



Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

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PUD Secures \$1 Million Grant and Loan for Critical Water System Repairs in Metaline Falls

METALINE FALLS, WA. - Public Utility District No. 1 of Pend Oreille County (PUD) has been awarded \$1 million in funding—\$500,000 in grants and \$500,000 in low-interest loans—from the Washington State Public Works Board to address critical infrastructure needs in Metaline Falls. The funding will support the Metaline Falls Transmission Line Project, which includes replacing a failed drinking water main and stabilizing the steep hillside where the line is located.

On October 17, 2024, two sections of aging water mains ruptured on a steep hillside, causing a catastrophic failure that left 200 water customers without service for nine hours. The rupture caused 3,000 gallons of water per minute to flow downhill, destabilizing the hillside and washing debris onto Highway 31. Temporary bypass lines restored minimal water service but remain insufficient for fire protection or long-term reliability.

“This grant and loan are a lifeline for our community,” said John Janney, General Manager of the PUD. “This funding will allow us to take critical steps to restore reliable water service, protect public safety, and support the local economy.”

The funding will be used 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, a vital transportation route near the Canadian border.

“Without this funding, the risks to our residents, local businesses, and critical infrastructure would continue to grow,” said Janney. “We thank the Public Works Board for their urgency in approving this emergency funding and we are committed to working quickly to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone who relies on this system.”

The PUD is working closely with funding partners to finalize the terms of the loan in a way that minimizes financial impacts on Metaline Falls residents, who rely on this vital infrastructure.

“We recognize that affordability is a priority for this community,” Janney added. “We’re working towards making sure these repairs are completed without placing undue financial strain on our customers.”

The project is expected to be completed by summer 2025.

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>.