

SUBreports

The water-energy nexus

Earth, wind and fire in a low-water year



In the Pacific Northwest, water and electricity are inextricably linked: The same water we source for drinking also supplies much of our electricity via the PNW's impressive hydropower system. Importantly, it also gets tapped for fighting fires.



After the Holiday Farm wildfire devastated much of the area near Springfield last year, disrupting the lives of so many of our friends and neighbors, news that we were in for another summer of above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall was an attention-getter.

What are the risks?



As a utility operating primarily within urban areas, SUB's normal operations are less likely to be an ignition source for wildfire compared to utilities that serve more rural and forested areas. But the risk is not zero, and therefore SUB monitors extreme weather events for hazardous conditions and takes appropriate steps aimed at avoiding, or if necessary, navigating a potential event.



One such step includes preemptively de-energizing a power line to eliminate the risk of that line igniting a fire. You may see this referred to as a Public Safety Power Shutoff, or PSPS. Although always a last resort, it is an important tool for managing risks

during conditions that could result in catastrophic wildfires.

Do we have enough water?

SUB's water supply comes from both surface river water and deep groundwater wells. Our reservoirs are currently at normal capacity and we don't expect this low runoff year to impact our ability to draw water, nor do we anticipate asking customers to restrict water use. Further, SUB has groundwater and surface water rights that help ensure an ample supply to support the City's needs.

Of course, SUB water managers continue to monitor the situation. While SUB always encourages wise water use, if drought conditions persist or worsen, SUB may ask customers to be even more mindful of how they use water. See page 3 for easy, practical ways to be a good steward of this limited resource.

How does SUB encourage wise water use?

Along with providing tips on how to use this resource wisely, SUB sets water rates a little higher during summer. This serves as a price signal to encourage thoughtful water use during the summer when water demand peaks.

Current summer water rates went into effect for bills rendered on or after June 1. For most residential water users inside Springfield's city limits, a unit of water (748 gallons) is \$2.28 for the first 13 units. This is the same cost as in winter.

For units 14 to 100, the cost per unit inside the city limit in summer is \$2.44 as compared to \$2.43 in winter.

SUB will be keeping a weather-eye on conditions, but for now our advice is to **use the water you need, but not a drop more.**

Thank you for doing your part in keeping Springfield green and safe!

Open-minded and nimble

Pandemic creates opportunity to field-test new ways of delivering services

Like other organizations, SUB rapidly reconfigured its customer-facing procedures to keep everyone safe during the pandemic. That meant closing the lobby and delivering more services via alternate methods.

While disruptions of this magnitude can be unsettling, they also can be transformative. In this case, they gave SUB the chance to experiment with the best methods for delivering customer services in ways that will scale as we grow.

Service at your fingertips ...

The biggest change? At the start of the pandemic, routine services that had been provided in the lobby shifted so they could be delivered online, over the phone, through our drive-up and via email.

Given the wide adoption of these changes, SUB is incorporating them into our normal practices.

In particular, customers embraced new service delivery methods they could use without a trip downtown: In-person visits to the main office lobby dropped to a third of pre-pandemic levels – with

no change in customer service levels as measured by our most recent customer satisfaction survey. Given the wide adoption of these changes, SUB is incorporating them into our normal practices.

... that's friendly and accessible

Technology allows access to routine services from anywhere a phone or an internet connection is available. But some customers may need extra assistance with questions, special transactions or with document handling. In these cases, customer service staff are available



General Manager Jeff Nelson

via the drive-up, or at our new Customer Service Window when it opens at the Main Office later this summer.

We've also made enhancements to various programs, and to the main office environment itself, to support this new model:

- Residential customers can pay their bills online or over-the-phone with a credit card for free.
- Customers have access to a new sidewalk-accessible drop box.
- Customers can enroll in AutoPay and Average Payment Plan online, via their computer or mobile phone, in addition to using traditional enrollment methods.
- Customers enrolling in AutoPay receive a \$10 incentive credit on any newly enrolled active account until further notice.

And for vendors and contractors working with our electric and water service centers, please continue to call our offices so we can make arrangements suitable for each project.

These changes have the advantage of meeting customers' high standards for service while also positioning SUB for the future, where the momentum continues to be toward integrating technology solutions into our daily procedures.

Our goal is to stay nimble as an organization so we can continue to deliver utility services safely, affordably and efficiently... and to our customer's highest standards.

MEET the Board

SUB's water and electric 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 at 6 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. Go to subutil.com for special instructions on participating online or by phone.



David Willis
Position 1
Term exp. 12/31/24



Robert Scherer
Vice-Chair
Position 2
Term exp. 12/31/22



John DeWenter
Position 3
Term exp. 12/31/22



Michael Eyster
Chair
Position 4
Term exp. 12/31/22



Mark Molina
Position 5
Term exp. 12/31/24

12 Water-wise habits to start right now

Using water wisely is a habit that makes sense.

Inside



Check faucets for leaks. Place paper on the drain at night then see if it's wet in the morning.



While waiting for hot water to pour from the tap, catch the flow in a watering can to use on plants.



Take showers rather than baths and install a low-flow showerhead.



Turn off the tap when shaving and brushing your teeth.

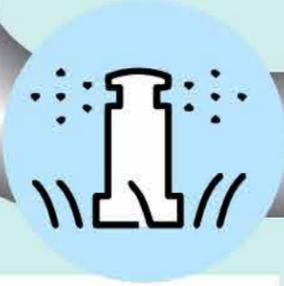


Consider water-saving toilets and Energy Star® washers when replacing appliances.

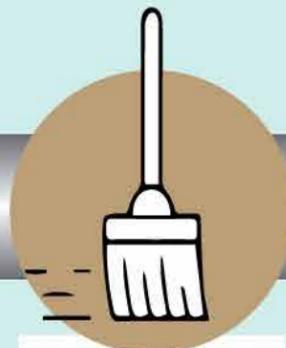


Only wash full loads of laundry and dishes.

Outside



Position sprinklers to avoid watering sidewalks, driveways, and other paved areas.



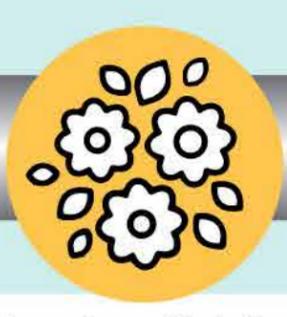
Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks.



Use hoses with nozzles that automatically shut off flow when set down.



Know when to water your lawn and for how long. See recommendations at subutil.com.



Group plants with similar water needs together and mulch them to slow evaporation.



Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation.

Water Quality Report Available

Every year, water utilities across the nation issue a report to their customers detailing the quality of the drinking water delivered to homes and businesses in their service area. Called the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), it is available in English and Spanish by visiting our website at subutil.com/ccr or by calling the Water Service Center, which can provide you with a printed copy. Here's a sneak peak: **Water sourced, treated and delivered by SUB meets or exceeds all state and federal standards!**

Informe de calidad del agua 2020 de SUB: Este documento contiene información sobre la calidad de su agua potable. Una versión en español está disponible. Llame al 541-746-8451 o visite nuestro sitio web en subutil.com para obtener una copia.

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.



Springfield Utility Board
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Springfield, OR 97477

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Watts Happening

Attend a Budget Committee Meeting!

Are you interested in how SUB sets its annual budget? Do you have thoughts you'd like considered? Attend SUB's annual Budget Committee meetings.

The Budget Committee, comprised of SUB's five-member Board of Directors and a panel of board-appointed ratepayers, meets several times in late summer and early fall. They provide input to SUB management on long-term capital plans and other financial matters. Decisions made here are integrated into a proposed budget that the Board considers at year end. If you are interested in utility projects, how they get prioritized and the rate impacts of those priorities, these meetings are for you.

The first meeting is scheduled for **August 11 at 5 pm** and can be attended in person or over the phone or internet. Meeting details, when available, can be found at subutil.com. Future meetings will be scheduled as needed to complete the work.

Este artículo está disponible en español en nuestro sitio web y contiene información sobre las próximas reuniones del Comité de Presupuesto, que están abiertas a los contribuyentes.

Join us at the Lane County Fair!

The Fair is back, and SUB will be there, once again bringing you a shady spot where you can fill your water bottle with refreshing, ice cold, tap water... for free, of course! Drop by anytime from July 21 – 25.



Serving up tap water at the Fair is a great reminder of all the ways tap water serves us. We use it not just for drinking, but for household chores, irrigation, fire fighting, and for fun – all for about a penny a gallon. Because water knows no boundaries, SUB hosts the booth with our two regional water partners, EWEB and Rainbow Water District. Our common goals of protecting the quality of our water sources, conserving this important resource, and encouraging preparedness in the case of emergency, mean we work together on a variety of water projects throughout the year.

The area will be configured to ensure safety and compliance with all state and county pandemic precautions.



Curious about electric cars?

Join one of Emerald Valley Electric Vehicle Association's **free** "rEV Up!" workshops this Fall. Learn about the benefits of owning an electric vehicle, key considerations when shopping for one, their range, batteries, and charging. You'll also get the most current information about financial incentives. The next two workshops are set for September 14th and 29th. To check times, future workshop dates, and to register, visit revuporegon.org. Participants qualify for discounts at several local auto dealerships!

Light of Liberty slated for return in 2022

We've had many calls from customers asking about the annual fireworks show at Island Park this year. Unfortunately, the uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic meant postponing this year's July 4th Light of Liberty Celebration once again. However, all signs point toward a big return in 2022. Watch for updates!



Electric Rate Comparison

Monthly bill amount is based on average residential electric use for each month of an average year



SUB has earned both state and national recognition for water and electricity excellence:



DIAMOND RATING
Reliable Public Power Provider



OUTSTANDING PERFORMER: WATER
Oregon Health Authority