

Community OUTREACH

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

May/June 2009

MLGW Employees: Ambassadors in Community

Has your organization had a utility-related question arise at a meeting but didn't know whom to call about it? Now you can call your organization's MLGW Ambassador.

In April, MLGW had 28 employees complete the MLGW Ambassadors Orientation. These newly trained ambassadors will serve as liaisons between MLGW and key organizations in the community, and as speakers for schools, churches and other organizations.

The MLGW Ambassador Program is aimed at increasing MLGW's responsiveness to customers and will allow MLGW to be more proactive in responding to utility issues that are raised by key organizations.

"I'm happy to be given the opportunity to publicly represent MLGW and use my gifts and talents to serve our customers," said **Derrick Dones**, who works at MLGW in Security Automation and recently completed the orientation.

For more information or if your organization would like to have an MLGW Ambassador assigned, contact **Beverly Perkins** at 528-7673 or commrelations@mlgw.org.



The first group of MLGW Ambassadors recently completed their orientation and are ready to serve as liaisons in the community.

MLGW Wins APPA Awards



Reggie Bolin and **Philip Lim**, MLGW managers (center, left & right), pick up the APPA RP3 Award for the Division with **Maude Grantham Richards** (far left), chair of the APPA Board of Directors, and **Paul Allen** (far right), chair of APPA's RP3 Review Panel, in attendance.

The American Public Power Association (APPA) recently recognized Memphis Light, Gas and Water with two prestigious national awards.

For the second time in four years, MLGW has earned APPA's Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) Award for providing consumers with the highest degree of reliable and safe electric service.

"The RP3 award is independent confirmation that we at MLGW are working to improve our customers' quality of service," stated **Jerry Collins Jr.**, President and CEO. "I am proud of our employees' commitment to providing safe, reliable and cost-effective electric services to our customers. I believe that this award is in the best interests of our customers as a whole."

MLGW has also won APPA's Community Service Award for the premiere Community Conservation Day held last October. The award recognizes "good neighbor" activities that demonstrate the commitment of the utility and its employees to enhancing the quality of life in the community through activities that address a community need or improve the community's social, cultural, educational or economic environment, and provide an opportunity for employee involvement. It will be presented at the APPA Conference in June.

MLGW Bills among Nation's Lowest

Even in the depth of winter, when utility bills can be at their highest, Memphis residents still have, on average, one of the lowest monthly residential utility bills in the nation.

In a recently completed survey of 35 metropolitan areas, Memphians had the ninth lowest average monthly residential utility bill for the winter for electricity, natural gas, water and wastewater. Memphis has the lowest combined bill for metropolitan areas in Tennessee, with Nashville ranked 11th, Jackson ranked 22nd, and Chattanooga and Knoxville ranked 19th and 31st respectively.

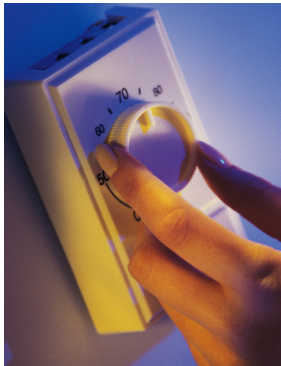
MLGW maintains low rates despite adjustments in the rates of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which supplies electricity for MLGW. TVA recently announced a seven percent rate decrease in its fuel cost adjustment rate that should save the average MLGW customer approximately \$5 to \$6 on their electric bills compared to the first quarter of 2009.

"There are few cities that can say they have lower bills than ours. That is something that every Memphian should be aware of and proud to say," said **Jerry Collins Jr.**, MLGW President and CEO.

While MLGW bills are among the lowest in the nation, weather and customer usage have the strongest impact on customer bills. Customers can help control their usage and costs by practicing smart energy conservation. MLGW offers several tools on its Web site to help customers use energy wisely. Customers can take an in-depth, customized energy evaluation of their home and see recommendations for energy-saving tactics in the My Account section of www.mlgw.com.

Simple Summer Savings

Just because the temperatures are rising doesn't mean your utility bill has to. Here are a few tips for simple summer savings:



- Use fans to increase comfort with higher air conditioning thermostat settings (78 degrees minimum).
- Shut off your air conditioner when you are gone for four hours or more.
- Change or clean your air conditioner filter regularly.
- Close your blinds, shades or draperies during the hottest part

of the day to keep your home cooler.

- Get rid of your second refrigerator. Clean coils on your primary refrigerator and give it sufficient breathing room to lower energy use.
- Cook, do dishes, and wash and dry clothes while the sun is down.
- Cook outdoors, use a microwave oven or prepare cold meals to avoid heating up the kitchen.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
- Adjust your sprinklers so the grass is getting watered, not the sidewalks or driveway.
- Water plants or lawn during the earliest and coolest part of the day.

For more energy-saving tips, visit www.mlgw.com.

On an Energy Diet? Don't Binge!

You know how hard it is to stay on a diet when you're trying to lose weight, but how does that apply to "energy diets" – conservation efforts bolstered by energy-saving appliances, compact fluorescent lightbulbs and other low-usage methods?

Recent studies show that those who use energy-efficient items often think that because they use them, they can abuse them. Simply put, having these energy-savers can lead to "bingeing" because users believe they are getting such savings that it's okay to increase usage. It's like thinking you can eat high-fat foods because you're on cholesterol medicine.

A recent marketing survey by the Shelton Group showed that one third of respondents who made energy-efficiency efforts at home saw no decrease in their energy bills, and a 2008 University of Michigan study found that people given energy-efficient washing machines washed more clothes.

People who install efficient fluorescent lights lose 5-12 percent of expected energy savings by leaving them on longer, according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. And those who buy an efficient furnace lose 10-30 percent of their savings, probably from raising the thermostat.

The phenomenon is what economists call the "take-back effect," and it cuts into Americans' energy savings.

The message is simple: Don't binge! If you have energy-efficient items in your home, you should still stay on your low-usage energy diet to realize savings on your utility bill. Source: USA Today

Tennessee: Highest Electricity Usage in the Country!

It's time for Tennessee to tighten its belt, or at least its electricity usage. Tennessee has the highest annual rate of electricity use per household, and that should change. Conservation needs to move from being a buzzword to being a daily practice in all our lives.

In 2007, the average U.S. household used 11,232 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity, while Tennessee's usage was 16,132 kWh – a whopping 44 percent more than the national average! MLGW's average household usage for the same period was 15,975 kWh, or 42 percent higher than average. This trend of excessive energy use dates back to at least 1990, based on data provided by the Energy Information Administration. Being tops in energy waste is "an honor" that comes with high utility bills, air pollution and other problems that affect us all.

There are plenty of reasons why Tennessee uses so much electricity per household: low electric rates, ample power supply, older building codes, deteriorating homes, and general lack of energy awareness and conservation efforts.

Be a part of the solution: Conserve energy! You can find useful, effective energy-saving tips on MLGW's Web site at www.mlgw.com. Just look for Energy-Saving Tools under the "For Your Home" link or click on the "Here's How" Videos link at top right. You can also register for My Account and complete the "Home Profile" and "My Appliance" sections to receive a free TVA kit filled with products that will help you get started on your energy-saving efforts today.

Reducing Taxes and Utility Costs

With the signing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on February 17, 2009, there's no better time to make energy improvements to your home which can reduce monthly energy costs and possibly cut your taxes.

Tax credits are now available for home improvements:

- "Placed in service" from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010.
- For taxpayer's principal residence, except for geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters, solar panels and small wind-energy systems (where second homes and rentals also qualify).
- \$1,500 is the maximum total amount that can be claimed for all products placed in service in 2009 and 2010 for most home improvements; however geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters, solar panels, fuel cells and small wind-energy systems are not subject to this cap, and are in effect through 2016.
- You must have a Manufacturer Certification Statement³ to qualify. Be sure to save your receipts and the Manufacturer Certification Statement³.
- Improvements made in 2009 will be claimed on your 2009 taxes (filed by April 15, 2010).
- If you are building a new home, you can qualify for the tax credit for geothermal heat pumps, photovoltaics, solar water heaters, small wind-energy systems and fuel cells, but not the tax credits for windows, doors, insulation, roofs, HVAC or non-solar water heaters.

Tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost, up to \$1,500, in 2009 and 2010 (for existing homes only) for windows and doors, insulation, roofs (metal and asphalt), HVAC and water heaters (non-solar). Tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost, with no upper limit through 2016 (for existing homes and new construction) for geothermal heat pumps, solar panels, solar water heaters, small wind-energy systems and fuel cells.

Keep in mind that not all ENERGY STAR qualified home products qualify for a tax credit. These tax credits are available for a number of products at the highest efficiency levels, which often cost much more than standard products.

MLGW provides this information as a service to customers interested in financial incentives for making energy efficiency improvements to their homes. MLGW makes no guarantee as to accuracy, completeness or applicability of information. Please consult your tax professional for specific advice. Additional information is also available through www.energystar.gov, www.aceee.org, www.cee1.org and www.energytaxincentives.org.

The **2008 Water Quality Report** will be mailed in May to all commercial, industrial and residential water customers. The report presents the latest data confirming the superior quality of Memphis' drinking water in addition to information on how our water meets and often exceeds all federal and state safety standards.



TERRA House

A new energy-efficient, sustainable-design home built as a project by the University of Memphis in Uptown was recently dedicated. Called TERRA House, the home represented a three-year collaboration between MLGW and the U of M. TERRA stands for Technologically + Environmentally Responsive Residential Architecture. The project was initiated in 2005 by the Department of Architecture through the U of M's Center for Sustainable Design and adheres to MLGW's EcoBUILD program for energy efficiency. TERRA stands in the midst of Uptown, one of the largest green neighborhoods in the nation, and is the first home in Shelby County to participate in TVA's Generation Partners solar power generation program.



MLGW Celebrates 70 Years

MLGW turned 70 March 9. For 70 years the Division has brought you reliable electric, gas and water services. In 1939, the city of Memphis bought 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 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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