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Graves appointed to TVA board – On June 5, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination of Bishop William Graves to the Board of Directors of TVA. Graves served briefly in an interim capacity on the TVA board until the term expired in May 2007. He was also on MLGW’s Board of Commissioners, and is the only Memphian to ever serve on the TVA board.

Change in Customer Care Center hours—Beginning July 1, the CCC hours will change to be more accessible during peak calling times. The new hours will be Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Water rate increase in effect – On June 26, MLGW implemented a 15 percent water rate increase approved by the City Council last fall. MLGW raised its natural gas rate by 6.8 percent. Because MLGW’s water rates remain economical – ranking among the lowest in the nation – the increase will have minimal impact on utility bills.

MLGW enhanced Web site with outage map and other new features
MLGW introduced a new, more user-friendly main page design at www.mlgw.com on June 16. The new design offers easier navigation, greater flexibility, and new features such as a live outage map. The outage map incorporates Google Maps, enabling customers to zoom in for more specific outage locations. The new map also features a graph that displays an approximate range of the number of customers that are currently experiencing an outage.

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MLGW meets challenge of rising energy costs

For the last decade, the price for residential U.S. natural gas has nearly doubled, placing a significant burden on utility customers across the nation, including MLGW customers. According to the Energy Information Administration’s (EIA) short-term energy outlook report in June, the price was expected to increase further from an annual average wholesale price on the Gulf Coast of $7.17 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf) in 2007 to an average of about $11 per Mcf in both 2008 and 2009.

Now costs are escalating for other forms of energy. Coal has doubled in price in the past year, leading to cost increases for electricity produced from coal-fired plants including the 60 percent of power generated by TVA at its 11-fossil fuel facilities. The rising cost will be passed on to local customers via a TVA fuel cost adjustment mechanism implemented in 2006. Tennessee Valley residents have already experienced escalating electricity costs due to several TVA rate hikes of 9.95 percent, 7 percent and 7.5 percent in 2005, 2006 and 2008 respectively.

While no one, including MLGW, can control wholesale energy costs or weather conditions that influence energy consumption, a lot can be done to reduce the financial impact on households. MLGW does its part to minimize the burden including negotiating discounted supplies of electricity and natural gas through long-term prepayment contracts; making strategic purchases of natural gas; and ensuring price protection of these purchases using a combination of futures, options and market pricing. MLGW also engages in efforts to help shape the direction of federal and state electric restructuring to ensure continued access to reliable, low-cost electricity supplies.

MLGW also publicizes a wealth of information to help you make the most of your energy dollars. Anticipating a volatile energy climate for the foreseeable future, MLGW urges you to peruse its Web site at www.mlgw.com or call 544-6549 to obtain energy-saving tips, home improvement ideas, available assistance programs and an abundance of other pertinent information.

In even a prolonged period of surging nationwide energy costs, MLGW’s efforts have enabled the utility to provide competitive service. A 2008 Jacksonvillian Energy Authority (JEA) survey of residential electric rates from 55 public and private utilities shows that MLGW customers pay some of the lowest rates in the nation. MLGW will continue pursuing ways to contain energy costs for the welfare of our community.

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