



Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

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Pend Oreille PUD Secures \$1 Million Emergency Rapid Response Grant for Metaline Falls Water System

METALINE FALLS, WA—Pend Oreille Public Utility District No. 1 (PUD) has been awarded \$1 million in Emergency Rapid Response (ERR) funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce to advance critical repairs on the Metaline Falls Transmission Line. This fully funded grant replaces a previously approved \$500,000 grant and \$500,000 loan from the Washington State Public Works Board (PWB). To maintain project flexibility, the PUD will retain \$200,000 in PWB funding as a contingency for unforeseen project needs.

“This new grant represents a significant investment in our community’s infrastructure, providing the resources we need to address critical challenges without adding financial strain on our customers,” said John Janney, General Manager of the PUD. “This funding ensures we can move forward with essential repairs while safeguarding the stability and safety of our region.”

Background on the Emergency Repairs

On October 17, 2024, two sections of the aging water mains ruptured on a steep hillside, causing catastrophic failures that disrupted water service for 200 customers. The ruptures unleashed 3,000 gallons of water per minute, destabilizing the hillside and sending debris onto Highway 31, a vital transportation route near the Canadian border. While temporary bypass lines restored minimal service, the system remains insufficient for long-term reliability.

Planned Improvements

The \$1 million ERR grant will allow the PUD to:

- Install a durable 12-inch pipe to replace the failed hillside section.
- Replace the remaining sections of the aging waterline.
- Implement erosion control measures to stabilize the hillside.
- Safeguard Highway 31 to ensure access for residents and businesses.

“This fully funded grant is a game-changer,” said Janney. “It enables us to restore reliable water service and protect public safety while minimizing the financial burden on a low-income area. We deeply appreciate the Department of Commerce’s swift action and commitment to addressing the needs of our community.”

The Metaline Falls project is expected to be completed by June. As work progresses, the PUD will share additional updates on project milestones and the impact of these repairs on the community.

About Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

Pend Oreille PUD was established in 1936 and began operations in 1948. The PUD is governed by three locally elected Commissioners. A General Manager and staff operate the utility within policies set by the Board of Commissioners. The PUD has four operating systems: The electric system distributes electricity to the county, the production system produces power from the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project, the water system consists of nine individual water distribution subdivisions, and the community network system provides wholesale broadband communication services. For more information visit: <http://popud.org>.