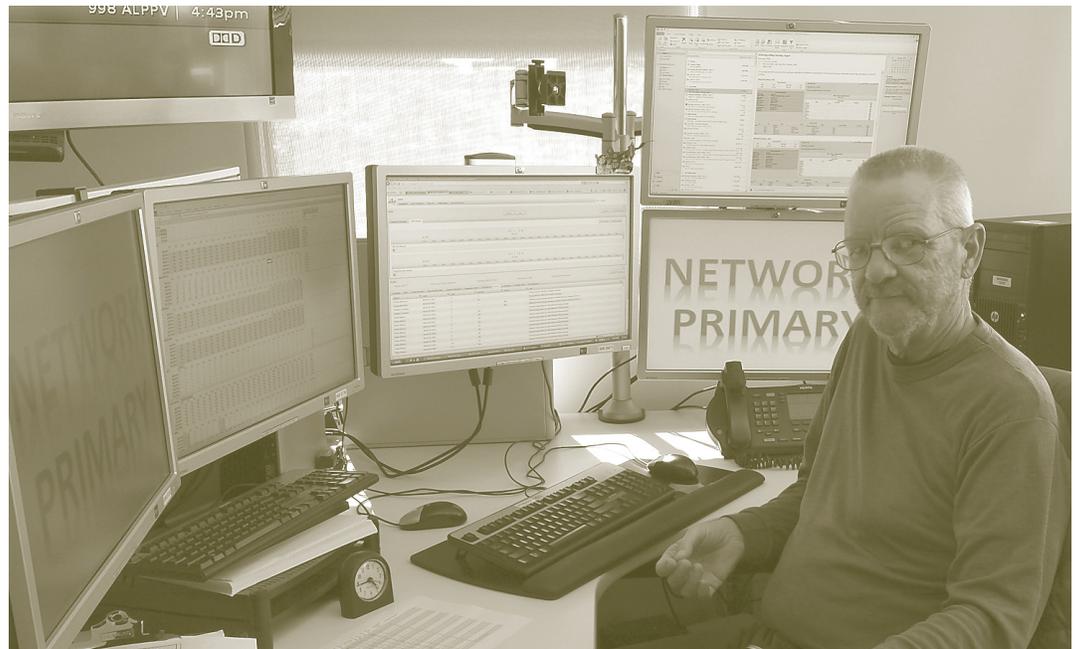


ANOTHER STEM INTERVIEW!

**Meet
Jed Folts**
PUD Hydro
Scheduler

We interviewed Jed to find out about his job at the PUD.



What sparked you towards a STEM career field?

I moved to a new city when I started high school and found myself at the top of the class in mathematics. I found that I enjoyed the challenge of trying to maintain this standing. I also found a real interest in science when I studied physics a few years later. These interests pointed me toward studying engineering when I went to college.

What type of training do you have?

I have a bachelor of science in mathematics and a bachelor of applied science in structural engineering. Also I have a secondary science teaching certificate and extensive computer programming experience. I've been at the PUD since May 2012 as a Hydro Scheduler. Before that, I worked at BPA doing something very similar for my last 10 years there. I did longer term planning before that and computer program support for that analysis. I started as a student in the transmission tower design research group, which pertained to what I was majoring in at school. Just goes to show, you don't know where your career path will lead.

What STEM skills are important in your job?

Mathematics and physical science education are required for the position. On an hourly basis, I have to estimate area load to try and set our generating resources to match that load. One main resource is the Federal Columbia River Power System. Of the six hydro dams that we operate, I have to determine flow, reservoir levels and generation. I base my hydraulic

analysis off the flows I set in the river. From this, I calculate what the reservoir content (elevation) is and, together with the required fish spill levels, what the generation will be. I match this against load and adjust the flows and resulting generation to meet load.

Why is your career unique?

Few jobs offer the chance to operate a 25,000,000-horsepower machine [referring to BPA's total operating capacity]. I've always found it challenging and rewarding. My job is also unique in that I work 12 hour shifts day and night on a five-week rotation.

What do you like about your job?

My job allows for opportunities to be creative in answering the questions and problems that arise in operating the Federal Columbia River Power System. I work in scheduling, so I don't worry too much about things when I'm done for the day. I've done it long enough that it's second nature to me. It pays well and I like the people I work with.

Any advice for students who want to go into a similar career?

When I was in college, I took a machine language programming class. I found the subject fascinating but couldn't see any future in computer programming. Stay open to what you find challenging and take any opportunities to pursue your interests. Joseph Campbell phrased it "follow your bliss."