



Energy Edge

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMPHIS LIGHT, GAS AND WATER DIVISION GENERAL POWER CUSTOMERS
MAY 2010



Test your business energy efficiency smarts!

Smart business means efficient business, and energy is one of the few areas where you can cut costs without sacrificing customer service or product integrity. Test your energy efficiency knowledge by taking this short quiz, and pick up some smart energy efficiency tips that can improve your bottom line. (Answers found on page 4.)

1. What two pieces of office equipment are the biggest energy hogs?
2. True or false? Computers and other office equipment (including printers, copiers, and fax machines) account for the majority of the electricity used in an office building.

REMINDER

Upgrades to MLGW's My Account trigger temporary password change

Effective May 1, existing users of MLGW's My Account web service will need their temporary password to login to the enhanced service. Passwords were emailed to all existing My Account users from MLGWDoNotReplyMail@mlgw.org on 4/27/2010. Check your inbox for details and instructions. If you need assistance with passwords, contact MLGW's Customer Care Center at 901-528-4270 or CRC@mlgw.org. Remember to update any website URLs you may have bookmarked, as they have changed. Read related articles in the February and March issues of *Energy Edge*.

LED signs tout "open for business" while saving money and energy

Almost any business—big or small—looking to attract attention or convey that it is open for business can benefit from an "open" sign in the window. Historically, neon signs have been the most popular versions; however, signs using light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are now a great energy-saving, cost-effective alternative that requires no compromise.

In fact, findings of a comparison study by Southern California Edison indicate LED "open" signs are a better option!

MLGW Rates

MLGW's current and historic electric, natural gas and water rates are published at www.mlgw.com, along with updated Purchased Gas Adjustment and Fuel Cost Adjustment rates.

Looking for updated Purchased Gas Adjustment (PGA) and Fuel Cost Adjustment (FCA) information normally posted in this spot? The *Energy Edge* editor is leaving on vacation, but the monthly PGA and FCA details are not yet available. Rather than delaying the newsletter until the editor returns, we're publishing this month without this information.

You can access PGA and FCA online at this URL, as soon as the information is posted http://www.mlgw.com/SubView.php?key=comm_genrateinfo



Important Contact Information

Commercial Resource Center:

Monday-Friday

7:30am-5:00pm Central

Phone: 901-528-4270

Fax: 901-528-4547

E-mail: crc@mlgw.org

Emergency: 901-528-4465

Outage: 901-544-6500

VIEW YOUR BILL ONLINE AT www.mlgw.com

- *Both have the same potential to attract attention.* They have similar brightness and are equally eye-catching, which is their main purpose.
- *They are available in the same styles and sizes.* You don't have to compromise the look of your sign.
- *LED signs are generally less expensive to buy.* On average, they are \$30 cheaper than neon signs (\$192 for LED versus \$222 for neon of comparable size ranging from 22" x10" to 37" x 20"). Many neon signs are hand-formed, which requires the skills of traditional craft labor. They have also been on the market for a while and have had time to settle into their current market prices. LED sign production is more automated and because the technology is newer, it is still decreasing in price.
- *LED signs have lower maintenance and replacement costs.* Because they last much longer than their neon counterparts, LED signs do not need to be replaced as often, saving you valuable time and money. The estimated useful life of an LED sign is 16 years; you would need to purchase four neon signs in that period. At an average cost of \$222 per neon sign, that's a total cost of \$888 versus the \$192 spent on a single LED sign—a difference of \$696!
- *LED signs use less energy, resulting in lower operating costs.* For a sign of a typical size that is on for 12 hours per day, 365 days per year, LEDs can save business owners 133 kilowatt-hours per year, or an average of almost \$14 per year in electricity costs (using the 2009 U.S. Energy Information Administration average electricity price of \$0.1031 per kilowatt-hour for commercial customers).
- *LED signs can be animated.* Many LED signs have an animation feature at little or no additional cost that allows each individual bulb to blink sequentially to create an illusion of motion or animation. Neon signs have limited animation because only whole tube sections can be turned on and off.

If you're looking to attract customers with an "open" sign in your window, look for LEDs.

NEWS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

MLGW seeks residential Smart Grid Demonstration volunteers

MLGW is seeking residential customers to volunteer for the three-year Smart Grid Demonstration, which will bring advanced electric meters, communications and more detailed energy information to 1,000 households within Shelby County in 2010. Although businesses and organizations cannot participate in the demonstration, you or your employees may be interested in participating at your homes. The limited-use project will help MLGW demonstrate the operational, economic and customer service benefits of Smart Grid.

MLGW will select 1,000 households at random from volunteer applications. Each home will receive a free advanced electric meter--which means no more estimated reads due to weather or access issues, and no more calling to report a power outage as the meter will communicate directly with MLGW. Some homes also will receive a free in-home energy display. Participants with Internet access will be able to view information in a new section of MLGW's My Account web service.

Volunteers can live anywhere in Shelby County, provided the area has adequate cellular coverage. If a renter, the customer must have lived in the home at least three years to participate.



The application deadline is Friday, May 14, 2010. If you are selected, you will be notified by early June. All volunteers are required to participate in MLGW surveys to provide feedback about their experience, which will help MLGW develop a business case for system-wide deployment.

To access the application and read Frequently Asked Questions about MLGW's Smart Grid Demonstration, visit www.mlgw.com/smartgrid

Rebound in energy efficiency spending predicted by new research

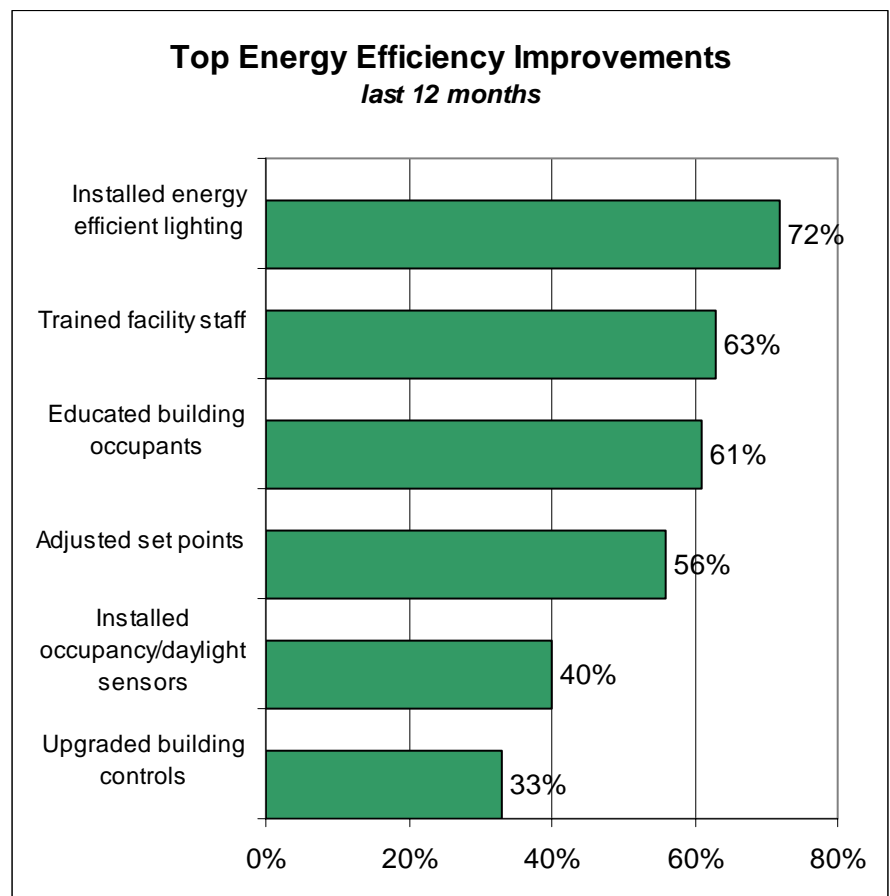
Annual Energy Efficiency Indicator points to rising costs, public image as drivers

Those looking for signs that the U.S. economy is rebounding can find encouragement in the fourth annual Energy Efficiency Indicator released in April by Johnson Controls, in association with the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and the American Society of Healthcare Engineering (ASHE).

The findings reveal that planned investment in energy efficiency is expected to rebound in 2010. Following a decline last year, the survey found that 52% (up from 46%) are planning to make capital investments in energy efficiency and 60% (up from 55%) are planning to make operating budget expenditures in efficiency programs over the next 12 months. However, a significant number of the business leaders surveyed (38%) said that the largest barrier to making energy efficiency investments is limited capital availability.

Highlights from this year's survey:

- When asked what specific energy efficiency improvements have been implemented over the past 12 months, the most popular are those with low capital cost and/or a rapid return on investment. (see graph)
- 65% of business leaders say they are paying more attention to energy efficiency than they were one year ago.
- 84% of respondents say that energy efficiency is a priority for new construction and retrofit projects planned for this year.
- 97% of respondents stated energy costs savings were the most important factor influencing energy efficiency decisions. The next most important factors influencing energy efficiency decisions are: enhanced public image (63%), government and utility incentives (62%), and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (62%).
- 64% expect energy prices to rise in 2010. Overall, the average expectation of respondents is a 7% increase in the combined price of energy over the next 12 months.
- 75% of decision-makers believe significant legislation mandating energy efficiency and/or carbon reduction is likely within the next two years, compared to 85% in 2009 and 76% in 2008.
- Executives were also asked this year to predict what energy-related technologies would see the greatest improvement in performance-to-price ratio over the next 10 years. The top picks were lighting (51%), smart building technology (44%), solar PV (38%), electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles (28%) and nuclear power (22%).



The Energy Efficiency Indicator tracks energy management priorities, practices and investment plans among decision-makers responsible for commercial buildings and their energy use. A total of 1,435 decision-makers were surveyed in North America between February 23 and March 15, including CEOs, CFOs, real estate leaders and facility managers from a range of organizations including small businesses, global corporations and the public sector. For more details about the study and its sponsors, visit: <http://www.johnsoncontrols.com> and www.ifma.org

Plan ahead to reduce landscape watering, cut water and sewer fees

Outdoor water use represents roughly one-quarter of overall water consumption for businesses. It is prone to a number of problems that can waste large amounts of water each year—and, unless the grass or plants begin to look unhealthy, it can be hard to tell when water isn't being used effectively.

Many businesses use inefficient irrigation techniques, including sprinklers that turn on even when it's raining, those that water the sidewalk instead of the grass, or broken or leaky plumbing and sprinkler heads. As a result, an easy first step in saving water is to inspect the irrigation system to see if anything is out of place or operating ineffectively. Maintenance personnel may also be able to tell if water isn't being used effectively because it will generally result in runoff, soggy or dry spots, and even turf that is a little too healthy. If the system is set up properly, installing smart irrigation controls can yield further water savings.

Smart irrigation controls currently offer a number of features, ranging from simple rain and soil-moisture sensors to complex computer modeling systems that incorporate weather data, seasonal water use information, and even the physical layout of plants to be watered. Because many of these systems offer different features and prices, it's difficult to estimate the economics for a typical business. However, typical irrigation water savings range from 20% to 50%, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

There's another financial aspect to outdoor water waste: the impact on sewer fees. Unless your business has a separate irrigation meter, outdoor water use is subject to sewer fees just like indoor water use.

Additional Resources

- See previous issues of *Energy Edge* for additional ideas on water use
- Portfolio Manager (www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=evaluate_performance.bus_portfoliomanager), a software package available free from Energy Star, allows you to monitor multiple water meters, track a facility's water use over time, and compare water consumption with similar facilities.
- The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy web site provides several calculators to analyze lifetime savings resulting from the implementation of various water-saving technologies: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/calculators/homes.html>

Test your business energy efficiency smarts: **ANSWERS**



1. What two pieces of office equipment are the biggest energy hogs?

Refrigerated vending machines and coffeemakers. Cold-beverage vending machines typically operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In addition to consuming 2,500 to 4,400 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year, they add to cooling loads in the spaces they occupy. Installing timers or occupancy sensors can yield energy savings by allowing the machines to turn on only when a customer is present or when the compressor must run to maintain the product at the desired temperature. When choosing a new vending machine, select an Energy Star-rated model to ensure that it uses efficient compressors, fan motors and lighting systems.

Large commercial coffeemakers are often the second-largest individual plug load in the office—with most of the energy going toward keeping the water hot 24 hours a day. Businesses can save close to \$100 per year by installing timers so that water is not heated overnight or by using smaller household coffeemaker models.

2. True or false? Computers and other office equipment (including printers, copiers, and fax machines) account for the majority of the electricity used in an office building.

False. Lighting accounts for the largest portion—more than 35%—of a commercial building’s electricity bill, making it one of the best targets for energy savings. Read more about energy saving opportunities for lighting (and office equipment) at www.mlgw.com/BusinessEnergyAdvisor .

Energy Edge is published by the Commercial & Industrial Customer Care department of Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division, which serves all non-residential customers including business, government, institutions and non-profit organizations. Comments and distribution list changes may be e-mailed to: CRC@mlgw.org