

# SUBreports

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## Demand for Ductless Heats Up

Ductless heat pumps are the right product at the right price at the right time!

Last year, SUB introduced incentives to help residential customers replace inefficient ceiling, wall or baseboard heat with ultra-efficient, inexpensive ductless heat pumps. Based on available market data, the utility anticipated about 25 of the units would be installed during calendar year 2009.

Instead, the year ended with a robust 159 installs. Regionally, a similar picture developed, with 3,900 ductless heat pumps installed, outpacing expectations by 55%. “Clearly, ductless heat pumps fill a niche in our area,” says Keith Lockhart, SUB’s energy and conservation services manager. “They have all the efficiencies of ducted heat pumps, plus the flexibility of zonally-controlled heat, all at a cost far less than a traditional heat pump.”

### So what is a ductless heat pump?

These unobtrusive units are mounted directly on the wall and connect to refrigerant lines that are installed in the wall or ceiling via a three-inch opening. The unit has its own vents and fans that deliver heated or cooled air into the living space. Depending on the size and configuration of rooms in the house, one or more units can be installed.

### Why would I want one?

- They heat and cool homes at a fraction of the cost of baseboard, ceiling and wall heaters.
- Conditioned air circulates through the home via ultra-quiet fans, eliminating hot and cold spots.
- They are inexpensive and easy to install, with little disruption to your home.
- You get air conditioning... no more window units!

### What’s the incentive?

Qualified customers receive either a \$1,500 cash rebate or a zero percent loan up to \$7,000.

### How do I qualify?

To qualify, the home must be a single family, site-built structure that currently uses electric resistance zonal heating. The home must be fully insulated (SUB can help you determine this, and has help available if upgrades are needed). Natural gas service to the home IS allowed, a change from the previous requirements, but it may not be used as a fuel source for a heating system (such as a gas space heater.)

### Got Ducts?

See page four to learn about duct sealing incentives for homes with traditional heat pumps!



# Stamp it. Click it. Drop it. Or phone it in.

**At SUB, you choose the way you'd like to pay your bill.**

**P**aying bills is often a lifestyle choice. Are you the kind of person who likes to get routine bills set up on an automatic payment schedule so you never have to worry about late fees? Or perhaps you prefer to write out a check each month, either mailing it, or saving a stamp by putting it in a SUB drop box? Maybe you'd just as soon do it over the phone or online.

SUB offers all these options. Choose the one that works best for you!

- **Mail**

Checks or money orders are made out to Springfield Utility Board and sent to SUB at P.O. Box 300, Springfield, OR 97477.

- **Auto Pay**

Your payment is automatically deducted from your checking or savings account, although you'll still receive a monthly statement so you can view your usage and track your payments.

- **Pay by phone (1-866-200-1977) or internet ([www.subutil.com](http://www.subutil.com))**

Residential customers can pay utility bills over the phone or through our SUB website using a VISA, MasterCard or Discover card; a debit card; or by electronic check. To cover the costs of this service, a \$3.50 fee is added to the transaction and paid directly to the service provider.

- **Drop Box**

Put your check or money order, made out to Springfield Utility Board (remember to include your account number), in one of several conveniently located drop boxes around Springfield:

**Albertson's: 2000 Marcola Road and 5755 Main Street**

**DariMart: 3185 Gateway Street**

**Safeway: 1891 Pioneer Parkway East**

**Wal-Mart: 2659 Olympic Street**

**SUB: 250 A Street**

Please call SUB at 541-746-8451 if you have questions about any of the payment options listed.



## MEET the Board

SUB's water and electricity services are provided under the direction of SUB's Board of Directors, five Springfield citizens who are elected to four-year terms, and who serve at-large and without pay. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The public is invited and encouraged to participate in these meetings, at which SUB policies and procedures are formulated and adopted.



**Virginia Lauritsen**  
Chair, Position 2  
Term exp. 12/31/10



**Joe Mathieu**  
Vice-Chair, Position 1  
Term exp. 12/31/12



**Bobbie Jean Adams**  
Position 5  
Term exp. 12/31/12



**Ted Johnson**  
Position 3  
Term exp. 12/31/10



**Ken Boyst**  
Position 4  
Term exp. 12/31/10

# Leak Detectives: Chasing the Invisible

**S**ome water leaks are so obvious, they're easy to detect: A front yard might suddenly be saturated, or a river might abruptly gush down a street.

And if those signs aren't obvious enough, just look for the utility trucks swarming the scene to make urgent repairs.

But there's another type of leak that, and though less dramatic, can be far more insidious.

## Training, Patience and Skill

Non-surfacing leaks – those that let water seep into the ground at a rate slow enough that they don't affect water pressure, and in amounts small enough that water is never visible on the ground – for all practical purposes are invisible. Often buried several feet underground and paved over by asphalt or concrete, eventually they can spill significant amounts of water without ever calling attention to themselves.

"Finding those leaks takes special training, patience, and a lot of skill," says Bruce Barker, water general foreman at SUB. "Not everyone can do it."

Luckily, SUB has a three-man crew that not only does it, but does it very, very well. In fact, in a recent month of survey work, the team found and fixed six leaks on one street that, cumulatively, leaked enough water *daily* to serve five homes for a month.

If they make it look easy, it's anything but.

## Learning to Discern

The crew uses state-of-the-art survey equipment, including acoustic probes and industrial earphones, to listen for the tell-tale underground sounds of a leak. They start by listening at water meters, hydrants and main valves – all good places to detect a potential problem. Most clues are subtle – just a faint hiss or whooshing sound, which crews must distinguish from a host of other noises that travel underground, including the rumble of traffic and the electric hum of buried power lines.

"That's where training and lots of experience comes into play," says Jason Owens, who leads SUB's leak detection crew. "One of the hardest things is learning to trust yourself and your equipment," he says. "After all, you're about to dig a hole, sometimes in someone's front yard, without any visible sign that there's a problem. That takes some getting used to."

Confidence in that ability only comes with on-the-job, real world training: Donning the survey equipment to

find the leak, using advanced computer programs to help pinpoint the location, then digging a hole to see if you're right.

"As part of our training, we try to estimate the number of gallons-per-minute being leaked before we see it, so we can start to visualize what different sized leaks sound like in different conditions," he says.



*Water Foreman Jason Owens uses survey equipment to listen for a water leak. Customers may see SUB crews at hydrants and water meters hunting down subterranean leaks.*

## Variables Make Detection a Challenge

A lot of factors play into the character and quality of the sounds they are trained to hear, including the pipe material (metal pipes transmit louder, higher frequency sounds than PVC or concrete pipes), ground conditions (hard, compacted soil transmits sounds better than loose, sandy soils), how deeply the pipe is buried (not surprisingly, shallower is better), how large the diameter of pipe is (smaller pipes transmit more sound and at a higher frequency than large pipes) and ground cover (street surfaces and concrete slabs resonate with the sounds of the leak, unlike grass or dirt surfaces, which can muffle the sound).

With some pipe in SUB's system now close to a hundred years old (the last bit of 1906 pipe was replaced five years ago, making a 1914 section near downtown the oldest pipe around), and with other sections made from thin-walled steel common right after World War II, the survey crew's methodical work is likely to turn up a fair number of leaks. The goal is to eventually survey every pipe in the system.

"With a comprehensive leak detection program, you save a little here and little there, but those steady, small improvements really add up," says Bruce. "It's one of the important tools SUB uses to manage resources on behalf of our customers."

**The crew uses state-of-the-art survey equipment... to listen for the tell-tale underground sounds of a leak.**

# Watts Happening

## Have you signed up for the Average Payment Plan?

Included in your March bill statement was a sign-up form for SUB's Average Payment Plan (APP). This program allows customers to smooth out their utility payments so that they pay an even amount each month. Without the plan, your utility bills will likely be quite a bit higher during the winter heating season, just when the holiday season is stretching your wallet.

To qualify, you must have been at your current address for at least one year, and your account must be paid in full. That's it! Enrollment for this popular program ends June 1, so be sure to get your application in. If you can't find your form, another is included below.

If you'd like more details, please call SUB at 541-746-8451, or visit our website at [www.subutil.com](http://www.subutil.com) and click on customer service. Navigate to the "stabilizing your bill" tab.

### Sign me up for the Average Payment Plan!

I'm already enrolled:

Great! No need to complete this form; you'll remain enrolled unless you decide to cancel.

Enroll me now - I've met both of the following conditions:

- I've lived at the address below for 12 continuous months.
- My account is paid in full.

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

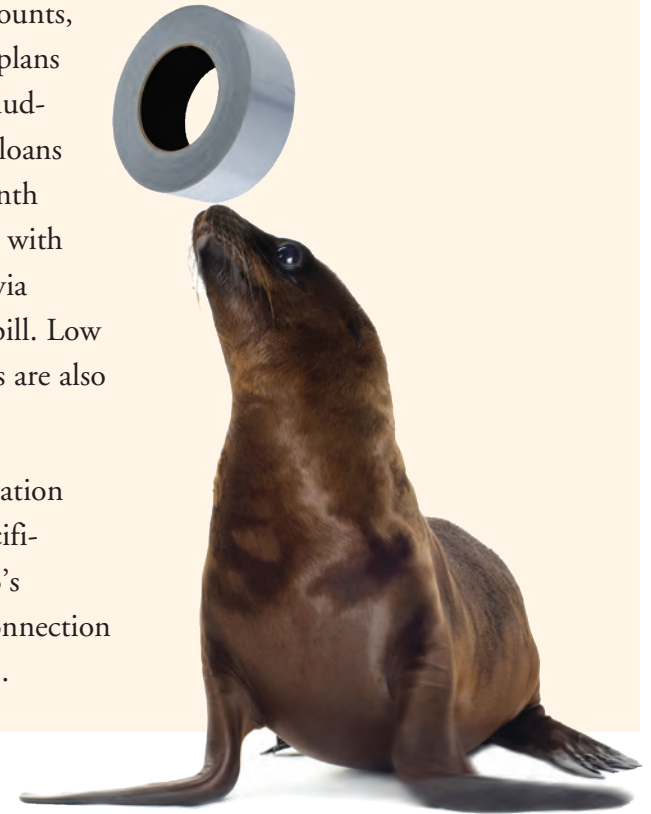
Please return this form with your utility payment or drop it by the SUB office at 250 A Street.

## Seal Your Ducts!

Take advantage of SUB's duct sealing program! Studies show the average duct system loses 20% to 40% of its heating energy through leaks. SUB's duct testing and sealing program is designed to increase comfort and provide energy savings to SUB customers at minimal or no cost.

For both manufactured and site-built homes, SUB will pay \$150 for one initial pre-test. For site-built homes, SUB will then pay \$500 for pre- and post-duct testing and sealing (\$400 for manufactured homes.) For duct sealing, repairs or rebuilds that exceed the incentive amounts, several payment plans are available, including zero-interest loans and a twelve-month installment plan, with payments made via SUB's monthly bill. Low income programs are also available.

For more information and detailed specifications, call SUB's Conservation Connection at 541-746-0963.



## Look Who's On the Move:

SUB's **Conservation Connection** has moved, just a little. Its traditional location has been in the annex building directly across from SUB's main office at 250 A Street. The Connection remains in the annex building, but instead of fronting A Street, it is now in a suite

located toward the center of the complex. Despite the move, the address stays the same (223 A Street, Suite B).

So, come visit the new digs, check out the conservation displays and feel free to ask our knowledgeable staff all about SUB's money saving programs that also help you conserve electricity and water!



## Independent spirit. Low rates.

The Springfield Utility Board is a customer-owned municipal utility operated independently from the city and responsible only to its ratepayers. We deliver exceptional service, and some of the very lowest utility rates in Oregon!

*SUBreports is a regular publication of SUB's Community Relations Department. We welcome your feedback. If you have questions, comments or story ideas, please call 541-744-3794.*

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