

Winter 2023

UTILITIES & YOU

You're getting warmer...

# New water rates went into effect on Jan. 1

You will see a \$1.73 average monthly increase on your utility bills if you live within the City of Tacoma and \$2.05 if you live in our surrounding service area. As a not-for-profit utility our customers own, you entrust us to ensure you get the most value and quality services you expect.

Your water rates cover the cost of providing you with safe, reliable water, maintaining utility infrastructure, protecting natural resources near our facilities, and investing in system improvements that make your services better. Rate adjustments help cover the cost of operating the utility and caring for its assets, make up for revenue shortfalls, and provide increases in payment assistance to customers in need.

Visit [MyTPU.org/Rates](https://MyTPU.org/Rates) for more information. **U\***

## Help others with their utility bills this winter

Keeping the lights on and water running is especially important for the most vulnerable during colder months. Assisting our low-income community members with their utility bills through online donations is now an option with the recent upgrades to MyAccount. Previously the only way you could donate was by adding money when you paid your bill with a check. Now you have three ways to give online:



Enrolling in a recurring donation.



Making a one-time donation when you pay your utility bill.



Making a one-time donation in a fixed amount or round-up your payment to the nearest dollar.

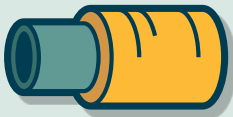
Our hope is that by making this process easier, we can help more customers when they need assistance.

Donate today at [MyTPU.org/MyAccount](https://MyTPU.org/MyAccount). **U\***



# How to prevent your pipes from freezing

Now that the temperatures have dropped outside, you should take measures to protect your pipes. Burst pipes are one of the most common causes of property damage during frigid weather and can cause thousands of dollars in water damage and leave you without running water. You can prevent frozen pipes by taking these steps.



Insulate pipes, valves, and hose bibs in unheated areas.



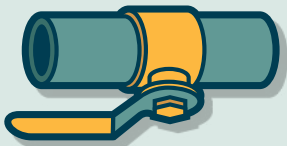
Open cupboards to allow air to warm pipes.



Remove, drain, and store garden hoses.



Turn off and drain irrigation systems.



Find shut off valves for emergencies.

For more ideas, visit [MyTPU.org/ProtectPipes](https://MyTPU.org/ProtectPipes). If you have a water emergency, call 253-502-8384. **U\***

## Nifty network provides numerous benefits

We own a broadband network that is used for cable, data storage, and internet. We use portions of it for our operational needs, and we lease the excess capacity to Rainier Connect. The lease revenue we receive helps us provide economic value to you.

We operate under the values and outcomes identified in **Strategic Directive (SD) 8: Telecom**.



SD8 is one of 14 Public Utility Board SDs that guide our efforts to stay accountable to you.

SD8 directs the full use of the capability and capacity of the network to ensure maximum return on investment, continued public ownership of the network, and value creation for the public and communities served.

Rainier Connect provides high-speed internet, cable TV, and phone service over our network. We are collaborating with them to provide free internet access to at least 30 locations that provide services to low-income members of the community.

Learn more at [MyTPU.org/SD](https://MyTPU.org/SD). **U\***

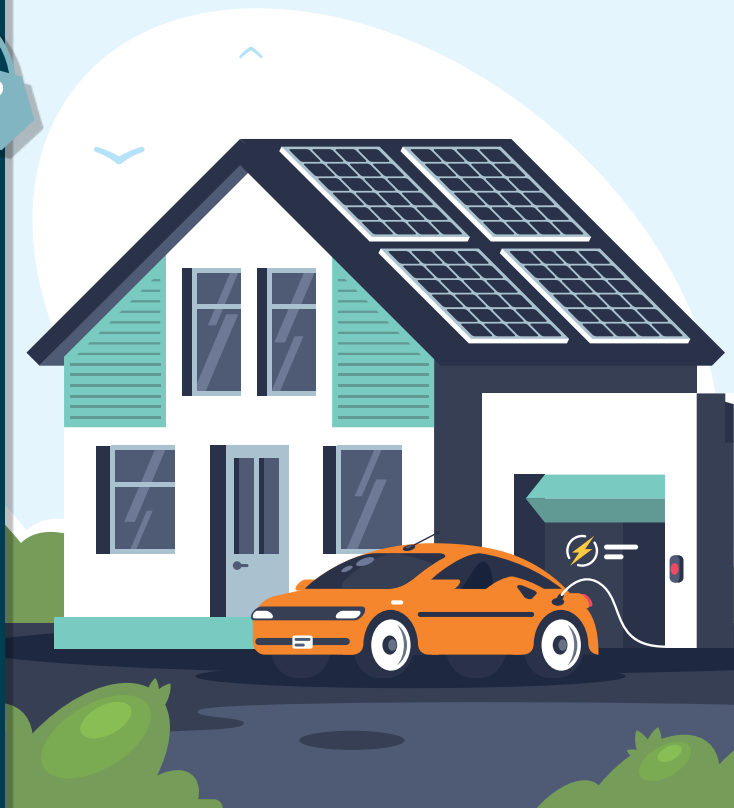
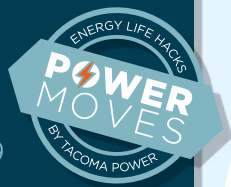
POWER  
MOVE #39

## Making cozy nights even cozier

Big wool socks aren't enough for winter's cold nights. But don't worry – you can stay warm (and save big at the same time) with Power Move #39 – Making your cozy nights even cozier. Upgrade your heating system, and we'll help you cover the costs. Heat pumps use up to 50% less energy than furnaces, and you can get a 7-year, 0% interest loan\* to pay for it.

Check out the offers we have on heating and cooling systems at [MyTPU.org/PowerMoves](https://MyTPU.org/PowerMoves). U\*

*\*Must have existing electric heat.*



## Get up to a \$600 utility bill credit when you install EV home charging

Whether you already own an electric vehicle but charge with a Level 1 or are considering an EV for your next purchase, now is the time to install faster Level 2 charging at home. Take advantage of one or more of these offers, and get up to a \$600 utility bill credit when you buy and install:

- 240-volt circuit
- Level 2 EV charger
- Smart splitter

You don't have to own your home to be eligible. You just need to be a Tacoma Power customer. It's easy to apply for the rebate and receive a credit on your utility bill.

For more information or to apply, visit [MyTPU.org/EVatHome](https://MyTPU.org/EVatHome). U\*



## New legislation provides more water and energy resources for our community and environment

The federal government has funds available to benefit customers and the environment in two recent spending packages.

The first bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allocates \$220M toward downstream fish passage at the federally owned Howard Hanson Dam on the Green River Watershed. In addition to being perhaps the most significant investment in fish recovery efforts in the Puget Sound region, these funds also benefit water customers through our ability to store additional water, making more supply available when our community needs it. The second bill, called the Inflation Reduction Act, provides new and increased incentives for energy-efficient home improvements, like installing heating and cooling systems. **U\***



### POWER MOVE #41 Keeping your energy-efficient resolution. Automatically.

Here's a resolution that's easy to keep - use a smart thermostat to automatically save money and energy.

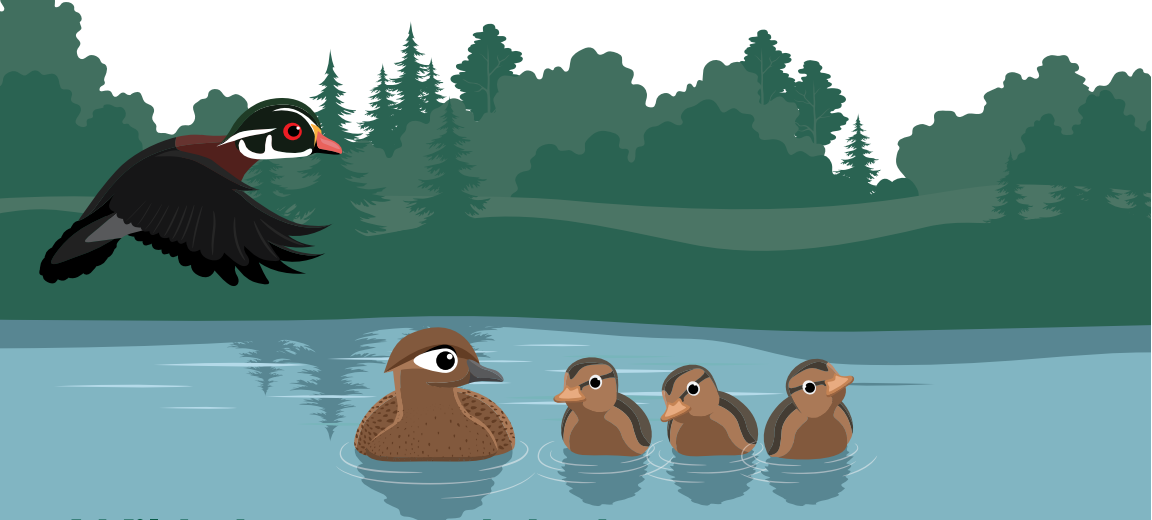
It might be the easiest thing you do all year. What if you could use your phone to tell your thermostat you were on your way home? Or what if your thermostat could sense when you were close to home and calculate the optimal time to make your home warm and cozy for your arrival? With a smart thermostat, these features and many others are standard.

A thermostat might seem like a basic feature of your home, but the kind you have matters. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heating and cooling make up about half of the average American household's annual utility bill. That means controlling your home's temp will significantly impact your utility bill.

With a smart thermostat, you can make the most of your heating system without wasting money or energy. Install one. Get a \$50 rebate. Done.

See other offers at [MyTPU.org/PowerMoves](https://MyTPU.org/PowerMoves). **U\***





## Wild about wood ducks

Much exciting work happens behind the scenes to bring you clean, renewable hydroelectric energy.

For example, we manage 20,000 acres of land around four hydro projects to protect and conserve wildlife habitat.

We provide and maintain wood duck nesting boxes, along with elk forage fields, bat roosting boxes, osprey nesting platforms, and habitat for many other wildlife species.

Wood ducks prefer to nest in cavities in decaying trees near water. Our nesting boxes provide a safe place for hens to lay their eggs. Hours after they hatch, the darling ducklings leap out of the boxes and make a beeline for the water.

Our biologists check 60 boxes three times a year; more than 1,000 li'l peepers have hatched in them so far!

Every time you pay your bill, a portion goes toward protecting wildlife – thank you! **U\***



## Creating pathways for students into STEM

Engaging with community partners and educators is one of three primary strategies that support our utility's equity goals to achieve a workforce that reflects our community and opens pathways to future employment.

Two education programs at our utility served over 60 students last summer and introduced them to attainable careers in STEM fields and career possibilities at TPU.

Partnering with the Boys and Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound and MESA of Tacoma/South Puget Sound (MESA stands for math, engineering, science, achievement) connected students with our employees who shared their professional journeys and information about interesting and often not thought of careers in utility work. The intent was to spark future interest in the vital jobs and services that enhance the quality of life in our community. **U\***



# U\* Calendar

All events take place online and in-person unless otherwise noted.

## JANUARY

- 1**  
New Year's Day | TPU offices closed
- 2**  
New Year's Day observance | TPU offices closed
- 11**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.
- 16**  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance | TPU offices closed
- 25**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

## FEBRUARY

- 8**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.
- 20**  
Presidents Day observance | TPU offices closed
- 22**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

## MARCH

- 8**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.
  - 22**  
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.
- Find a complete list of events at [MyTPU.org/Calendar](https://MyTPU.org/Calendar). U\*

## You make the call Area code (253)

<b>Report a power outage</b> .....	502-8602
<b>Start or stop service</b> .....	502-8600
<b>Home weatherization</b> .....	502-8363
<b>Fishing and recreation</b> .....	502-8690
<b>Fish and wildlife programs</b> .....	502-8008
<b>Education programs</b> .....	502-8224
<b>Power conservation</b> .....	502-8363
<b>Water conservation</b> .....	502-8723
<b>Report a water emergency</b> .....	502-8384

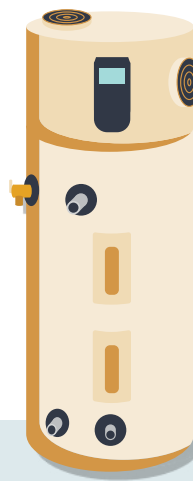
### Bill Payment Assistance (available for limited-income customers)

- **Electric bill assistance**
  - City of Tacoma residents ..... 572-5557
  - Pierce County residents ..... 855-798-4328
- **TPU Utility Bill Assistance** ..... 502-8400



## U\* readers know their water heater's lifespan

Congratulations and thanks to the 350 people who participated in the trivia published in the fall issue of U\* - *Utilities & You*. Your water heater generally lasts about 10 years before it needs replacement. To learn more about electric water heater replacement, visit [MyTPU.org/WaterHeater](https://MyTPU.org/WaterHeater). U\*



## U\* Trivia ANSWER AND WIN

What are the two best ways to make donations that help others with their utility bills this winter?

Be one of 50 randomly chosen people with the correct answer, and we will mail you a free prize. To enter, submit your answer by Jan. 31 either online at [MyTPU.org/Trivia](https://MyTPU.org/Trivia) or by mail to **U\* Trivia, 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma, WA 98409**. Include your name, phone number, and mailing address. U\*

Winter 2023

# UTILITIES & YOU

We produce and mail this newsletter for about 33 cents each.

© 2023 Tacoma Public Utilities  
Communications@CityofTacoma.org.

THE END

5214 1122



PO Box 11007  
Tacoma, WA 98411



Printed with soy ink.

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
TACOMA WA  
PERMIT NO 2

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER