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Subject: Happy Thanksgiving, and Some More Thanks!
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Dear Colleague:

The Thanksgiving holiday weekend is upon us, and once again we're about to head out to spend time with family and friends, to enjoy favorite foods, football, and those wonderfully sappy holiday shows that make some of us cry ... and to count our blessings. As I visit with staff in schools, and think back over how we came through a rather nasty storm, I don't think we have far to look to be thankful.

Last week I shared some stories of those whose work went "above-and-beyond" to keep us powered up and safe during Tuesday night's storm. Today, as we head into the four days traditionally dedicated to gratitude, I have a few more storm-related stories to share – and more reasons to be grateful.

Each November presents some special challenges to our colleagues in the finance and payroll departments because of the four-day Thanksgiving holiday. Your monthly check lands in your bank account earlier than usual in November because of the way the calendar dates fall.

On Tuesday last week, even without power in the CRC and no heat, the payroll and benefits staff were here to make sure that your paycheck would, as we expect, be on time this month. Here's what Payroll Manager Bev Rogers shared about Tuesday's day-saving and "pay-" saving teamwork:

"... if it wasn't for Ken Toyn, Jo Ann Buiteweg and other IT staff, all of the finance staff would not have been set up with a viable work station using a battery powered laptop and mouse. Anyone who needed an adding machine used their cell phone calculator. I think we all came to appreciate what we have (ex: electric staplers, electric adding machines, electric date stamp machines, microwaves, coffee pots, photo copy machines, etc.)

"... Accounting has a pay date tomorrow [Thursday], and they were busy getting data entered into the computer system. Karen Buchmann ran out and purchased a box of Starbucks hot coffee, and several of us split the cost of pizza so we wouldn't have to go out for lunch. And thanks to Gayle Watts who sat at the welcome desk for letting the pizza guy into our building."

The IT staff's response was critical to saving systems that went down in the storm on Tuesday (in the middle of the school board meeting!) and came back up that night under IT staff's care. All systems were successfully transferred from back up mode to the PUD on Wednesday and Thursday. Here's what Ken Toyn shared:

"The power outage ... could have been a catastrophe if not for the amazing efforts of Marian Armant and Dorothy McBride.

Within minutes of having the emergency power to the Data Center restored [on Tuesday evening during the board meeting] they “rolled up their sleeves” and began the systematic and very technically challenging task of restoring the operational status of every system in the board room, and in less than 3 hours 95% of all the systems were back online.

They followed up early the following morning to mop up the few remaining issues and assist transitioning to utility power. As it turned out, power was not restored to the building until Wednesday evening, so they spent the day onsite supporting the payroll staff by helping with temporary connections to printers and using the laptop computers to process payroll. They again came in early Thursday morning for the electrical power cutover to ensure the Data Center had no problems with the transition.

Two more examples of extraordinary teamwork by committed behind-the-scenes folks who do their work quietly and extraordinarily well so others can do theirs. Please join me in adding these teams to our list of reasons to be grateful this season.

A huge district-wide thanks goes also to staff and students already embarking and planning to embark on seasonal efforts to help others. I’m hearing of food drives, penny drives, pet food drives, and toy drives – all to help those less fortunate. In your work each day, you are helping others; during the holidays, that effort ramps up even more, and the community is better for it.

On Dec. 10, the district’s United Way fundraising effort comes to a close. Thank you if you have already chosen to help United Way. Many will be thankful for your generosity. If you are still thinking about it, you can return your form to the Foundation office here in the CRC.

To you and yours – may this holiday bring you other reasons and people to be grateful for – and for others to appreciate your giving ways. To our everyday heroes who help keep our Everett Public Schools running smoothly, we give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving!



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