

PUD hesitant to underground all power lines

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2 new potential substation sites

By:

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CHELAN - The Chelan County Public Utility District (PUD) might be listening to Chelan residents in their plea to underground power lines, but PUD Commissioner Ann Congdon wouldn't bet on all of the lines in Chelan going underground.

"The answer is no," Congdon responded after being asked if the PUD was under-grounding all lines in Chelan. "There have been several requests to underground distribution lines as part of the substation discussion. But there are significant costs to under-grounding power lines."

At the last PUD meeting on May 1, Congdon said staff presented numbers for underground and over ground lines, but that was just the start of the conversation of considering how, when and where to underground distribution lines and who is going to pay for the increased cost.

As far as the North Shore Substation, Congdon said specific sites have still not been identified.

"But two areas, very close to the "blue line" or load center, have been highlighted," Congdon said. "Staff is in the process of talking to owners to see if they are willing to sell, so we should be able to identify two sites by the next meeting on May 15."

Although developments are being planned throughout the Chelan Valley and the current load is hovering around 80 percent capacity, Congdon said staff is confident they can adequately service all new and existing homes until the new substation is up and running.

It was estimated the substation would take around two years to construct.

"The next step is to determine if we have willing sellers, getting options and then presenting these options to the customer focus group for recommendation to the commissioners."

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