April 17-21 – Africa In April Cultural Awareness Festival, Beale Street and Robert Church Park. For more information, call 947-2133.

May 4, 11 and 18 – Jimmy Ogle Walking Tours of Downtown Memphis. The one-hour tours are between four- to six-blocks long and are handicapped accessible. For information, call 604-5002 or visit jimmygoogle.com.

May 10-11 – Memphis Greek Festival, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 573 N. Highland, Memphis, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, visit memphisspecialfestival.com.

May 26 – Sixth Annual Sundresses & Linen at the Historic Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Ave., Memphis. Food, music, live entertainment and more. 6 p.m. to midnight. For more information, visit sundressesandlinen.org

National Safe Digging Month
April is National Safe Digging Month when many homeowners, residents and contractors dig, excavate, construct, landscape and garden. If there are plans to dig on your property, whether for fence posts, trees, gardening, home addition, etc., always call to get your utility lines located and marked first. Almost 60 percent of natural gas pipeline accidents are caused by damage from digging, excavation or construction.

Plan ahead. Call 811, the safe digging hotline, before you dig. MLGW, cable and phone companies will come and mark your utility lines for free. Allow 72 hours (three business days) for your lines to be marked before any digging. Always check to make sure your contractor has called 811 and had your lines marked before they’re allowed to begin a job that involves digging. Striking unmarked underground gas or electrical lines can be deadly, and they could be at any depth. Call 811 Before You Dig. It’s the law! It’s free and it’s smart. For more info, visit mlgw.com/811.

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Public power partnerships between TVA and local power companies, like MLGW, provide residents of the Valley with low cost, reliable power, job creation through joint economic development efforts, and an improved environmental footprint through our stewardship actions. The messaging is meant to help inform residents of the benefits they receive from public power. TVA does similar educational programs with other local power companies across the region to help them meet the needs of their customers.

MLGW 2019 Budget Updates
MLGW President and CEO J.T. Young announced budget reductions throughout the Division in March after the Memphis City Council did not approve rate increases for electric and gas. MLGW will not fill new positions and will reduce tree trimming and limit overtime.

The goal is to cut the 2019 Operations and Maintenance Budget (O&M) by $40 million and the 2019 Capital Budget by $150 million as compared to the original budget approved by the MLGW Board of Commissioners in October 2018.

The Division is committed to being a good steward while providing superior customer experiences but we are unable to make the infrastructure improvements that we had planned to do to improve reliability. We will do the best we can to minimize any customer impacts.

City Council did approve a temporary increase in water rates; it went into effect in March and will be in place through February 2020. MLGW customers will see their water bills increase an average of 45 cents per month. The measure will raise roughly $2.5 million and help cover a projected 2019 deficit in the utility’s water division.