

BPA Welcomes Washington's Newest PUD, Jefferson County

Local News

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PORT TOWNSEND, Wash. - Set deep in the woods that blanket Washington's Olympic Peninsula is the Northwest's newest public utility — Jefferson County PUD, which began receiving BPA power April 1. To commemorate this event, BPA Administrator Bill Drummond ventured north for a day of reflection and celebration with Jefferson County's commissioners, managers, staff and community.

Drummond addressed the crowd from the loading dock inside the PUD's newly refurbished operations center outside Port Townsend, Wash.

Looking out over an audience bracketed by shiny, new state-of-the-art boom trucks, Drummond said, "I would like to congratulate all those who helped make Jefferson County PUD a reality. Your hard work has ensured that the people in Jefferson County will be served by clean, emission-free hydropower for generations to come."

He added, "It's not every day that a new public utility is formed. In fact, we have had only seven publicly-owned utilities form in the past 65 years." Jefferson County PUD is the eighth.

The new utility requested service from BPA and returned a signed Regional Dialogue power contract in June 2010. The agency reviewed the information, determined that Jefferson would be eligible for service and decided to execute a Regional Dialogue contract with the PUD.



BPA Administrator Bill Drummond presents Jefferson County PUD Manager Jim Parker with plaque that reads: April 1, 2013 - The Bonneville Power Administration welcomes Public Utility District No. 1 of Jefferson County to the Pacific Northwest family of public power utilities.

"It took a lot of work for Jefferson County PUD to get to this point," Drummond said. Before signing the Regional Dialogue contract, the PUD had to meet specific requirements to purchase power from BPA on a preference and priority basis. Prospective PUDs must meet six standards for service. BPA requires an applicant be legally formed; effectively own a distribution

system at the time service commences; have a general utility responsibility to serve consumers; have the financial systems to collect revenues and the ability to pay for federal power; have an organization and staff to provide service and maintain system operations; and can purchase power in wholesale amounts.

Even if a potential new utility has met the standards for service and makes a request to purchase power from BPA, it must observe a three-year waiting period before service can begin. BPA uses that period to augment the system to serve the new load.

After welcoming Jefferson County PUD to the public power family, Drummond told them, "Being in the public power family does provide you many opportunities, but as with any family, responsibilities come, as well. Together, along with our tribal, state and federal partners, we have the enormous responsibility to watch over the Columbia River, which creates the most amazing energy on earth."

Drummond also thanked the BPA employees who helped make the event happen, singling out power account executive Shannon Green and transmission account executive Melanie Jackson.

The PUD purchases 38 average megawatts to serve about 18,000 electricity customers in Jefferson County. It also serves about 3,500 water and/or sewer customers.