



October 30, 2007

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LOCAL PUD DIRECTOR ELECTED PRESIDENT OF STATE ORGANIZATION

Northern Wasco County PUD Director, Howard Gonser, has been elected the 2008 President of the Oregon PUD Association in Salem, Oregon.

The Oregon PUD Association (OPUDA) is an alliance of Oregon People's Utility Districts devoted to serving its customers and others interested in consumer ownership of their utility. Among other advocacy roles, OPUDA represents the six Oregon PUDs in legislative and related matters.

Oregon's six operating electric PUDs serve approximately nine percent of the state's electric consumers. The six PUDs, in addition to Northern Wasco County PUD, are: Central Lincoln PUD in Newport; Clatskanie PUD in Clatskanie; Columbia River PUD in St. Helens; Emerald PUD in Eugene; and Tillamook PUD in Tillamook.

"Leading the Oregon PUD Association in the coming year will be a challenge as the Oregon legislature will meet for its first annual session in history beginning in February 2008," states Gonser. He indicated on the positive side, this will allow legislators better involvement in state government by meeting every year instead of having an 18 month down time between sessions. From a "not for profit" utility standpoint, however, it will mean continued education of legislative representatives to help them better understand those issues which could have a negative impact to our PUD customers. At each legislative session there always seems to be new efforts to erode PUD local control so we're on the lookout for that, as well, acknowledged Gonser.

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RE: Howard Gonser. OPUDA 2008 President

The regional power dynamics in the Northwest will change dramatically in the next five years, more so than in the last sixty years. As the federal based power system is nearing its capacity and the demands for electricity continue to grow, there is a greater push by “for profit” utilities such as PGE and PacifiCorp to vie through legislative bills to take a larger slice of the cheap power pie. They contend that since they serve the majority of electric consumers in Oregon, it seems logical that the majority should be able to change the rules, many times without regard to how it might negatively affect the smaller “not for profit” utilities such as PUDs, municipals and cooperatives. As the stakes rise, it requires more and more effort to protect the rights to cheap electric power produced on the Columbia River system granted to the publicly owned utilities by the Bonneville Power Act of 1939.

More so than any other time in the Northern Wasco County PUD’s history, the locally elected board of directors, general manager and staff are taking a pro-active role in monitoring energy issues and making sure local customers are represented and protected as the region’s energy policies are shaped for the next twenty years and beyond.

“The stakes are huge and political battles are raging at both state and federal levels,” stated Gonser. As a NWCPUD board member, I was elected to represent my constituents and work to do what is best for them. As President of the Oregon PUD Association, I will be in a leadership role to help protect the low rates and local controls our PUD customers enjoy at a state level.”

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