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Eugene Water & Electric Board

Jill Hoyenga, Water Resource & System Planner

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Leak Detection & Repair
(on the customer side of the meter):
Navigate the Labyrinth of Risk

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Leak Detection

- High bill complaints
  - Customer Service Representative (CSR)
  - First responder
- Distribution system leak detection
  - Leaks traced to the customer side of the meter
- Meter reading or AMI
- Other?

You found a leak…now what?

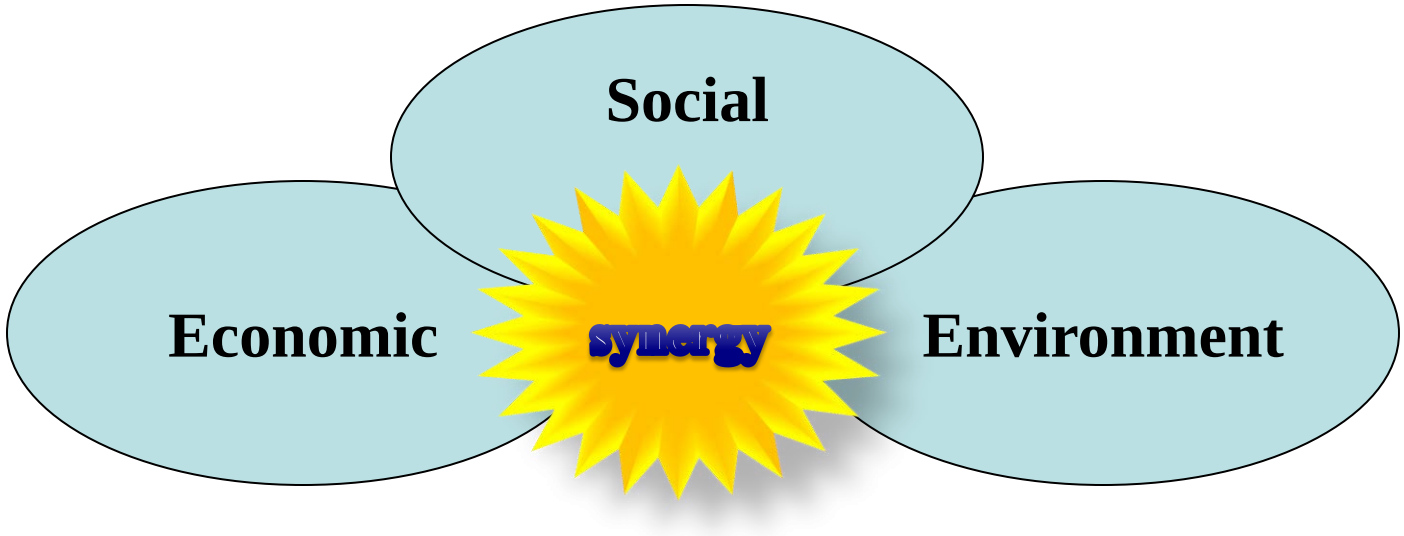
- High bill complaints
  - Low income/Fixed income elderly
- Distribution system leak detection
  - Notify, identify, inspect, observe…repair?
- Meter reading or AMI
  - Door hanger? Assistance?
- Other?

Help!

- Enter the labyrinth of risk…
  - Any “advice” or direction given by utility staff
  - Any work performed by the utility beyond the meter (including leak detection)
  - Any referrals to private contractors

Run from the risk…or manage it?

- Temptation is to run from the risk
- Compelling reasons to attempt to manage risk
  - Customer service
  - Write-off risk vs. Assistance risk
  - Water conservation requirement



Water Conservation

- Oregon OAR 690-086-0150
  - Technical and financial assistance
- Washington WAC 246-260
  - Leak detection and repair services specifically listed in WUE Guidebook
- Idaho Dept of Environmental Quality
  - Recommends distribution system leak detection, though not for the general public

Low Hanging Fruit

- Easy to communicate the benefit
- Clearest compelling need
- Easy cost/benefit analysis
- Easy reporting to regulator

At Your Service

- Customer wants your help
- You and/or your staff want to help
- Regulations say you should/must help
- Contractors see profit in helping

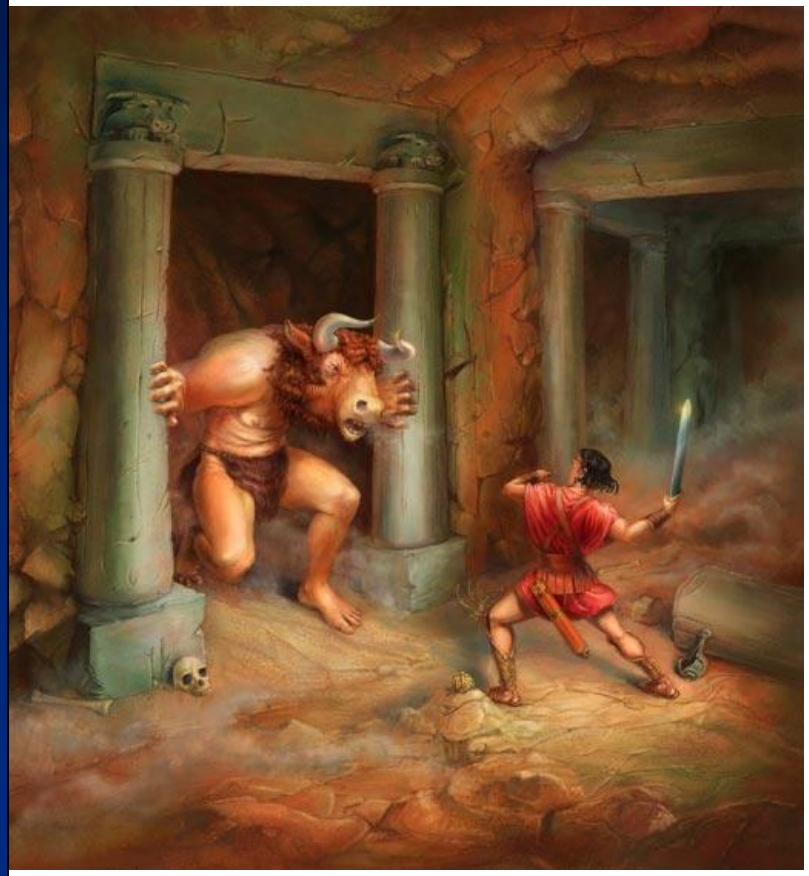
Perfect World

- Customer gets helped
- You and your staff just do the easy stuff
- Contractors just do the hard stuff
- Everyone is helpful and helped and happy

Nice Try

- Easy stuff
  - You touched it, you broke it…
  - The leak isn’t where your marking paint says it is…
  - A few years ago you fixed this…
- Hard stuff
  - Call my favorite plumber…
  - One call does it all…
  - Check the box and they will come…

Monster in the labyrinth?

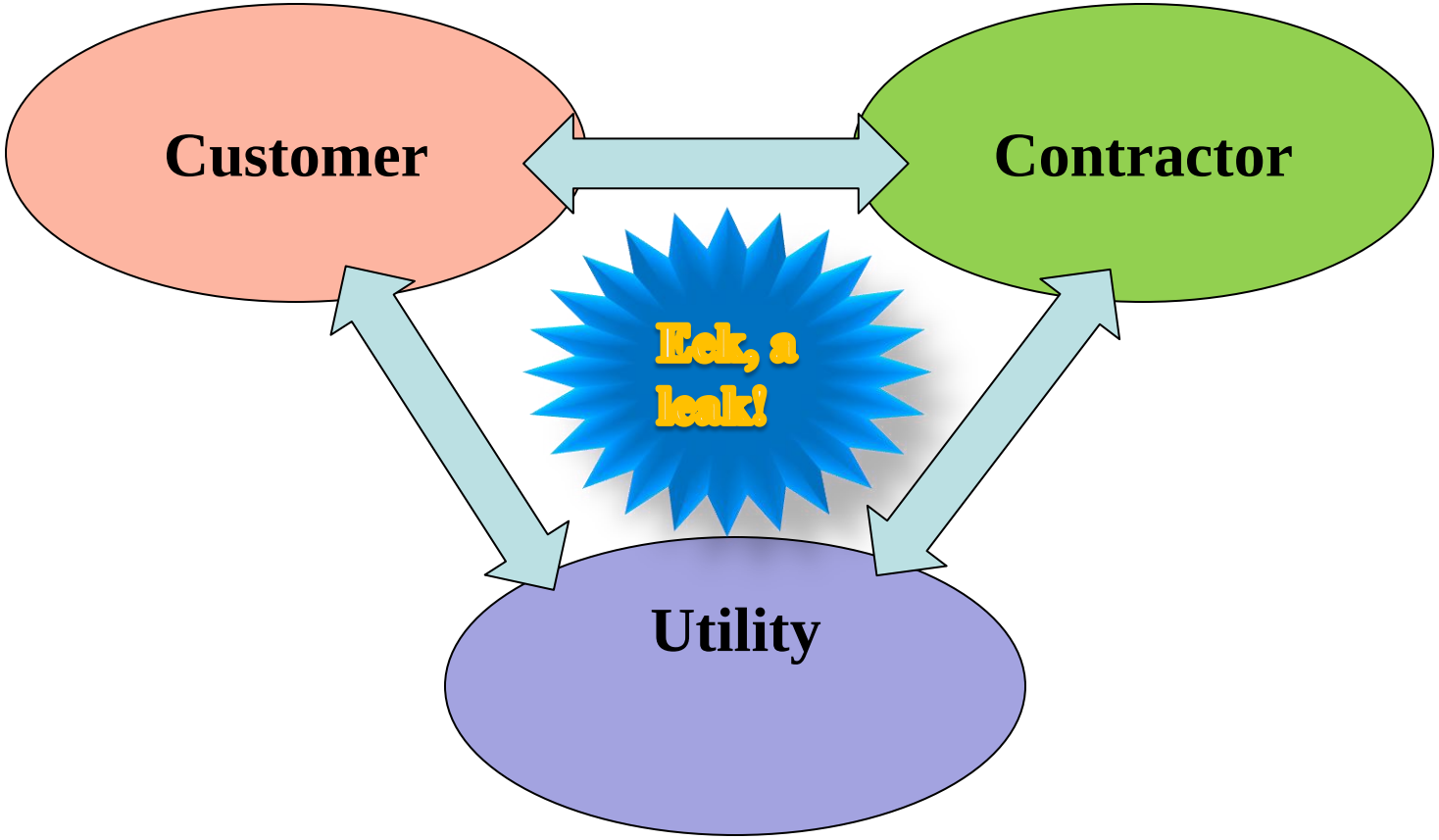


- Remember the Greek myth of the labyrinth ?
  - Minotaur: half man, half bull lives in the labyrinth
  - Theseus: hero who volunteers to slay the monster, and does it!
  - Ariadne: gives Theseus a ball of thread allowing him to retrace his path out of the labyrinth

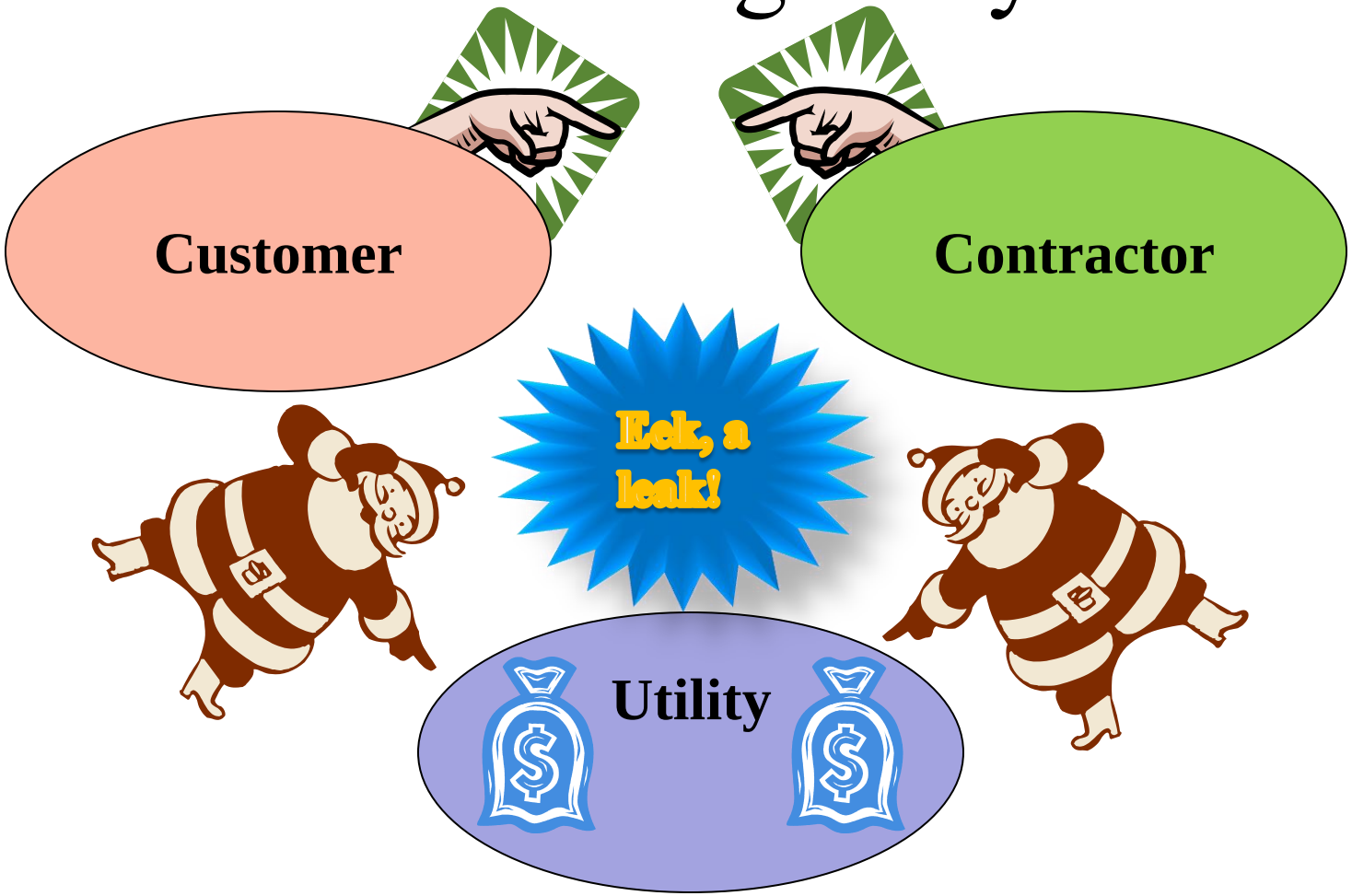
Today's Goals

- Help you identify some monsters in the labyrinth of risk
- Arm you to become the hero who slays the monsters
- Provide a ball of thread to guide your way safely out of the labyrinth of risk

Interested Parties



Interesting Party



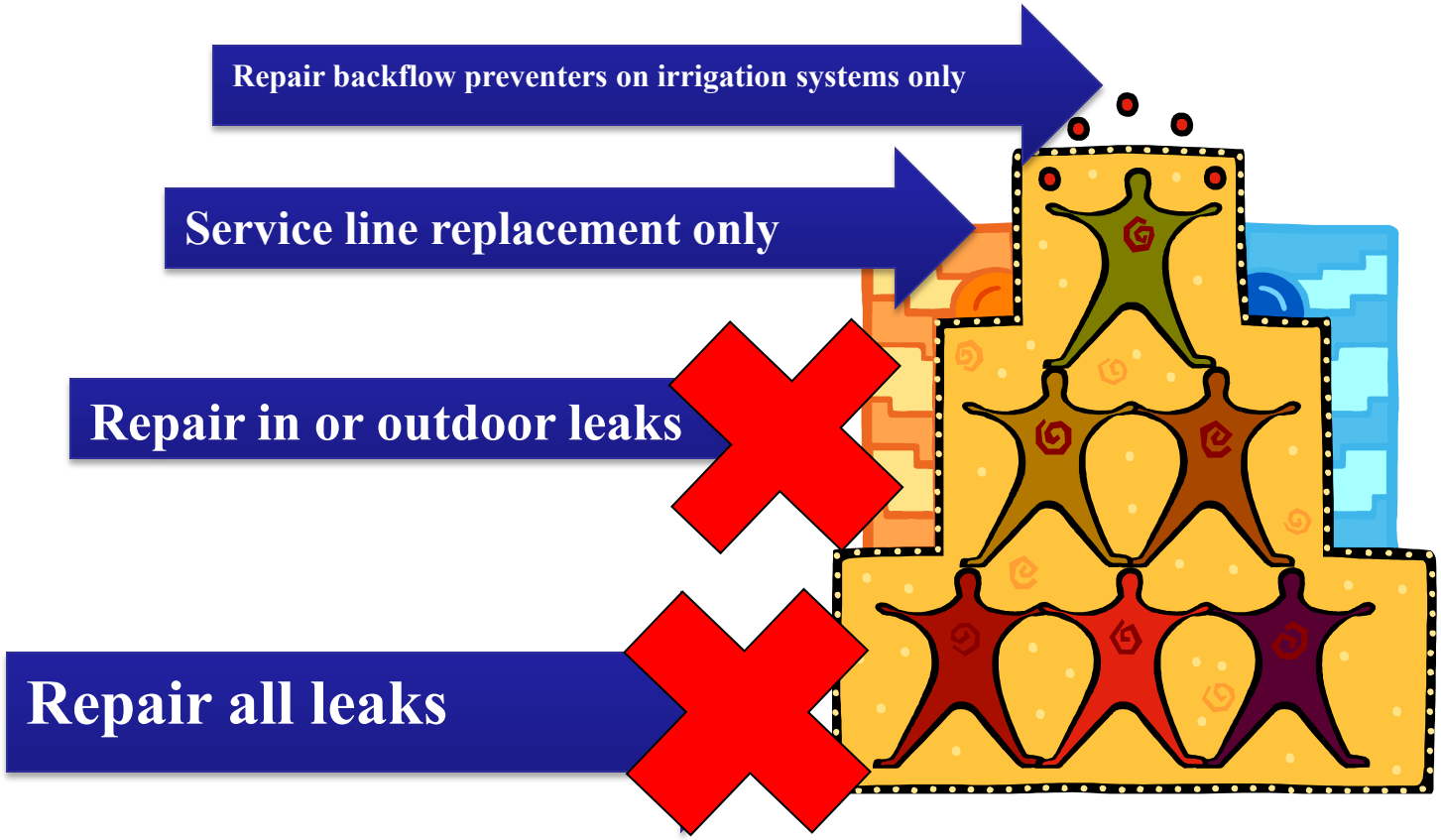
Narrowly Defined Path

- Regulating directive
- Narrow and specific contractual scope
- Process that allows and invites competition
- Prevailing Wage Rules (comply or avoid)
- Plumbing Code vs. Water Supplier jurisdiction

Regulating Directive

- Services (especially contracted services) are restricted to regulated requirements
  - OAR & WAC
  - Include a purpose statement in the contract citing the regulatory requirement
- Careful not to exceed regulations
  - PRSV, a cautionary tale

Narrow Contractual Scope



Invite Competition

- Initial and annual request for qualifications (RFQ)
  - Direct mail solicitation for initial RFQ
  - Web posting
  - Newspaper notice
- All program materials invite the customer's favorite plumber to apply if they are not already listed

Prevailing Wage Rules

- Public Works (public dollars) are subject to prevailing wage rules
- Not subject to PWR: Projects for residential construction that are privately owned and that predominately provide affordable housing
- Not subject to PWR: Customer project expenditures (private not public dollars)

Jurisdiction

- Make sure you create contracts only with companies authorized to do such work
- May further narrow the scope of the contract
- Excluded contractor groups must be well reasoned (no appearance of arbitrary criteria)

Domestic Piping

- Water pipe that serves domestic needs within a structure authorized for occupancy or issued a business licence
- Subject to the plumbing code
  - Only contract with licensed plumbers
  - Customer has the option of doing the work themselves
  - Permits are sometimes required

Irrigation Piping

- In Oregon, some licensed landscape contractors can work on irrigation systems, including replacement and repair of the backflow preventer

- In Oregon, plumbers may work on irrigation, but irrigation is not subject to the plumbing code

Irrigation Piping

- In Washington, the landscape specialty contractor can work on irrigation systems
  - For repair they must have backflow assembly tester and specialty plumber certification
- In Idaho, did not find any specific license for irrigation

Low Hanging Conservation Fruit

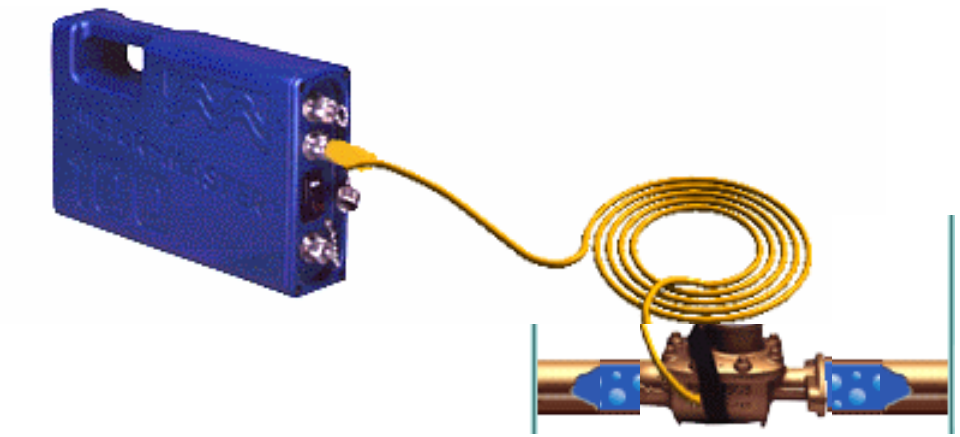
- Communicate the benefit
- Clearest compelling need
- Cost/benefit analysis
- Reporting to regulator

Benefits and Need

- Educate management
  - Value case (TBL)
- Roll-out to staff
  - Emphasize narrow path
  - Eliminate past risk-fraught behavior
- Promotions to customer
  - Target strategically
  - Match promotion goals to capacity to serve

Leak Detection & Repair Services

- Data logging/data capture
- Site inspection if allowed by program
- Bill analysis (before and after services)



C/B and Reporting

- Cost/benefit analysis
  - Lost revenue?
  - Water permit extension
- Reporting to regulators
  - Know reporting format BEFORE launching the program
  - Interval/estimate of saved water

Goals Achieved?

- Identify some monsters in the labyrinth of risk
- Arm you to become the hero who slays the monsters
- Ball of thread to guide your way safely out of the labyrinth of risk

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Rely on us.

Questions? Story to share?

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