

## MLGW/IBEW Local 1288 Present Check to United Way

The annual MLGW/IBEW Local 1288 United Way campaign reveals how much MLGW employees cheerfully give back to their community. A check for \$781,808 raised in MLGW's fall campaign was presented to United Way officials at the Feb. 19 MLGW Board meeting. Pictured are (l-r) employee campaign co-chair Bart Stoebner, United Way of the Mid-South President Harry Shaw, executive sponsor and VP of Construction & Maintenance Nick Newman, MLGW Board Chairwoman V. Lynn Evans, IBEW Local 1288 Assistant Business Manager Bill Hawkins, campaign co-chair TJ Redmond, United Way Fundraising Specialist Reginald Green, and MLGW President and CEO Jerry Collins Jr. MLGW has consistently ranked among the top six corporate United Way donors in Memphis, all without a single dime of corporate funding. Special thanks to our employees for their generous support!



## MLGW Celebrates 70 Years

MLGW turns 70 March 9, and for 70 years the Division has brought you reliable electric, gas and water services. In 1939, the city of Memphis bought then-privately-owned Memphis Power and Light and formed what has evolved into the largest three-service public utility in the nation. Visit [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com) to learn more about our history.



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. The Community Relations area also assists neighborhood groups and churches with training needs and technical assistance. Address all correspondence to:  
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P.O. Box 430, Memphis, TN 38101-0430

# Community OUTREACH

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

March/April 2009

## MLGW Continues Free Energy Kits and Classes



Got a few minutes after pumping gas at your local Exxon On the Run? An hour or so to hop on a MATA bus at an MLGW Community Office? MLGW is pulling out all stops in 2009 to help customers learn how to lower their utility costs. Now, an energy cost-cutting class with a free energy kit is just one stop away from all customers.

Last year, MLGW partnered with Exxon On the Run and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to organize the first MLGW Community Conservation Day. This successful effort has led to the establishment of monthly community conservation events where MLGW distributes free energy-saving kits and information.

On March 13 and October 5, MLGW employees will be at Memphis Exxon on the Run locations. Employees will also be at all MLGW Community Offices (except Millington) on April 3, May 4, June 3, July 6, August 3, September 3, November 3 and December 3. At the Community Office events, customers can also attend an EnergySmart workshop held on a MATA bus and receive an additional energy-saving kit valued at \$50.

"Simple changes like lowering the thermostat and sealing leaks can add up to big savings on your utility bill," says MLGW President and CEO Jerry Collins Jr. "The focus of Community Conservation Day is to educate customers about how these small changes can reduce their energy costs."

For more information about MLGW Community Conservation Day, call 528-4887.

## Spring into Safety

It's spring, and with the change of seasons can come severe weather. MLGW wants you and your family to be protected during severe weather outbreaks, and here are a few tips to keep you safe.

Identify the safest place in your home in case of emergency. It might be either a closet or bathroom in the middle of your home. Go there if you hear severe weather warnings.

- Stock it with emergency items such as a first aid kit, flash-lights, a battery-operated radio or TV, and extra batteries.
- Store either bottled or tap water in sterile containers – enough for several days, two quarts per person per day. Store some unspoilable food items that don't require heating, as well as a can opener.
- Include a whistle or similar device to alert emergency personnel in case of rescue efforts.
- Store a supply of necessary prescription medicines.

### When severe weather strikes, remember these utility-related safety tips:

- Never approach or touch downed power lines. If a power line falls on your car, remain inside until help arrives.
- Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water in case the lines are damaged.
- If you smell gas, do not turn on lights or electrical appliances or use the phone – or any source of flame or spark. They could cause an explosion.
- If you do smell gas after damage from severe weather, leave the building immediately. Go to a safe place and call MLGW. Do not go back into your home until an MLGW representative says it is safe to do so.
- If you use a portable generator, do not operate it inside your home due to carbon monoxide danger. Also, do not plug it into a wall outlet to power your home; that can cause a dangerous fire hazard.
- Should you have downed wires, gas leaks or a broken water main, call MLGW's 24-hour, emergency-only hotline at 528-4465.



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## Gas Pipeline Safety

In addition to being prepared for the dangers presented by severe weather, a little knowledge about natural gas safety is a must. It is important to know what to be prepared for in case of natural gas transmission pipeline problems.

Be aware of where natural gas transmission pipelines are located in your area. If your home is close to a major gas-supply pipeline, you should know what to do and where to go in case of a pipeline emergency. When warned to evacuate the area, do so immediately. The leading cause of natural gas pipeline accidents – almost 60 percent – is damage from excavation or construction. Other causes include rare damage by vehicles or corrosion.

Whenever you plan to dig on your property, check to see where your home's underground gas lines are located – even for spring planting. Call Tennessee One-Call first in order to have your underground gas (and electrical) supply lines located and marked. Failure to do so could result in an explosion (or electrocution). Plus, it's the law. Simply call 811 at least three days before you plan

to dig to arrange for a representative to come out and mark the location of your underground pipes and cables. Don't dig until they have done so.

For gas appliance safety, make sure your gas appliances are properly vented and inspected annually by a licensed professional. For more info on natural gas safety, visit [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com).

## Get Smart with SmartPay

You don't have to be a psychic to know the amount of your monthly utility bill. All you have to do is enroll in MLGW's SmartPay program. SmartPay averages your monthly utility payments so you can budget to pay the same amount each month.

When customers enroll in the program, MLGW analyzes the previous 12 months usage, adjusts for rate changes and weather conditions, and divides the total into twelve monthly installments. So to qualify for SmartPay, customers must have lived at the current address for a minimum of 12 months. Participating customers must also be current on their account and remain so while in the program by making their payment by the due date each month.

Previously, customers were required to have a good credit history with MLGW in order to qualify, but MLGW recently eliminated the creditworthiness criteria. "More and more customers are looking for ways to better manage household expenses," says MLGW President and CEO Jerry Collins Jr. "This policy change is just one of the ways MLGW is adapting to better serve its customers."

Applying is easy! Just call 544-MLGW (6549) or visit an MLGW Community Office Monday - Friday during business hours. Customers can also apply online at [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com) or by e-mailing their information to [smartpay@mlgw.org](mailto:smartpay@mlgw.org).



## MLGW Sends Crews to Help Restore Power

After recent ice storms wreaked havoc across areas north of Memphis, MLGW sent several crews to help with restoration efforts. A convoy of 12 MLGW trucks left Memphis on Friday, Jan. 30 heading to Mayfield, Kentucky, a city rendered powerless by recent winter storms. As part of a mutual aid agreement, MLGW sent three six-man crews, two supervisors and a mechanic to help clear downed power lines and restore power to Mayfield's more than 10,000 residents. In recent years, mutual aid agreements have assisted MLGW in restoring local power after windstorms and tornadoes.

## MLGW Relaxes Credit Policy to Aid Customers

With rising energy costs and a volatile economy, MLGW has implemented changes to its customer care policy (previously MLGW's "credit policy") to assist as many customers as possible while still maintaining sound business practices. The revisions went into effect January 1, 2009. Highlights of the changes include:

**Deposits** – The maximum deposit amount of \$500 has been reduced to a maximum amount of \$225, with a minimum of \$125. Also, new customers can pay their deposits over a five-month period in increments of \$25 instead of being billed the entire amount the first month.

**Definition of Good Pay Customers** – MLGW has changed the definitions of "good pay" and credit risk customers, resulting in a more flexible "good pay" designation. A-rated or "good pay" customers are not required to have a deposit and have a higher minimum balance threshold. For B-rated or "credit risk" customers, missed payment arrangements and poor payment history are removed from the criteria. Therefore, an additional 50,000 to 70,000 customers will move into the "good pay" category.

**SmartPay** – Because credit history will no longer affect a customer's eligibility to enter SmartPay, MLGW's leveled-billing program, more customers can participate and will be better able to manage fluctuations in their utility bills.

**Discount Allowance** – MLGW's Discount Allowance program allows a customer to earn a Discount Allowance after six consecutive months of not incurring a late fee. The Discount Allowance will automatically be applied on the first late payment assessed. A customer may accrue no more than three Discount Allowances.

**Deferred Payment Plan** – Customers will now be allowed to enter into a payment arrangement while on a Deferred Payment Plan.

**Hardship Criteria** – The new policy increases the number of days for hardship criteria from 30 to 45.

**Conservation** – In addition to altering credit policies, MLGW strongly encourages customers to conserve energy through a variety of communications including bill inserts, brochures, news stories, advertisements and MLGW participation in events such as Community Conservation Days. MLGW is also engaged in an advertising campaign that features PSAs on TV, radio and print, and billboards, to help customers save energy. Tips are also available online at [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com).



## MLGW's Water Rates are Lowest; Satisfaction Rising

MLGW is widely recognized for its low rates. In fact, Memphians pay the lowest combined water and wastewater rates of nearly 30 U.S. cities, according to the newly released 2009 report of water and wastewater bill comparisons compiled by Austin Water Utility in Austin, Texas. The report showed that MLGW residential water customers pay, on average, \$22.67 per month for water and wastewater service. Salt Lake City residents have the second lowest average bill at \$27.40. Seattle residents have the highest combined average bill at \$99 per month, according to the report.

Although a recent J.D. Power survey indicated that there is plenty of room for improvement in terms of customer satisfaction, third-party surveys of MLGW customers by Renee Enterprises show high levels of overall satisfaction. In 2008, 98.75 percent of randomly selected customers reported that they had favorable views of MLGW; of the total, 71.4 percent rated their perception of MLGW as "very favorable." MLGW President and CEO Jerry Collins Jr. has made customer satisfaction a top priority. "We always want to over-deliver when it comes to service," he said.

## Rental Ordinance Inquiries

With the recent passing of the Rental Ordinance, MLGW has set up a phone system for reporting energy-deficient rental housing and associated problems. Those calling to report problems or to request an inspection of their rental units should call 322-5757.