

# TAX FREEZE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE SENIOR CITIZENS

With the price of many things going up, some seniors can breathe a sigh of relief when it comes to property taxes. Earlier this year, the Memphis City Council followed the will of 81 percent of Shelby County voters, who voted for a Tennessee constitutional amendment authorizing local government to freeze property taxes for qualified seniors.

This does not mean eligible seniors won't pay taxes. The program allows the property owner's tax to be frozen at the 2008 tax amount, as long as no improvements are made to the home. If improvements are made, the assessed value of the home could increase. However, even if there are future property tax rate increases, the taxes for eligible seniors would stay the same.

The City of Memphis tax-freeze program is only for residential property owners in Memphis 65 years of age and older who earn less than \$32,590 (the city's median income). Even if your spouse listed on the home's deed is not 65 or older, you may still qualify, if one person on the property deed is 65 or older. However, the total income of all persons on the deed

must not be above \$32,590.

To qualify for the tax freeze:

- Property owner's age must be 65 or older on or before December 31, 2008.
- Must provide proof of age.
- Must be an owner of the property on which you apply.
- Must provide proof of ownership.
- Must own property on which you apply as your primary residence.
- Must provide proof of primary residence.
- Combined 2007 annual income of all owners of the property cannot exceed \$32,590.
- Must provide proof of income for all owners of the property.

The deadline to apply for the tax freeze is October 6, 2008, and seniors will have to recertify annually by providing proof of income for the previous year. For more information, contact the City of Memphis Treasurer's Office at (901) 522-1111.

# EnergySmart Relunched

MLGW and TVA will present a new and improved EnergySmart Memphis program to help MLGW customers reduce their energy costs through education, training and demonstrations, with the assistance of the Shelby County Community Services Agency (CSA) and MIFA. The program will be presented as a Do It Yourself Workshop for community groups.

- EnergySmart workshops are approximately 1½ hrs.
- Participants receive a free weatherization kit (one per household) and learn ways to reduce energy costs.
- Workshops can be scheduled Monday – Friday, or on Saturday mornings.
- Please schedule your event at least 3-4 weeks in advance.
- Please limit your workshop to a maximum of 30-35 participants.
- Workshops are conducted by an EnergySmart Memphis representative

To schedule an EnergySmart workshop for your organization, contact **Jacquelynn Royston**, Residential Services, at (901) 528-4181 or jroyston@mlgw.org. The EnergySmart program is a partnership between MLGW and TVA.



*John Moore, President and CEO of the Memphis Regional Chamber and member of MLGW's Community Advisory Council, praised MLGW's restoration efforts after the February tornado in Southeast Memphis.*

## Community Advisory Council

MLGW's Community Advisory Council (CAC) met at Division headquarters March 27, and discussed MLGW's new credit policy, 2007 Corporate Scorecard results, post-tornado clean-up efforts, Call Center issues and the Customer Bill of Rights.

MLGW President and CEO **Jerry R. Collins Jr.** told the CAC that in order to increase service levels at the Customer Care Center, MLGW has hired 20 new employees to help answer phones. He also announced a new EcoBUILD program in the works for energy-efficient renovation of existing homes rather than full home construction.

# • • • Call Before You Dig • • •

Spring is here. Got some yardwork to do? Don't forget to dial 811 before any dig – even when you're just planting trees and shrubs. It's very important to know where your utility lines are, and have them marked. The depth of gas, electric and water lines varies, and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can be very hazardous. Not only is there a danger of explosion from hitting an underground natural gas pipeline or possible electrocution from buried electric cables, you could also disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm yourself and

# MLGW in the Community

MLGW is an active participant in community activities and maintains regular outreach and volunteer programs. Recent MLGW efforts in the community:

- MLGW volunteers bowled to raise funds at the Junior Achievement Bowl-a-Thon March 1 at Billy Hardwick's All Star Lanes, raising more than \$23,000 for Junior Achievement.
- MLGW volunteers assisted at the Habitat for Humanity Spring Building Blitz March 14 - May 3.
- The MLGW Goes to School program in Memphis City Schools March 24-28, coordinated by MLGW Univ., featured MLGW employees giving presentations to students about utility career opportunities.
- MLGW volunteers assisted the Special Needs Jambo-ree April 1 at the Showcase Arena on Germantown Road.
- MLGW's Community Relations area staffed a booth April 18-20 at Africa in April, giving visitors information on conservation, ways to save on utility bills and online access to "My Account."
- Community Relations staffed a booth at Lichterman Nature Center's EarthFest April 19, informing visitors about energy saving, green power and conservation.
- Residential Services coordinated volunteers for Project MAX in North Memphis April 19 and 26, building wheelchair ramps and weatherizing homes for seniors and low-income residents.
- MLGW volunteers participated in the March of Dimes Walk: "March for Babies" on Saturday, April 26, at Shelby Farms.

those around you, and potentially have to pay fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

Be sure to call 811 a few days in advance of your scheduled dig to allow time for the request to be processed. Once your lines are marked, you will know their approximate location and can dig safely. Knowing what's below will protect you, your family and your neighbors.



# Gov. Bredezen Names Evans to Energy Policy Task Force

Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredezen has named MLGW Board of Commissioners Chairman V. Lynn Evans to the Governor's Task Force on Energy Policy. The Task Force has been asked to develop an energy plan that puts Tennessee at the forefront for renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and conservation, the use of alternative fuels and the development of clean-energy technology across the state.

The Task Force will begin its efforts this spring and includes representatives from the Tennessee Departments of Economic and Community Development, Environment and Conservation, Finance and Administration, and General Services.



## CCC's New Hours

MLGW's Customer Care Center has changed its hours of operation, Monday - Friday, to 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. to be more accessible to customers during peak calling times. Previously, it was open until 9 p.m. The CCC number is (901) 544-MLGW.



Community Outreach is produced bi-monthly 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 (901) 528-4557. The community relations area also assists neighborhood groups and churches with training needs and technical assistance.

Address all correspondence to:

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

# Community OUTREACH

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

May/June 2008



## Free Energy Kit

Receive a **Free Energy Kit** from TVA when you complete a home energy audit using one of three methods:

- An online version at [energyright.com](http://energyright.com), using average regional rates and does not include customer billing history.
- A printed version you complete and mail back to TVA (using average rates and no billing history). Request this version through TVA's website ([tva.com](http://tva.com)), or contact MLGW's Residential Services at 528-4188.
- Register for MLGW's My Account online at [mlgw.com](http://mlgw.com) and complete BOTH the "Home Profile" and "My Appliances" questions under the Home Energy Center tab. This **PREFERRED METHOD** uses local rates and the customer's actual billing history for more accurate results.

The Energy Kit includes two compact fluorescent light bulbs, outlet and light switch gas-kets, a filter whistle for your AC air filter, two faucet aerators, a hot-water temperature gauge, home thermometer and *How to Save* brochure. The campaign runs through June 30, or while supplies last. Limit one per household.

## Changes for Net Pay/SmartPay

Recent changes in MLGW's credit policies have affected both SmartPay and Net Pay payment programs. For Net Pay, the change allows seniors over the age of 60 who receive Social Security, pension or disability as their only source of income and are the users of record to participate in the program with a balance up to \$600. Previously, they had to have a zero balance. The change also applies to disabled customers whose name is on the account. Net Pay was designed for customers on fixed incomes to set their monthly payment due date after the arrival of their monthly check.

Also, the change allows Net Pay customers to jointly participate in SmartPay, where customers pay the same amount every month on their utility bill – calculated by averaging utility bills over two six-month periods from the prior year. Customers with a \$600 balance may now enroll in SmartPay, but must be enrolled in Net Pay, too. For information, call the Customer Care Center at (901) 544-MLGW or go to [mlgw.com](http://mlgw.com).

## MLGW'S EBILLING A HIT!

MLGW customers are signing up for paperless eBilling in droves! It's something you should consider if you have Internet access. It saves paper and energy, increases convenience and you can access information about your MLGW account. And it's easy!

MLGW now has more than 24,000 customers who rely on paperless eBilling, a bill production savings of more than \$110,000 annually.

To sign up for eBilling, simply go to MLGW's Web site ([mlgw.com](http://mlgw.com)) and look for the *My Accounts* link. As you register for *My Account*, you have the option of enrolling in eBilling. If you've already registered, log in and click on *My User Profile* to switch to eBilling.

When you REGISTER for *My Account*, you can see your monthly bill online, analyze changes, conduct an energy audit, and more. And you can receive a free TVA energy conservation kit when you complete an online energy audit for your home (see article to the right).

When you ENROLL in optional eBilling, your monthly utility bill goes paperless, you are billed online and you qualify to make free electronic bill payments from a bank account. For details, visit [mlgw.com](http://mlgw.com).

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