

# SUBreports

Volume 18 Issue 3

Autumn 2019

## Best. Week. Ever.

### Plan your week:



***SUB is powered by community. And for one glorious week in October, we're also powered by caffeine.***

Oh yes, it's here again. That week when SUB thanks its customers for letting us serve them all year long by handing out free lattes and energy efficient light bulbs!\*

And this year, Customer Appreciation Week falls during national Public Power Week, a celebration of the many benefits of having local control of your electric and water utility. In SUB's case, that includes affordable rates, safe and reliable service, and the ability to elect those people who guide utility policy.

If those sound like givens, then now's a great time to brush up on SUB's history.

Founded in 1950, SUB exists because regular Springfield citizens were fed up with the high prices and poor service they received from the private utility in the area. But creating a public utility didn't happen without a fight. Tucked away in SUB's history, you'll find politics and intrigue, victories and set backs,

and entertaining shenanigans, reminding us that things we often take for granted came as the result of a struggle.

You can read all about this intriguing history in *Lighting the Way*, a short booklet on our founding that includes interesting photos and other memorabilia from the time. Or view a short video by the same name that tells the story. Both are available on our website – just check out the link on the front page at subutil.com.

**Monday Oct. 7 – Saturday Oct. 12**  
**Mon. – Fri. 8:30 am – 1:30 pm**  
**Sat. 9:00 am – 12:00 Noon**  
**Across From SUB's Main Office**  
**(250 A Street)**

Whether you read up on SUB or not, we hope you'll come by and check out the buzz during Customer Appreciation Week.

"This is the best kind of tradition," says Jeff Nelson, general manager for SUB. "An opportunity to get together, meet each

other over great coffee and good times, and celebrate community."

*\*Coffee and hot drinks are for everyone, but energy efficient light bulbs are for SUB residential customers only (with proof of Springfield address). One per service address. No businesses, please.*



# Are You Two-Weeks Ready?

The emergency experts at Lane County recommend every household be two-weeks ready in case of a catastrophic natural disaster. To help, they've created a checklist that helps residents decide what to gather, how much to store, and which tasks to do to prepare. Here's how the process went for one homeowner.



### First on the list:

Find a place in your home for the items you'll gather. This pantry worked well, but so can a few shelves in the garage or a space under a bed.



### Load in your water:

Water can take up a lot of space! Research the water storage system that best meets your needs.



### Collect first aid and hardware supplies:

On the left are typical outage kit supplies, like a flashlight, batteries, and an emergency radio. On the right are a first aid kit and personal supplies.



### Load in food:

Focus on ready-to-eat items that can sit on a shelf. If you purchase items your family will eat, you can rotate them into your regular meals and replace items as you use them.

The idea is to get started, often the hardest part of any project. Add to your emergency supplies as time and budget allows, and soon you'll have the peace-of-mind that comes with knowing you've got what you need if an emergency strikes.

Lane County has comprehensive information on their website at [lanecounty.gov/prepare](http://lanecounty.gov/prepare), including recommendations for households with small children or pets. Tips and information can also be found at [ready.gov](http://ready.gov).

## 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 in SUB's Boardroom, across from our main office. The public is invited and encouraged to participate in these meetings.



**David Willis**  
Position 1  
Term exp. 12/31/20



**Robert Scherer**  
Position 2  
Term exp. 12/31/22



**John DeWenter**  
Chair, Position 3  
Term exp. 12/31/22

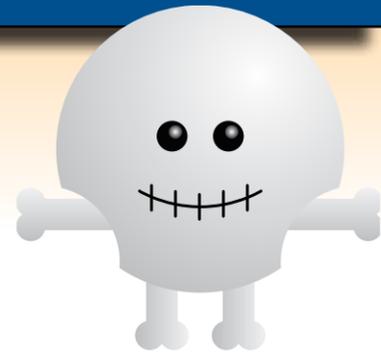


**Michael Eyster**  
Vice-Chair, Position 4  
Term exp. 12/31/22



**Pat Riggs-Henson**  
Position 5  
Term exp. 12/31/20

# Don't let these questions haunt you!



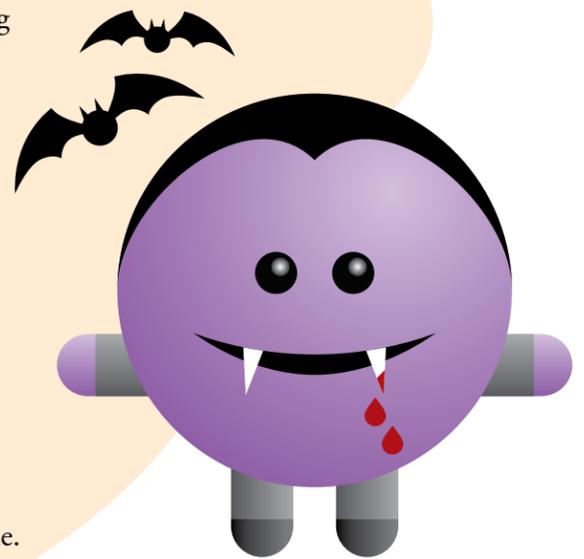
## Is vampire power sucking up my kilowatts?

Even when turned off, some electronics draw electricity just by virtue of being plugged into an outlet. Often called phantom load, this refers to electricity being drawn while devices hang out in standby mode awaiting a signal to wake up. It's common for printers, TVs, DVRs, gaming consoles and other popular devices. Devices with chips in them to run internal clocks, displays or background programs draw this phantom load as well and are found in appliances like coffee pots and toaster ovens.

And... it adds up. According to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, "stand-by power" amounts to almost 10% of residential electricity use ([standby.lbl.gov](http://standby.lbl.gov)).

### Want to bite back? Sink your teeth into these tips:

- Unplug laptops, cell phones and tablet devices once they are charged.
- Unplug chargers from the wall.
- Unplug lesser used appliances and those countertop appliances within easy reach.
- If an appliance is difficult to reach, plug it into a power strip to make it more accessible.
- If unplugging an appliance isn't practical, consider purchasing Energy Star® appliances, which are known for energy savings.



## Am I Goblin up too much water?

By using water wisely in winter, you can save on your wastewater bill all year. How? The City of Springfield calculates annual flow fees for wastewater based on how much water a household uses from December through April. These months were chosen as a baseline because homeowners generally use far less water during this time of year than during the hot, dry summer months. If you have questions about your stormwater or wastewater bill (which is included on your monthly SUB statement for convenience) call the City of Springfield at 541-726-3696.



## Is that a trickster on my phone?

Many experts note that instances of fraud go up dramatically starting with Halloween and running through the holiday season. But these days it seems phone scammers never rest. Don't fall for their schemes! Be suspicious of anyone who calls you out of the blue and threatens to turn off your power. Trust your instincts. If you have any hesitation, hang up and call SUB directly at 541-746-8451 day or night, any time. Visit SUB's website at [subutil.com](http://subutil.com) for comprehensive information on common scams and how to protect yourself.

## 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  
P.O. Box 300  
250 A Street  
Springfield, OR 97477

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## Watts Happening



### Get Ready For Winter!

Take time now to get ready for the coming cold weather. Here are some quick tips to get your started:

**Prevent frozen pipes:** Frozen pipes can lead to costly repairs. Before freezing weather hits the area, disconnect and store outdoor hoses; cover hose bibs with an insulating material; and wrap exposed pipes in heat tape.

**Stop drafts:** A house that leaks air can mean a higher electricity bill and less comfort. Save money by installing weather stripping around doors; sealing cracks with caulk or expandable foam; and closing fire-place flues when there's no fire burning.

**Insulate your home:** Making sure your home has adequate insulation will save money in the long run. Call SUB's Conservation Connection at 541-746-0963 to learn more about zero percent loans and rebates to help you with the process. And don't forget other ways to insulate: plant evergreens as windscreens; close drapes at night to hold in warmth; and place insulating film over windows.

**Stay safe:** Power outages can happen with winter weather. If you've followed Lane County's two-weeks-ready suggestions (see page two), it's likely you have all you'll need to wait out the typical power outage caused by wind, ice or snow. Here are some additional tips to keep you and your family safe. Avoid downed power lines – there is no way to tell by looking if they are energized! If you decide to install a generator, be sure it is installed safely and inspected. This not only protects you, it protects our crews as they restore power. And finally, remember to keep a basic emergency kit in your car.

### Public Hearing Dates Scheduled

Over the next several months, SUB's Board of Directors will be focusing on the utility's 2020 overall budget and on next year's water and electric rates. Customers are encouraged to participate in the process by attending upcoming public hearings.

A first public hearing for both the budget and water rates will be held at SUB's Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 13 at 6:00 p.m. A second public hearing and possible vote for both the budget and water rates will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11. All hearings take place in SUB's board room, which is located across the street from SUB's main office.

SUB will have background materials relevant to both issues posted on the website before the first public hearing in November.

### Electric Rate Comparison

Based on 1,500 kWh  
Point-in-time August, 2019



### Where SUB's power comes from (For 2018, prepared 5/2019)

