



MEDIA RELEASE

May 1, 2020

Klickitat PUD implements COVID-19 Small Business Customer Assistance Program

Partners with Klickitat County Economic Development for program administration.

Klickitat PUD has concerns about the impacts on our community due to the COVID-19 crisis and state mandated business closures. In the interest of public safety and regional economic stability, improving access to energy assistance for COVID-19 affected customers is a priority.

Klickitat PUD commissioners recognized the lack of energy assistance available specifically for small businesses and asked staff to work on a proposal to address this need. In coordination with Klickitat County Economic Development (KCED), staff began to develop a COVID-19 Small Business Customer Assistance Program. KPUD commissioners approved implementation of the program at their meeting on April 28. The intent of the program is to take reasonable action to mitigate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our small business utility customers. The program extends discounts to impacted small businesses depending on business type. It is intended to encourage appropriate reopening of businesses that are struggling to keep the lights on due to this crisis, or have had to close their doors due to state mandates.

Klickitat PUD has partnered with KCED for the administration of the program. KCED is a local, familiar third party with the ability to take and review applications, and provide recommendations to KPUD regarding eligible businesses. KPUD is grateful for this partnership and is optimistic that, together, we can reach many of the small businesses struggling to qualify for other assistance programs. Small businesses are the heart of a community and provide jobs and services needed for our day-to-day lives. Loss of small businesses would impact all of us and would decrease the tax base upon which our rural communities rely for hospitals, schools, roads, etc.

Eligible small businesses will receive a discount on their electric bill for three consecutive months upon reopening or being approved. Small business eligibility criteria include: being in business as of January 1, 2020 within Klickitat County; having between 1 and 10 employees; and having been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Agricultural producers do not qualify for the program.

The discount percentage is dependent on the type of business. Store-front businesses are eligible for a usage discount of 50% and waiver of the monthly basic fee. Home-based businesses are eligible for a usage discount of 30%. Discounts will be applied to a business' active KPUD account. To apply visit Klickitat County Economic Development's website and complete the KCED survey at <https://www.klickitatcounty.org/1193/Covid-19>. Klickitat PUD's website will be updated with relevant information to aid in the application process.

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