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COMMUNITY OUTREACH
January/February 2016

Teens rev up engines with sun’s rays in A-Blazing Race

As a part of a fun-filled Engineering Day (E-Day), 22 local high school and middle school teams recently harnessed the sun’s rays to see who was the fastest and coolest solar-powered car on the track, during MLGW’s A-Blazing Race, which is a part of the University of Memphis’ E-Day. Arlington, Bartlett and East High schools participated in the high school category, while White Station, Collierville, Sherwood, Germantown, Houston, Millington and Memphis Home School Tutorial represented the middle school category. Schools with teams well on their way to the winner’s circle included the following teams:

- White Station Middle School

Behind on your bills? On Track may be able to help

On Track: For students needing help. On Track may be delayed until after you have received your check.

• Flex-fuel: More than 200 on-road light-duty vehicles which utilize unleaded gasoline or ethanol (E-85) fuel.

Health Consultants conducting gas leak survey

We’d like to inform our customers that MLGW’s Gas Matrix’s contractor, Health Consultants, is making phone calls to our gas customers to arrange for a follow up natural gas leak survey of their service and/or atmospheric corrosion meter check due to non-access issues (locked gates, etc.). Be assured these calls and requests are legitimate. Health Consultants is working on behalf of MLGW. Health Consultants is an authorized contractor and is scheduling mandatory, regulatory checks of natural gas services and meters. For more information, call 544-6549.

MLGW named in 100 Best Fleets in North America

Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division was recently announced as one of the 100 Best Fleets in North America. The utility was named 46th in the Government Green Fleet Awards for 2015, scoring higher than its previous honorable mention award in 2014.

The Government Green Fleet Award is open to all federal, state and local government fleets in North America. The rating criterion is based on hundreds of sources of green fleet planning and methodology. The evaluation standards are divided into several key categories: fleet composition; fuel and emissions; policy and planning; fleet utilization; education; executive and employee involvement; and supporting programs.

MLGW owns and operates a diverse fleet of alternative fuel vehicles used by employees for service calls, field inspections and project deployments. The portfolio includes:

- Compressed Natural Gas: 36 on-road light-duty half ton series trucks, 56 on-road heavy-duty three-quarter ton trucks and a one ton series truck.
- Hybrid: Twenty-four (Ford Prius, Ford Escape and Ford Fusion) vehicles powered by unleaded gasoline and a lithium battery.
- Plug-In Electric: Four Nissan Leaf vehicles powered 100 percent by lithium ion batteries which are charged by electricity from Level 2 EV charging stations. MLGW has five charging site locations.
- Plug-In Hybrid Electric: One Odyne on-road heavy-duty bucket truck used in electric line repair and installations.

“This award shows we are committed to making our community a better place to live for everyone,” said Jerry Collins Jr., president and CEO of MLGW.

MLGW assistance programs for residential customers

We realize that our customers sometimes have extenuating circumstances that prevent the timely payment of utility bills. To help ease this burden, we’ve developed the following payment and assistance programs:

Extended Payment Plan: In certain instances, MLGW may establish a repayment plan of a past due balance in addition to the regular utility bill.

Net Due Date: If you are late or on a fixed income and receive only one check at the beginning of each month, you may qualify for this plan. You may request the net due date on your bill be delayed until after you have received your check.

Holiday Bill Break: MLGW will defer cutoffs for nonpayment for all residential customers annually between December 15 and January 14 if they have an unpaid balance of $500 or less. The program allows customers extra cash for the holidays while protecting them from serious debt.

Winter Moratorium: MLGW’s Winter Moratorium provides elderly (60 and older) and disabled customers uninterrupted utility service during the coldest months of the year (December through February). However, customers are not relieved of their obligation to pay.

Third party notification: You may designate a third party for us to notify in the event of a pending service cutoff due to non-payment or insufficient payments. The third party will not be responsible for paying your bill, but will act as an additional communication link.

Plus-1: This program provides one-time utility assistance due to unforeseen events like a job loss. You can help by adding a dollar or more to your utility bill each month. For Plus-1 assistance, contact MLFA at (901) 527-0308.

On Track: Behind on your bills? On Track may be able to help you. The program provides energy and financial information to customers needing help.

Budget Billing: MLGW’s Budget Billing is designed so that you can pay the same amount every month on your utility bill. Your payment is calculated by averaging your utility bills over two six-month periods from the previous year.

AutoPay: With the MLGW AutoPay program, your utility bill is deducted from your bank account each month. You still receive a statement so you can keep track of your usage, but your checking account is automatically deducted on the net due date based on your bill.

For more information about these programs, call the MLGW Customer Care Center at (901) 544-6549, visit one of our Community Offices or go to mlgw.com.

Teenagers rev up engines with sun’s rays in A-Blazing Race

White Station Middle School students test their success in having the fastest solar car. They also won for having the best use of materials.

MLGW’s Winter Moratorium provides

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Robert Gallaher says he was a little skeptical of smart meters. He heard the rumors, but hadn’t had one complaint after his meter was upgraded. The new electric meter was installed in his Midtown home last year. An analysis of Gallaher’s consumption shows that his household’s electric consumption for the 12-month period starting in May 2014 (an electric smart meter was installed in April 2014) was 10.4 percent less than in the 12-month period starting in May 2013. (In comparison, the average residential customer’s electricity consumption for the 12-month period starting in May 2014 was only three percent less than in the previous year.)

Gallaher’s reduction is consistent with the results of MLGW’s, 1,000 smart meter pilot. The findings show customers with smart meters consume less energy than customers who do not have smart meters. For whatever reason, smart meters appear to make customers more energy efficient.

There are other advantages seniors like Gallaher and his wife Sylvia can enjoy. The remote meter reading capability means they don’t have to leave their gate open for MLGW to measure their consumption for billing, nor do they have to report an outage. The two-way communication of the smart meter tells MLGW when there’s a problem.

When Gallaher was asked about the perception of some seniors that smart meters are a threat, he replied, “People are afraid of change.” He added, “My wife and I are very well pleased.”

1-2-3 How electric meters are installed

Customers frequently have questions about smart meter installation, wondering if they need to be home. They also wonder what’s the big difference between a digital meter and a smart meter. Any time a new meter is installed at a home, MLGW workers snap a photo with their cell phones (photo 1) of the old electric meters they are replacing. They pull out the old meter (photo 2) and snap a second photo of the new smart meter once it is in place (photo 3). It’s simple, and in most cases a customer doesn’t have to be at their residence.

The process takes a matter of minutes unless a worker discovers there is a problem with the electric socket that the meter plugs into. While the meter is MLGW’s property, the homeowner is responsible for having a working electrical socket. When lights in a home flicker or fade, it is often the result of the home’s electric socket. The socket is similar to an electrical wall socket in a home. Just like wall sockets sometimes go bad and stop working, so do outdoor electric sockets at homes. MLGW has committed to repairing any socket problems discovered during installation.

The 2015 Residential Utility Trusted Brand & Customer Engagement survey by Coجانit Energy Reports named MLGW recently as one of the top three combined energy providers in the South for environmental dedication. The survey, according to Co건, measures “operational satisfaction, product experience and brand trust” among utility customers across the country. One hundred twenty-five of the largest utility companies were included.

MLGW was the only three-service utility company among the environmental category’s top performers. Barbara Vergelis Lundin of Smart Grid News said that the rankings in that category were based on “the extent to which consumers believe providers are supporting environmental causes, committed to environmentally friendly energy sources, encouraging green initiatives and offering tools to help consumers save energy.”

Earlier this year, MLGW’s J.D. Power Score was reported as 114 points higher than in 2006, making MLGW one of the nation’s most improved utility companies for customer satisfaction. Both of these survey results indicate a positive trend in customers’ overall perception of MLGW.

Raving Fans

Dwayne gave me a birthday card on my birthday, and he actually came and cut a few hanging limbs in my rental home.

The reason I am emailing you is that there are some people that have to complain about everything, and shouldn’t.

Dwayne and crew have been so kind to me through my bad times a year ago, and they are so happy that I am a happy camper now! I truly believe that the Lord puts people in one’s life for a reason, and I thank the Lord every day for these loving, kind souls.

Sincerest regards,
High Point Resident

Your utilities deserve a vacation, too!

Finally … vacation time! But before you firmly close and lock that door, take one last look around your house. Utility usage does not stop when you leave. In fact, unless you made some adjustments before departing, your usage could be nearly as high as when you are home. Before you leave, take some time to flip a few switches, turn a few knobs, and fix a few leaks.

Touch that dial… Start with the thermostat to maximize savings. Nearly 60 percent of your home’s annual energy bill is used for heating and cooling the house. Since you won’t be home, why keep the house at your regular comfort level?

During the summer, keep the thermostat above 85°, or turn off the air conditioner completely. Factors to consider are the presence of pets, and heat-sensitive decorations such as candles and oil paintings.

Getting into hot water… Your water heater maintains water at a constant temperature 24 hours a day, whether or not you are home. But you can adjust the thermostat to its “vacation” or lowest setting. Since electric water heaters have two thermostats— an upper and a lower – you must adjust both. Electric water heaters can be turned off at the circuit breaker also.

Money down the drain… A constant water drip the size of a pinhead can waste more than 1,500 gallons of water each week. Why not save money on your vacation and repair leaky faucets, toilets and showerheads before you depart?

Shine some light on crime… Use a timer to operate lights instead of burning constantly during your absence. There are several other measures you can take to deter crime while you are away. Stop mail and newspaper delivery. Ask someone to mow the lawn. Have a neighbor pick up your mail.

Saving energy pays… By taking a few minutes to make adjustments around your house, you can have your vacation and save energy dollars in the process!