

PG&E - Marketing & Communications | Your Energy Dollars at Work in Plumas County

We're in the Feather River Canyon. We're at the location or near the location where two fires have started, the Dixie Fire and the Camp Fire. While we're here today, we're undergrounding eight miles on two separate projects. And we'll have this work completed by the end of the year, before winter hits.

And what makes it possible is this piece of equipment, the single-pass trencher. It takes three different functions and puts them all together. So digging, laying our pipe, and backfilling it is all done with one pass, so it's, hence, the single-pass trencher.

The single-pass trencher allows us to do the work, basically, five times more quickly than we would with a traditional excavator or backhoe and dump truck.

When we're doing rock, and pre-cutting, and the conditions are right, 800 to 1,000 feet a day is very achievable.

The community is very much in support. Those that have lived through these fires are more deeply emotionally connected to the negative results of a fire. So us being here, for the most part, has been welcomed. Undergrounding is a reduction of risk of nearly 100%

I think there has been conventional wisdom that undergrounding is just too expensive, and that's why we built the system overhead. But as conditions have changed, that calculus or that math has flipped. Undergrounding now is the most cost effective way of building the system in the safest fashion possible.

On an average bill, customers pay about \$1.75 per month for our underground program. Contrast that with our vegetation management work. Customers pay \$22 a month. So when we underground, we're able to eliminate vegetation management work.

We're able to reduce our inspections. And we also improved the system reliability when there are winter storms, so it's a win-win for our customers. Not only is it cheaper, it's also more safe and more reliable.