the utility. Financial needs include expenses to operate and manage the water system, fund capital projects, pay new and existing debt obligations, and meet fiscal policy goals established by the Board.

The cost-of-service analysis establishes a basis for assigning costs and establishing “equity” for water system customers. This was accomplished with the development of a series of allocations, based on customer data and engineering/planning criteria, to assign utility cost recovery to customers in proportion to their estimated demands.

Approval Process

Skagit PUD’s budget process occurs in three stages: Proposed Budget, Work Sessions, and Adopted Budget. The Proposed Budget was submitted to the PUD’s Board of Commissioners at a public hearing on October 8.

During work sessions that follow the public hearing, Board members can direct further changes to the budget. The Adopted Budget incorporates any changes and is binding at the onset of the 2020 calendar year.

The proposed 5% rate increase would go into effect for all bills generated January 1, 2020, and thereafter. Total rate revenue is projected to be $26.3 million in 2020.

A copy of the 2020 Proposed Budget is available online at SkagitPUD.org.

Skagit PUD Awarded $65K Drought Response Grant

Skagit PUD was awarded a $65,000 Drought Response grant from the State Department of Ecology to help install a new bulk water fill station in Skagit’s eastern service area near the city of Sedro-Woolley. The fill station will serve as a clean water source for businesses and homeowners to obtain water for wells that are overburdened or dry due to drought conditions.

Because of droughts in recent years, an increasing number of Skagit County residents have needed to truck water to their homes. Skagit PUD is able to serve rural residents not connected to “piped” water through temporary use of fire hydrants; however, this comes with related increased risk to the utility’s water system.

In 2016, Skagit PUD installed two automated bulk water stations at the northwest and southwest ends of its Judy Reservoir system. The unmanned fill stations allow for the purchase of bulk water to be hauled by the customer or a delivery service for residential, agricultural, recreation, construction, and other industries. These stations see increased demand toward the end of summer when groundwater is depleted.

The total project cost is estimated at $130,000 with a 50% cost share. The station is expected to be ready by year-end.

Frozen Pipes

> CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

5. Covering or wrapping your outdoor faucets is a simple job that can save you a big expense, both in water and plumbing fees.

6. Turn off and drain irrigation systems.

7. If no one will be home for an extended period of time during extreme winter weather, consider turning off your main valve altogether and hiring a plumber to drain your system. That way, if your furnace quits working, there will be no water in your pipes to freeze.