Media Release

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Mason PUD 1 Partners with Local Businesses for Supplies

PUD 1 Purchasing Agent Rich Crump (left), poses an appropriate social distance away from The Hardware Distillery owners Chuck and Jan Morris at their shop in Hoodsport.

Potlatch, WA – Mason County PUD No. 1 has found a new partner in its battle to protect utility workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hardware Distillery company in downtown Hoodsport has shifted their business model from producing craft spirits like whiskey and gin, to the production of hand sanitizer for the Mason County community. Jan and Chuck Morris, owners of the distillery, say they intentionally limit the offering of their product to Mason County to ensure that the limited resources are put to good use in their own community.

PUD 1, along with other essential businesses, are competing with the rest of Mason County's shoppers for supplies to keep their utility personnel working and safe, such as hand sanitizer, face masks, rubbing alcohol, bleach, disinfectant wipes, and of course, toilet paper. Lead by the efforts of PUD 1 purchasing agent Rich Crump and treasurer Katie Arnold, the PUD has been working creative angles and leveraging longtime relationships with suppliers and retail managers to procure the supplies the District needs to continue operating. When the opportunity came to partner with The Hardware Distillery company to purchase sanitizer locally in Hoodsport, it seemed like a perfect match.

Sanitizer is bottled in regular glass bottles- even airplane size!

The Hardware Distillery is unable to procure plastic containers, so they use their regular glass bottles. From a glance, the bottles of sanitizer look like regular bottles of alcohol one would buy off their shelves, but with different labels. They produce their 70% v/v (alcohol volume by volume) sanitizer from scratch, making it from an apple cider provided by Whitewood Cider Co. in Olympia. They have set up a barter arrangement with the Thurston County distillery to trade the apple cider product for finished bottles of sanitizer that the Whitewood Cider Co. owner then donates to a homeless shelter in Olympia. Jan and Chuck also donate sanitizer to Hoodsport's fire district and food bank, as well as Mason County's Department of Emergency Management. They retail their product to the public through Hood Canal Outfitters grocery store across the street, with new product

being stocked on Fridays. To control the supply for critical service providers, they only take special orders for essential businesses like PUD 1.

The PUD is very appreciative of the new business arrangement and hopes the new business stream will help keep The Hardware Distillery operating during the downturn. “What they’re doing for their community is really great”, said PUD purchasing agent Rich Crump. “Being able to use a local business here in Hoodsport to get sanitizer spray to disinfect our trucks and equipment is a win-win for everyone.” Over the last several weeks, PUD 1 has encouraged citizens and businesses still in operation to utilize local stores and restaurants for goods and services before going outside the county. “We’re all in this together and we want to still have each other around when the county and our country open back up for business”, said Crump.

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Incorporated in 1934, Mason County PUD No. 1 was the first public utility district formed in Washington State. PUD 1 provides non-for-profit water, sewer and electric services to approximately 7,200 customers in both Mason and Jefferson counties. The District’s mission is to provide customers with safe, reliable and valued utility services.

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