Where can you stand in the shadow of a hydro turbine, look for a Geocache, hug 42 kinds of trees, enjoy Mama D’s peanut brittle, visit a museum and get eye-to-eye with a sockeye? Rocky Reach Dam, of course.

The Visitor Center is open for 2015 and welcoming you for another great season of fun, exploration and education. There are free tours of the powerhouse along with the Museum of the Columbia, plus art displays, a theater and fish viewing.

Guests can take the award-winning D3 Tour — a GPS-assisted scavenger hunt — to find the hidden treasures of hydropower on the Columbia River. Find all the geocaches at Rocky Reach and get a stamp on a D3 passport and a prize. To complete the challenge and receive a unique coin, “cachers” must fill their passport by finishing the geocache courses at all three dams, including Chief Joseph Dam, near Bridgeport, and Grand Coulee Dam, near Coulee Dam, on the upper Columbia River in Washington state.

In mid-March, our new café operator, local foodie and baker-extraordinaire, Gina Dugger, will open Mama D’s Kitchen at Rocky Reach to welcome guests starting at 9 a.m. on weekdays. Weekend hours will be added in April. Dugger will offer breakfast, lunch and a variety of local canned and baked goods, including gluten-free items.

You can read the draft plan at ourpublicpower.org and comment through March 23.

After hearing from the District’s Strategy Partners and customers-owners, and responding to input, board members aim to approve the PUD’s next strategic plan in early April.
What an amazing response you, our customer-owners, gave us when we asked for your ideas on how Chelan PUD might help improve the quality of life in the county. The results are wrapped into our new draft strategic plan. Read it at ourpublicpower.org. Commissioners set a final vote for April 6.

We heard you loud and clear: “Before you spend a dime on any extras, take care of the basics.” That means keep rates low; pay down debt; invest in our critical assets to catch up on maintenance; and make sure we have a “rainy day” fund for “what if” situations.

As we do that, and if our bottom line stays positive, the plan outlines a new “public power benefit” for cautious spending based on your responses to options for: parks and recreation; water and wastewater; fiber; electrification; economic development and reinvestment in the PUD.

PUD commissioners agreed the best way to provide public power benefits to all customer-owners is through low rates and high reliability. Deciding how to provide the best for the most for the longest period of time inspired great conversations. We hope you will stay engaged with us.

Thank you.

Let’s talk: We want to hear from you. Talk to us on Facebook.com/ChelanPUD
Find us on Twitter @ChelanPUD • Email us at contactus@chelanpud.org
Give us a ring at (509) 663-8121 or toll-free, (888) 663-8121.

Tree huggers, this is for you

Save the dates for three programs on tree horticulture sponsored by Chelan County PUD and WSU Chelan County Extension:

- May 12 - New Tree Essentials. This program will cover species selection, quality nursery stock, proper planting and early formative pruning.
- July 14 - Common Tree Problems will cover problems from insects and disease to environmental damage.
- October 13 - Mature Tree Care will focus on pruning and best management practices.

The Wenatchee classes are geared to arborists and landscapers, but open to the public, too. Details on registration are coming soon. Send questions in the meantime to Paula Dinius, urban horticulturist, at pdinius@wsu.edu

Needed tune-up also brings faster Internet

Maintenance to replace aging equipment in Chelan PUD’s fiber network is making the system more reliable and providing faster Internet connections.

PUD crews are doing the work in phases. The project started last fall in downtown Wenatchee, home to some of the network’s original electronics. With that area complete, crews are now working in west Wenatchee and scheduling future areas about 90 days out.

Service providers will let fiber customers know when work is set for their neighborhood. Plans are to finish the network maintenance by early 2017.