

Tips for Winter Energy Savings

It's that time of year when the leaves fall, the wind gets colder and winter is right around the corner. That means heating bills, which can average 40 percent or more of your annual utility costs.

Use the following energy-saving advice to help reduce your winter utility bills. These free or low-cost steps not only save you money, they also conserve precious energy:

- Set thermostat at 68° or lower when you're home. Every degree below 68° saves four percent on your heating bills.
- Wear layered clothing and thick socks to keep warm, then set your thermostat lower.
- At bedtime, lower thermostat even more and add extra blankets.
- Use a programmable thermostat and/or lower or turn off thermostat when gone for four hours or more.
- Close garage doors; cover foundation vents; close off vents and doors to seldom-used rooms.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed at night and on cloudy days; open curtains on sunny days for warmth.
- Make sure central heating air filters are clean or replaced regularly.
- Place rolled-up towels inside against bottom of exterior doors and window sills to block wintry drafts.
- Adjust your water heater temperature to 120° or "warm" – it still provides hot water.

Greater energy savings can be realized if you weatherize your home by adding insulation, caulking cracks and gaps, weatherstripping, installing storm windows and many other improvements. You can find more weatherization and conservation tips at www.mlgw.com.



Budget Billing – A Wish Comes True

Wish you knew the amount of your MLGW bill before you received it? Wish your MLGW bill was the same amount every month? MLGW Budget Billing, formerly known as Smart Pay, is your wish come true.

So why the name change? "Customers tell us they wish MLGW would start a program where they pay the same amount every month so that they can budget their expenses, but they are unaware that the company already has this," says Clinton Richardson, MLGW Customer Relations Manager. "We feel that the Budget Billing name better explains what the program does."



Wish you knew how the program works? MLGW analyzes your previous six months'

or year's total usage, adjusts for rate changes and weather conditions, and divides the total into 12 monthly installments, which you pay each month until the following March, when the Budget Billing installment for the next 12 months is determined.

Wish you qualified for the program? The name was not the only change made to the program. MLGW also eliminated the creditworthiness criteria and shortened the length of service requirement.

To qualify, you must have had an active account at your current address for six months. You must be current on your account to remain in the program, and if you are disconnected for non-payment or change addresses, you will be removed from the program and will not be able to participate in Budget Billing for six months.

No need to wish anymore! Sign up for Budget Billing by calling 544-MLGW (6549) or visit an MLGW Community Office Monday-Friday during business hours. Customers can also apply online at www.mlgw.com or e-mail their information to budgetbilling@mlgw.org.

Stay Warm with MLGW's Winter Moratorium

When temperatures drop, seniors and disabled customers may experience difficulty paying their utility bill. MLGW does not want to see anyone left in the cold.

MLGW's Winter Moratorium provides qualifying disabled and elderly customers (60 years or older) uninterrupted utility service during the coldest months of the year (December – February). This program does not relieve customers of their obligation to pay, but it does offer peace of mind with the promise of no cutoffs during the winter months.

In order to qualify, residential customers must apply by November 13, show proof of age or disability and have no outstanding balance on November 30.

Once customers have been approved for the Winter Moratorium they are automatically re-enrolled each year if they have a zero balance at the end of November. Previous customers will receive a reminder letter to clear balances in the mail at the beginning of October.

For eligibility guidelines and enrollment, customers should call 544-MLGW (6549) or visit one of MLGW's Community Offices.



Changes in Cashiering Procedures

MLGW has made the following improvements to its cashiering process involving utility-bill payments at Community Offices:

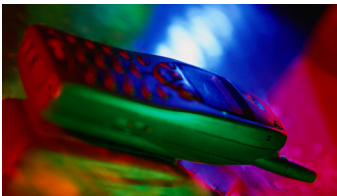
- Checks written to MLGW at its Community Offices will be debited from bank accounts that night, or the next morning. Community Offices have signs to alert customers that their checks will be debited immediately. The information is on monthly utility bills, as well.
- If customers have more than 10 utility bills they want to pay, they must take them to the Downtown Community Office at 245 S. Main by noon on business days, or put them in the mail.
- If customers have returned checks, they cannot pick them up from MLGW offices. MLGW will no longer have returned checks available for customer pick up. Customers should check with their bank and/or look for the check on their bank statement.

MLGW Mobile Alerts Program Launches in November

MLGW now offers text message notifications to give customers a heads-up on billing due dates and impending cutoffs. After a successful pilot period in which employees participated, MLGW has launched MLGW Mobile Alerts.

Participants in the MLGW Mobile Alerts program will receive a notification approximately three business days prior to their billing due date and/or scheduled cut-off date only if there is a balance due.

MLGW Mobile Alerts sign-up forms can be found at www.mlgw.com/mobilealerts. Customers should have their



16-digit MLGW account number and access code (found on their MLGW bills) in order to sign up. For more information, call 544-6549 or visit mlgw.com/mobilealerts.

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:

- The Business of Being a Church Conference, Nov. 13, MLGW's Joyce M. Blackmon Training Center, 4949 Raleigh-LaGrange Rd. (Call 528-4820)

- Community Conservation Day, Dec. 3, MLGW Community Offices
- La Prensa Latina Holiday Fiesta, Dec. 13, 4532 Getwell
- Southern Home and Garden Expo, Jan. 16-17, Agricenter International.

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



MLGW's booth for community events illustrates the message of energy conservation and how it can save you money on your utility bills. Glenn Smith, Safety/Tech Training, staffs the booth at the recent Delta Fair.

A Season of Giving

Plus-1

This is the season of giving, and many Memphians are suffering from financial problems, major medical emergencies and other difficulties. Many are unable to pay their utility bills. Join in the spirit of the season and help make a difference by donating \$1 or more per month to Plus-1 on your utility bill. Administered by MIFA, Plus-1 helps those in need of utility-bill assistance. All funds go directly to MIFA and are never used for any other purpose. Visit www.plus1memphis.org, www.mlgw.com or call 544-6549 to enroll.

Plus-1



Gift of Comfort

Give a special gift this holiday season, the gift of utilities. You may know someone who could use help covering their utility bills this winter. You can make a payment on someone's utility bill by going to www.mlgw.com, click on "Payment Options" and "Assistance Programs" and look for "Gift of Comfort," or call 544-6549. Show you care, give a Gift of Comfort this season.



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:
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OUTREACH

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

November/December 2009

Project MAX Marks 25 Years

Twenty-five years ago, some employees at Memphis Light, Gas and Water realized there was a need in the community – a need to help repair and weatherize homes and build wheelchair ramps for low-income, elderly and disabled residents in Memphis and Shelby County. The program they pioneered was called "Project MAX."

Now a quarter century later, Project MAX celebrated its 25-year anniversary in October.

Retiree Paul Bolden was the first Project MAX coordinator, heading up the fledgling MLGW volunteer-driven program that began in 1984. TVA had made home improvement loans available for weatherization, but many houses in poor neighborhoods did not qualify because they had everything from holes in their roofs and walls to broken and rotting windows and a multitude of other problems.

Bolden recalls the story of an elderly lady who was forced to leave her home because it was in such disrepair, it had been condemned. Bolden and Project MAX took the project under their wings, and began repairs to bring it up to code. The grateful homeowner was able to return to her refurbished home.

"Situations like that helped confirm just how great a need there was, and still is, for a program like Project MAX," said Bolden, who was program coordinator when MLGW was honored for its employee-volunteer efforts by the Thousand

Points of Light Foundation in 1989. Project MAX has been a mainstay of MLGW's volunteer programs over the course of its 25 years.

The program engages not only MLGW volunteers, but also depends for other organizations in the area to provide volunteers on worksites. Also, several departments within MLGW use Project MAX participation as team-building exercises. Over its 25-year history, Project MAX has made repairs to more than 4,000 homes. During that time, more than 113,000 volunteer hours have been donated to the program by more than 2,300 volunteers.

Project MAX founders, coordinators, volunteers and beneficiaries over the years gathered at a special luncheon at BRIDGES October 7 to mark the anniversary and honor program participants and volunteers. The following two weekends in October, Project MAX volunteers worked on 26 more homes in the Kansas/Riverview community. For more information about Project MAX, call MLGW Residential Services at 528-4188.



MLGW Offers Spanish EnergySmart Workshops

Earlier this year, MLGW began talks with the Latino community about offering its EnergySmart program in Spanish. Now with the help of the community, bilingual trainers have been recruited, materials translated and EnergialInteligente (EnergySmart) is prepared to offer do-it-yourself weatherization workshops in Spanish.

EnergySmart/EnergialInteligente Memphis is a partnership between MLGW, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), city and county government agencies, and non-profit organizations. The program is designed to help MLGW customers save money on their energy costs.

The partners are now looking for organizations to host EnergialInteligente workshops. Workshops may be scheduled Monday-Saturday and last approximately 1 ½ hours. Participants will receive a free weatherization kit and learn ways to reduce their energy costs.

If your organization would like to host a workshop (maximum of 35 participants) in English or Spanish, call MLGW Residential Services at 528-4188. For the best availability, please schedule your event at least three weeks in advance.

