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## Keep Your Electronics Safe During Power Outages

Power outages can happen without warning, and when electricity comes back on, it can spike suddenly and damage your devices. Computers, TVs, gaming consoles, routers, and other electronics are especially vulnerable. Even small, repeated spikes over time can wear out devices, cause glitches, or destroy important files.

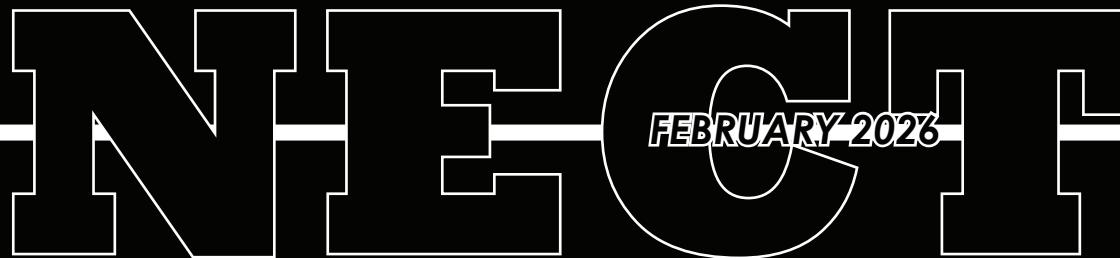
### How to protect your electronics

- Surge protectors: These are special power strips that absorb extra electricity before it reaches your devices. Plug in your computers, TVs, gaming systems, and networking equipment.
- Whole-house surge protectors: Installed at your main electrical panel, these protect every outlet in your home from big spikes caused by lightning or grid issues.
- Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS): UPS devices combine surge protection with short-term battery power. This gives you time to save your work and safely shut down computers and modems during outages.

### Simple habits to stay safe

- Unplug sensitive devices during an outage or before a storm. This prevents sudden spikes from reaching your electronics.
- Check your surge protectors regularly and replace them every few years or if they show signs of wear.
- Don't overload outlets, too many devices plugged in at once can create extra risk.

Using surge protectors, UPS systems, and safe habits helps protect your electronics, avoid expensive repairs, and make sure your devices last longer.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: MEET THE STAKERS

If you've ever wondered who makes sure power gets to your home safely and efficiently, it's our Stakers, the professionals who help plan, design, and coordinate new and upgraded power lines across the county.

This month, we're shining a light on Lauren Naccarato and Laura Smith, the PUD's two dedicated Stakers who balance fieldwork, office projects, and plenty of problem-solving every day.

A typical day for Laura and Lauren is a mix of field and office work. Out in the field, they measure routes, assess existing lines, and coordinate with property owners and crews. Back in the office, they draw designs, acquire permits, and ensure every project meets PUD standards before construction begins.

Their work helps our local community by bringing reliable power to new homes and businesses, maintaining existing lines, and supporting safety projects like wildfire mitigation.

"No two jobs are ever the same," said Lauren. "Finding practical solutions that balance engineering requirements, customer needs, environmental considerations, and what will work best for the crew in the field is challenging but very rewarding."

Laura adds, "I get to help in the process of bringing power to new properties being developed throughout the county and in improving our existing lines to maintain reliable service for everyone." Beyond helping customers, she enjoys connecting with people, saying, "It's fun to hear everyone's life experiences and what makes them uniquely who they are."

Both started with summer internships and returned to the PUD for the chance to learn, grow, and advance their careers. Outside of work, Laura enjoys camping, kayaking, and spoiling her pets, while Lauren keeps busy with her other businesses, outdoor activities, and spending time with her wife.

Next time you flip a switch or charge your phone, remember, Laura and Lauren helped make that power possible!



Pictured: left to right - Laura & Lauren.

# CONNECT



## Space Heater Safety: Stay Warm, Stay Safe

Space heaters can help take the chill off during the cold months, but they use a lot of electricity and must be used carefully to prevent fires and electrical hazards.

Never plug a space heater into an extension cord or power strip. Space heaters should always be plugged directly into a wall outlet, as extension cords can overheat and create a fire risk.

Always turn heaters off when you leave the room or your home. Unattended heaters are a common cause of home fires, especially if they tip over or contact nearby items.



Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including curtains, furniture, blankets, clothing, and bedding. Place heaters on a flat, stable surface where they won't be easily knocked over by kids or pets.

For added safety, use heaters with automatic shut-off or tip-over protection, never use them near water, and do not use heaters to dry clothes.

A little extra caution goes a long way, use space heaters safely and stay warm this winter.

## Office Closure



PUD offices will be closed in honor of Presidents Day Monday, Feb 16th. We will resume normal business hours Tuesday, Feb 17th. For convenient payment options, please visit our website.

## Show Some Community Love this Valentine's Day

This February, share the love close to home by supporting the PUD's Neighbors in Need Program. Your donation helps local families and individuals who may be struggling to keep their lights on during times of financial hardship.

Every contribution, large or small, stays right here in Pend Oreille County and helps neighbors get through challenging times. It's a simple way to make a real difference for someone who may need a helping hand.

As a thank-you, customers who stop by the Newport Administration Building and make a donation during the month of February will receive a free PUD tote bag, while supplies last.

Donations to the Neighbors in Need Program are tax deductible and are a meaningful way to support your community in 2026. If you donated last year, you can find your total 2025 Neighbors in Need contributions listed on your January billing statement. In addition to one-time donations, customers can also sign up for

Operation Round Up. Their bill is rounded up each month to the nearest dollar as a donation to NIN. They can also choose to add a recurring donation to their bill each month.

Thank you for helping spread kindness and support throughout our community, today and all year long!



## CONNECT WITH US!

Main Line: 509.447.3137

North County: 509.446.3137

South County: 509.242.3137

TDD: 800.833.6388

### Commissioners:

Curt Knapp: cknapp@popud.org 509.671.1111

Dave Rick: drick@popud.org 509.671.7952

Troy Moody: tmoody@popud.org 509.991.1327

Website: [www.popud.org](http://www.popud.org)



## UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Tue, Feb 3 - Newport

Tue, Feb 17 - Newport

**Office Closure:** Mon, Feb 16 - Presidents Day