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Community OUTREACH

News to the Neighborhoods from Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division

September/October 2013

Smart Talk: Serving Customers

The ability to focus on the customer is the hallmark of every successful organization. That includes anticipating customer needs and meeting those needs in a way that is simple for the customer. This is why Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division is committed to smart meters.

Smart meters provide options and opportunities our customers want — as expressed by 3,000 residential customer survey respondents. They want the ability to better manage their utility bills

with access to more information, to leave their gate locked, to select their own bill due dates, to pay as much as they want when they want for service — and more. Yet, a group seeks to deny these requests to the majority of our customers.

Still, MLGW's approach to smart meters accommodates this small group too; it's called choice. You can choose not to have a smart meter if you don't want one. You can choose not to have time-of-use (TOU) rates if you don't

want them. Customers have the right to have a smart meter and time-of-use rates just as much as others have a right not to have either one.

MLGW's vision is "to be the best utility for our customers," and one of the MLGW's values is "to always do what is in the best interest of the customers as a whole." Smart meters have been demonstrated to be in the best interest of the customer and are one of the solutions that will allow MLGW "to be the best utility for our customers."

MLGW in the Community

Community outreach and volunteer programs are always a part of MLGW's schedule. Some of the upcoming events that MLGW will be participating in include the following:

Sept. 1-9 – Delta Fair, AgriCenter; various days and times

Sept. 3 – Old Hickory Hills Neighborhood Association, Methodist South Hospital, 1300 Wesley Dr., 6 p.m.

Sept. 7 – Mid-South Convoy of Hope, Memphis Convention Center, 10 a.m.

Sept. 7 – Kirby High School Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Health Fair, 4080 Kirby Parkway, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sept. 9 – Rozelle-Annesdale Area Association, 1062 Rozelle, 6 p.m.

Sept. 21 – Memphis Police Ambassadors Citywide Community Appreciation Day, 999 Shady Grove, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sept. 25 – Memphis Public Library Sustainability Week, Energy Conservation for Teens, 3030 Poplar Avenue, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Sept. 28 – Anointed Temple of Praise Church Health and Information Fair, 3939 Riverdale Rd.

Oct. 2 – Senior Day at the Zoo, Memphis Zoo

Oct. 5 – Hermitage Chapter DAR, Ridgeway Baptist Church, Ridgeway Baptist Church, 2500 Ridgeway Road, 10:30 am

Oct. 12 – Festival Latino, Tiger Lane, noon – 8 p.m.

Oct. 23-24 – Wonders of Water [Students grade 2 - 8] Discovery Day, Lichterman Nature Center, 5992 Quince Road, 10 a.m. – noon

Oct. 24 – 2013 Collierville Business Expo, Cox Community Center, 440 West Powell Road, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Oct. 26 – Wonders of Water Girl Scouts Discovery Day, Lichterman Nature Center, 5992 Quince Road, 10 a.m. – noon

Nov. 7 – 18th Annual Germantown Senior Expo, Germantown Athletic Club, 1801 Exeter Road, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Nov. 8 – MLGW Business of Service Conference, 4949 Raleigh-LaGrange, 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

If you would like MLGW to be an exhibitor or speaker at your event, please call 528-4820 or request online at www.mlgw.com/speaker.

Interact with MLGW via: Twitter, Blogspot, Facebook and YouTube



Community Outreach is produced by the Communications and Public Relations department of MLGW. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions about this publication, please feel free to contact the Community Relations area of MLGW's Communications and Public Relations department at (901) 528-4820. Or call Glen Thomas, Supervisor, Communications and Public Relations, at (901) 528-4557.

Address all correspondence to:
Communications and Public Relations, Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division
P.O. Box 430, Memphis, TN 38101-0430

Smart Talk: Helping Our Most Vulnerable Customers

Memphis has a poverty rate of 26 percent. Imagine if nearly half of those impoverished residents took advantage of options to lower costs associated with their utility bills. No security deposits. No reconnection fees. The ability to pay in advance.

Smart meters provide that kind of flexibility. MLGW plans to implement a "pay as you go" option that allows customers to pay their utility bill much like their cell phone bill — in advance. Prepay lowers the risk for MLGW, which in turns means that security deposits would be eliminated. With no security deposit, that's \$150 less to start new service. That's \$150 more for other household needs. In fact, if 50 percent of Memphis' impoverished were to take advantage of prepay, the potential savings would be \$2.025 million.

MLGW connects about 100,000 customers a year for \$54 (same-day service) or \$44 (next-day service). With smart meters, that fee will be reduced to \$25.21. Again, using Memphis' poverty rate and assuming conservatively that 27,000 customers pay for next-day service, that's a collective savings of more than \$500,000 annually.

Smart meters also enable MLGW to streamline the process for reconnections after a cutoff. Right now, MLGW disconnects approximately 100,000 residential customers for failure to pay. An estimated 70,000 customers will reconnect and pay the \$25 reconnect fee the next day. Of the 100,000 whose utilities are turned off, 20,000 will have their power off for two or more days.

The new fee would be \$11.44 for reconnects. If we assume the 20,000 group are impoverished, the potential reconnect savings is about \$228,000 per year. But that's not all. Since service can be restored remotely, that means customers won't have to wait as long to get reconnected — within minutes, not hours.

That brings us back to "pay-as-you-go." Prepay customers won't have to wait for a bill. When their balances get low, customers will be notified. At any time, prepay customers will be able to pay for their service and keep on going. To learn more, go to www.mlgw.com/smartgrid.



Hurricane Elvis 10th Anniversary

On July 22, 2003, hurricane-force straight-line winds in excess of 100 miles per hour struck Memphis unexpectedly. The storm, dubbed Hurricane Elvis, toppled trees and power lines, knocking out power for 82 percent of our customers. In unsurpassed fashion, crews restored service to 339,000 customers in 13 days without lost-time or injury.



Call Now for Your Pilot Safety Inspection

MLGW's Pilot Safety Inspection program began Aug. 12 and will run through Feb. 28, 2013. If you're one of our many customers who take advantage of this program, you can schedule an appointment now. Appointments scheduled between Sept. 3 and Oct. 1 are free. Appointments scheduled between Oct. 2 and Dec. 31 will incur a \$54 fee. The fee will be billed to your account and covers up to three gas heating appliances. Each additional appliance over three will incur an additional \$17 fee. The service is free to physically challenged and senior (60 years and older) customers.

To schedule an appointment, please call 820-7878 to choose a date and time convenient for you. You may also use our Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) to schedule an appointment. You will need your 16-digit account number when using this system. You may schedule an appointment for a

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday for one of the following time slots:

- 8 a.m.– noon
- noon – 4 p.m.
- 4 p.m.– 8 p.m.
- Saturday appointments are either 8 a.m.– noon or noon– 4 p.m.

For the best selection of dates and times, please call as soon as possible. MLGW's Customer Care Center is open from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.



MLGW Opens Compressed Natural Gas Station in North Memphis

MLGW recently hosted a grand opening ceremony at the first compressed natural gas (CNG) public fueling station in Shelby County at 1130 Tupelo St.

The station provides drivers of natural gas vehicles with the ability to purchase fuel. Across the nation, many companies are turning to natural gas powered vehicles in order to cut their fuel costs. Currently, CNG prices (per Gasoline Gallon Equivalent) average about half that of gasoline. The price of CNG is driving the market with extreme fuel cost savings and improved air quality. Compressed natural gas is currently \$1.50-\$2.00 less per Gasoline Gallon Equivalent (GGE).

"It is our role to enable the public in a multifaceted approach," said MLGW President and CEO Jerry R. Collins Jr. "Natural gas vehicles are good for our economy, our environment and the

customer's bottom line so we wanted to make sure we have CNG available to customers in Shelby County."

In gasoline vehicles, evaporative and fueling emissions account for a significant portion of the emissions associated with operation. Natural gas vehicles, on the other hand, produce little or no evaporative emissions during fueling and use.

MLGW has 52 natural gas vehicles and plans to expand its fleet and build four additional public CNG fueling stations around Shelby County. For more information on natural gas vehicles, visit www.mlgw.com/ngv.



On hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the area's first public CNG station were (left to right): Paul Rice, West Tennessee Clean Cities Coalition; Alonzo Weaver, VP, Engineering Operations; Michael Taylor, Commercial and Industrial Customer Care; Ray Ward, Gas Engineering; Rick Bohne, AutoNation, and Virgil Deanes, Gas Engineering and Operations.

MLGW Takes First Place in Competition at 2013 Water Conference

The Kentucky/Tennessee Section of the American Water Works Association hosted the 2013 Water Professionals Conference in Louisville, KY from July 14 through July 17, 2013. At this year's WPC, MLGW took first place at the Top-Ops competition, and won the right to represent the KY/TN AWWA Section in the National Top-Ops Competition next June at the AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition to be held in Boston, MA. The Top-Ops Contest is similar to a Knowledge Bowl competition in which team members buzz in to answer water-related questions from various categories such as water treatment, water distribution, collection systems, water analysis and wastewater treatment.



(l to r) Jerry Collins Jr., President and CEO; Brandon Johnson, Water Distribution; Roland Person, Water Engineering & Operations; Chandrika Winston, Water Matrix; Phillip Richmond, Water Distribution; Nick Newman, VP, Construction Maintenance; Odell Johnson, Water Engineering and Operations.

MLGW Warns Customers About Scammer Calls

Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division has received reports of a scam involving a phone number and voicemail message from someone fraudulently claiming to represent MLGW.

Customers are receiving calls from (901) 310-9749 about their utility bill. The customer is placed on hold and the call drops. If the customer calls 310-9749, they'll hear a voicemail that falsely

claims to be an MLGW office and directs the caller to leave information that will result in a return call from the scammer. If a customer tries to trace back the call using *69, the number displayed on the phone is (901) 544-6549, the actual number for MLGW Customer Care, though the calls are not actually originating from MLGW. Police have been notified about this scam.

While MLGW mails cut-off notices to customers and uses auto-dialers alerting them that a payment needs to be made by a certain date to avoid cut-off, MLGW service representatives do not personally call a customer to request a payment. Customers who believe they have been targeted or victimized with this or any other scam should immediately contact the Memphis Police Department at (901) 545-2677.

Raving Fans: Customer Compliments

On a Sunday night, at around 1 a.m., a car crashed into our house rupturing the gas meter. I just want to commend MLGW on the excellent work you did in resolving our emergency. From the Customer Service representative who answered our call to the technician that installed the new meter, your employees were absolutely superb! My 90-year-old mother and I were completely panicked as the house was filling up with gas so quickly. Your emergency operator was so helpful and advised us what to do, and what not to do. When one of your employees arrived to cut off the gas, he also was exemplary. He put a chair out in the driveway for my mother to sit on, and ensured we were both okay, advising us what to do. He was so very helpful in getting the gas out of the house and helped to calm us down. His

professionalism as well as his friendliness made this disaster tolerable. And, finally, also very quickly, another of your employees arrived to replace the meter. I just can't fully express in words my appreciation for you and your employees. You never realize how important MLGW is until something extraordinary occurs. And, I had to let you know that I am so grateful for such wonderful service! Thank you.

Carolyn Palmer
Cordova, TN



MLGW Conferences Connect Attendees with Information

"Neighborhoods Get Down to Business" was the theme of the annual MLGW Neighborhood Leaders Conference held on Friday, Aug. 2 at the MLGW Joyce M. Blackmon Training Center. Approximately 125 community leaders attended and learned about Smart Meters, the City of Memphis' 311 Call Center, Nextdoor.com and other strategies to share with their neighborhood organization.

This year's conference also featured an opening plenary session where an MLGW representative shared and answered leaders' questions about Smart Meters. Attendee Diane White said, "My personal opinion, I think it's going to be an excellent program for those of us who want to use it."

In an interview with WREG-3, Cheryl Bone of Convoy of Hope shared that she learned about the 311 Call Center

and that "Anything you need to call the government about you can do there." During lunch, attendees heard from MLGW President Jerry Collins Jr. and Memphis City Councilman Harold Col-

lins. Councilman Collins talked about the importance of neighborhood watch and announced that the City of Memphis has allocated funds to re-launch a Memphis Neighborhood Watch office. President Collins warned the audience about scams MLGW customers have recently experienced.

Hate you missed the Neighborhood Leaders Conference? You've got another opportunity to get connected at the MLGW Business of Service Conference scheduled for Friday, Nov. 8. This conference is geared toward non-profit and faith-based leaders, their staff and others involved in service to the community.

Registration is \$10 and includes breakfast and lunch. For more information on attending the conference, call MLGW Community Relations at 528-4820.



During the Opening Plenary of the 2013 Neighborhood Leaders Conference, attendees asked questions and received expert answers about Smart Meters.