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Mason County Public Utility District No. 1 receives national award for community service

Orlando, Florida, June 22, 2021 — Mason County Public Utility District No. 1 in Shelton, Washington, received an American Public Power Association Sue Kelly Community Service Award during APPA's National Conference in Orlando, Florida. The award recognizes "good neighbor" activities that demonstrate the commitment of the utility and its employees to the community.

Mason County Public Utility District (PUD) No. 1 implemented a COVID-19 response program to safeguard employee health, customer health, and the continuity of essential utility services for its customer-owners. The utility suspended all disconnections, fees, and rate increases, offering long-term payment plans for any customer that kept in communication with them. The utility's general manager was invited to speak at numerous forums through the Washington PUD Association, Washington State Association of Counties, and APPA to share best practices and materials with other agencies.

When PUDs in the state were met with resistance by counties to share CARES Act funds to assist in utility bills, Mason County PUD's general manager managed to procure a spot to speak at the Washington State Association of Counties weekly statewide briefing, along with a representative from the Washington State Department of Commerce, and she broke through the barriers to help county leaders realize that those funds needed to be put to beneficial use for their constituents experiencing economic hardships. It took five months of lobbying and attending various meetings, but the utility eventually secured over \$57,000 in CARES Act assistance, which helped 147 households experiencing a COVID-19-related financial hardship.

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The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. We represent public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 93,000 people they employ. Our association advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. Our members strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power.