

Community OUTREACH

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

September/October 2009

Strong Congregations Strengthen the Community

"Strong Congregations Strengthen the Community" is the theme for the 2009 MLGW Business of Being a Church Conference scheduled for Friday, November 13, 2009 from 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The conference is an annual event hosted by MLGW for ministers, their staffs and others who lead church activities, and it's aimed at providing ministers and their staffs the opportunity to network and acquire new skills.

The conference offers an array of workshops to aid churches in building their ministry and is also a forum for MLGW to share information about its programs, services and activities. "Institutions of faith are the hub of many communities, and they serve as excellent vehicles to communicate through," says

Glen Thomas, MLGW Supervisor of Communications and Public Relations. "It is our hope that conference attendees will use and disseminate the information gained at the conference with members of their congregations."

This year's conference will feature workshops with subjects ranging from using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to Bridging Diversity and Strategic Planning. The conference will be held at the MLGW Joyce M. Blackmon Training Center at 4949 Raleigh-LaGrange Road at Covington Pike.

Registration for the conference is \$5 and includes a continental breakfast and buffet lunch. For more information, call MLGW Community Relations at 528-4322.



Appointments for Annual Pilot Light-up Inspections

It's that time of year when MLGW customers can schedule appointments for pilot light-up inspections. The service is free to all customers prior to October 6 and after December 31.

Customers can call 820-7878 to schedule an appointment date and time which will be most convenient: 8 a.m. - noon; noon - 4 p.m.; or 4-8 p.m. Saturday appointments are also available. For the best selection of dates and times, please call as soon as possible.

Floor furnaces and wall furnaces should be cleaned prior to the technician's arrival to light your furnace. If your furnace is in the attic, proper access must be provided.

MLGW inspection appointments worked October 6 through December 31 will be assessed a \$27 service fee that will be billed to the customer's account. The fee covers up to three gas heating appliances in your home; each additional gas appliance will incur a \$14 fee. If your utilities are listed in your name, and you are 60 years of age or disabled, the service will be provided at no charge as long as you present the Customer Service Representative with verification at the time of service. MLGW representatives will always have an MLGW I.D. badge.



Small Investment Yields Big Returns

If you have been waiting on the right time to weatherize your home, now is the time. TVA and MLGW recently launched the In-Home Energy Evaluation Program where an investment of \$150 could return your initial investment plus another \$500 for making energy-efficient home improvements. These energy improvements can lower your monthly utility bill and may also qualify for up to \$1,500 in Federal energy tax credits in 2009 and 2010, yielding even greater returns for you.

The process starts with an in-home energy evaluation by a TVA-certified evaluator who will review your home and provide a report detailing energy-efficient improvements along with available cash incentives. The evaluator will also provide the names of qualified contractors.

The cost for the inspection is \$150, which is refunded if you make at least \$150 in improvements. In addition, each recommended energy improvement made within 90 days is eligible for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the installed cost, with a maximum rebate of \$500 per household.

“Homeowners are often surprised to learn that they are losing costly energy, but there are a number of ways to fix that. This program allows them to make those improvements, and at a fraction of the cost that they would normally pay,” says **Tom Chamberlain**, MLGW Residential Marketing Project Manager.

Individuals living in rental property can also take advantage of the program, but the landlord and tenant must both sign the Participation Agreement at the time of the Evaluation.

Call 1-866-441-1430, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., to schedule your appointment.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS *	
Energy Efficiency Measure	Cash Incentive 50% of cost, up to...
Replacement windows, rated EnergyStar	\$500
Storm windows	\$500
Duct repair/replacement and sealing for existing HVAC systems	\$500
Rehabilitation work (covers minor repairs such as broken window glass, glazing, and prime door replacement)	\$250
HVAC replacement (central air conditioning and dual fuel heat pumps; cost of gas furnace not included)	\$250
Attic insulation and non-powered attic ventilation	\$500
Floor or perimeter insulation and ground cover	\$500
Exterior wall insulation (knee walls only)	\$500
Electric water heater insulation blanket	\$50
Air sealing (including weatherstrip and caulk)	\$500
HVAC tune-up	\$150
Do-It-Yourself caulk, weatherstrip and rehabilitation work	\$250

*** Unless listed as do-it-yourself, all work must be performed by a member of TVA's Qualified Contractor Network in order to be eligible for the cash incentive.**

Power Line Debate

Whenever widespread power outages occur, particularly after storms when fallen trees damage the power supply infrastructure, discussion centers around whether overhead power lines in much of Shelby County should be buried underground to protect against damage and the elements. On average, four-fifths of MLGW customers experience one power outage per year.

In many newer, outlying neighborhoods, MLGW's residential power lines are underground thanks to new construction. But this amounts to only 37 percent of MLGW residential customers. Large commercial establishments often have underground service because transformers are likely to be grouped and more easily accessible for repair. However, underground power lines are not impervious to disrepair, and damage to substations that service neighborhoods with underground lines can often render entire neighborhoods powerless.

Though overhead lines can break or be damaged during severe weather, that damage is more recognizable, more easily located and often easier and faster to repair or replace. Non-functioning underground lines must be tediously excavated and extricated. After 2003's Hurricane Elvis when 309,000 customers were without power – some for several days – an MLGW study concluded that the costs to move the remainder of MLGW's residential power lines underground would cost in the range of three to five billion dollars.

While no one wants to see their power go out, rest assured that MLGW will continue to work to ensure our electric grid's safety and reliability whether lines are overhead or underground.



MLGW Uses Social Media to Improve Customer Communications

Tremendous interest has been generated recently in so-called “social media” – the instant messaging, networking and connectivity communication methods people use via the Internet, cell phones and digital devices. Companies have learned that social media can be effective ways to reach and better serve customers.

MLGW had sparingly used its Twitter account (twitter.com/mlgw) before a storm struck and knocked out power to more than 130,000 customers on June 12. Afterwards, however, the account proved to be a timely, effective and rapid way to respond to customers who used Twitter via their laptops and cell phones to find information about the utility’s restoration efforts. Many were using Twitter for the first time.

By the end of the storm, MLGW’s Communications and Public Relations department sent approximately 3,000 personal communications via Twitter to customers. The number of MLGW’s Twitter followers swelled to more than 1,500, up from 200 or so before the storm.

MLGW customers offered some comments: “I feel like I had personal contact with MLGW through Twitter,” said Mike Jones and Becky Sowell. “Whoever did the Tweeting got up to speed in a hurry and did very well navigating the whole Twitter thing. It was especially great that [MLGW President and CEO] Jerry Collins himself was on Twitter for one afternoon,” commented Melanie Se-more. “I felt like I was getting the ‘cutting edge’ information, but I was not subjected to information overload. The occasional map and screen-shot were appropriate and helpful,” added Carl Schultz.

MLGW also offers a blog which **Stacey Greenberg**, Communications & PR, maintains and updates. It’s called Bird on a Wire, and it can be accessed from a link at www.mlgw.com. Subjects range from community issues to conservation to energy-saving tips and more, and interaction is encouraged. You can find a link on mlgw.com to MLGW’s Facebook page, as well, which offers information and interactivity on similar subject matter. News media often utilize these social media communications to stay informed about MLGW issues.

As MLGW customers, you are encouraged to become MLGW Twitter followers and Facebook fans so you can not only stay informed, but also participate in the conversation. MLGW will continue to research and use new communication innovations to provide customers with the latest, up-to-the-minute information.



MLGW Works for You 24/7

When severe storms strike, MLGW crews can be seen across the city working around the clock to restore your power. But MLGW offers many services day and night that customers may not realize until they need them.

Some of the services MLGW offers 24/7 include locating and repairing gas leaks inside and outside customer residences and businesses, fixing downed power lines and restoring electric power, and repairing dangerous holes where MLGW barricades have been knocked down or damaged. Whenever they occur, MLGW repairs water main breaks and service leaks throughout its service area. And MLGW offers round-the-clock customer service activities such as phone lines for reporting the above problems. When you need MLGW, you can call 544-6500 for help, or more information.

In related news, President Barack Obama recently approved Tennessee’s request for disaster assistance following the severe storms that ripped through Shelby County on and after June 12 - assistance that will help the city and county with debris removal, repairing property damage to public buildings, and restoring damaged roads and bridges.



Plus-1 Needs You!

You might say it will never happen to you, but you never know when you might need utility assistance because of a family, medical or financial crisis. Yet donations to the Plus-1 utility assistance program have been in steady decline in recent years. Some have quit giving to Plus-1 as a statement, or a reaction to rising utility costs or other issues, but the truth is – people in Memphis need your help!

Plus-1 is a utility assistance program administered by the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA) that provides one-time utility assistance for those facing an unforeseen financial crisis. The program is mainly funded by MLGW customers through one-time donations or by adding a dollar or more to their utility bills each month. The funds donated to Plus-1 go directly to MIFA and are never used for any other purpose.

YOU can help make a difference by contributing to Plus-1. For more information on how to make a contribution or to sign up for the program, visit www.plus1memphis.org or call MLGW’s Customer Care Center at 544-MLGW.

MLGW in the Community

Community outreach and volunteer programs are important to MLGW, and the Division's Communications and Public Relations department is very active in our community. Upcoming community events include:

- Community Conservation Days, Oct. 5 & Nov. 3

Call 528-4820 to request MLGW Community Relations staff to be present at your event.



MLGW Employees Honored

MLGW employees **Bob O'Connor**, Substation Transmission Engineering, and **Trish O'Connor**, Reliability/Power Quality, were recently honored as Special Event Volunteers of the Year by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Memphis.



North Community Office Closing for Renovations

Starting in October, the North Community Office at 2424 Summer Ave. will close for renovations. The community office will receive a new HVAC system, roofing repairs, and office renovations that will improve efficiency and convenience to better serve MLGW customers. The North Office is scheduled to reopen in January 2010. Customers can visit other MLGW community offices at the following locations: 245 S. Main, 2935 Lamar Ave., 1111 E. Shelby Dr., and in Millington at 5131 Navy Road.



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

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MEMPHIS TN
PERMIT 95

Communications and Public Relations
Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division
P.O. Box 430
Memphis, TN 38101-0430