

Community OUTREACH

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

September/October 2008

New Center to Address Customer Issues

In an effort to improve customer service, meet customers' expectations and resolve complaints, MLGW has created a Customer Advocacy Center, part of MLGW's newly formed Customer Relations department.

The Customer Advocacy Center was created to address most customer concerns and complaints that do not involve billing issues. The area is responsible for tracking and resolving customer issues utilizing an automated customer complaint system. The center receives notification of customer issues from sources within MLGW, and tracking identification is assigned to each complaint to track how well each issue is resolved. The system establishes responsibility and a time-frame for resolution, and automatically notifies the center if the issue isn't resolved within that timeframe.

The main focus of the Customer Advocacy Center is identifying and solving process failures – things that should have been done, things not done right or a process that failed. Customer issues are tracked whether they are received through MLGW's Web site (www.mlgw.com), as customer phone calls to MLGW Customer Care Center at 544-6549, or reported on our Intranet by our employees.

"The Customer Relations department and its Customer Advocacy Center are designed to serve as the advocate for our customers," said **Clint Richardson**, Manager of Customer Relations.



Knowledgeable presenters address important issues for attendees each year at MLGW's Business of Being a Church Conference in November. Admission to the Conference is free.

Church Business Seminar

As society changes, religious institutions are adapting the way they do business and connect with congregants. *Ministering in the New Millennium* is the theme for this year's MLGW Business of Being a Church Conference. Ministers, their staffs and others leading faith activities are invited to attend the annual Business of Being a Church seminar on Friday, November 14, 2008 from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the MLGW Training Center (4949 Raleigh-LaGrange Road.)

The conference, a one-day event coordinated by MLGW, aims to provide faith leaders the opportunity to network, and acquire information about model programs and community resources. The conference also allows MLGW to provide this critical stakeholder group with information about utility programs, services and activities.

"The conference is a forum for MLGW to share information with faith leaders who can then share that information with their congregants," says **Glen Thomas**, MLGW Supervisor of Communications and Public Relations. "The conference also allows MLGW to get feedback and input from a key audience."

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DOE Warns of Rising Energy Costs, MLGW Stresses Conservation

For the last decade, the price for residential U.S. natural gas has nearly doubled, placing a significant burden on utility customers across the nation, including MLGW customers. According to the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) short-term energy outlook report, the price was expected to increase further this winter.

Now costs are escalating for other forms of energy. Coal has doubled in price in the past year, leading to cost increases for electricity produced from coal-fired plants including the 60 percent of power generated by TVA at its 11 fossil-fuel facilities. This has contributed to recent TVA rate increases, including the 20 percent hike that will be effective October 1.

Customers often wonder why the price of natural gas keeps going up. The answer is that natural gas is "the clean fuel" in comparison to coal and oil. Demand has been steadily rising due to the fact that gas is clean while its supplies have been flat, and gas is increasingly being used for the generation of electricity by suppliers like TVA.



While no one, including MLGW, can control wholesale energy costs or weather conditions that influence energy consumption, a lot can be done to reduce the financial impact on households. MLGW does its part to minimize the burden by negotiating discounted supplies of electricity and natural gas through long-term prepayment contracts; making strategic purchases of natural gas; and ensuring price protection of these purchases using a combination of futures, options and market pricing.

MLGW also engages in efforts to help shape the direction of federal and state electric restructuring to ensure continued access to reliable, low-cost electricity supplies.

MLGW also communicates a wealth of information to help you make the most of your energy dollars. Anticipating a volatile energy climate for the foreseeable future, MLGW urges you to visit www.mlgw.com or call 544-6549 to obtain energy-saving tips, home improvement ideas, information about assistance programs and an abundance of other pertinent information.

Church Business Seminar

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An aging population, disengaged youth and rapidly changing technology are just a few of the issues congregations are confronted with. Some of the workshops featured this year include:

- Caring for Seniors
- Human Service Grants
- Engaging Youth and Young Adults

The conference is free and includes a continental breakfast and buffet lunch, but participants must register. The registration deadline is Friday, October 17, 2008. For more information, call MLGW Community Relations at 528-4322.

S&P, Fitch Give MLGW High Ratings

MLGW's strong financial fundamentals were recently reaffirmed by Standard & Poor's Rating Services and Fitch Ratings. Citing a stable outlook, S&P raised its rating on MLGW's electric system bonds to 'AA+' while Fitch maintained its rating of 'AA' on both. The S&P and Fitch ratings are signs of MLGW's financial capability to meet all of its obligations.

MLGW's water division is one of the few utilities in the world to hold "AAA" bond ratings from both S&P and Moody's Investor Services. "We are very proud of the credit ratings that MLGW has received over the years," said MLGW President and CEO **Jerry R. Collins Jr.**

Pilot Light-Up and Safety Inspection



Pilot Safety Inspection season is upon us. It's time to schedule your annual safety check-up before the winter heating season begins. Call 820-7878 to schedule your appointment with a Customer Care Advisor, or use our 24/7 automated system during Pilot Safety Inspection season. Safety inspections are free from Sept. 2-30, and \$27 from Oct. 6 - Dec. 31. Appointment times are available between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. Saturday appointments are also available.

The \$27 service fee is billed to your account and covers up to three gas heating appliances, including pilot light-up if needed. There is a \$14 fee for each additional gas appliance. Floor and wall furnaces should be cleaned prior to the technician's arrival and proper access must be provided for furnaces located in the attic.

If your utilities are listed in your name and you are at least 60 years of age or disabled, the service will be provided at no charge. Just present the customer service representative with verification at the time of service. When you schedule your appointment, be sure to write down the date and time you have selected. Appointment cards will not be mailed.



Bishop Graves Honored

A luncheon honoring Bishop William H. Graves' confirmation to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) board was held July 24 in MLGW's Administration Building Auditorium. Dr. Graves is the first Memphian and first African-American nominated to serve on TVA's board, representing West Tennessee and TVA's largest customer, MLGW. Pictured are Bishop Graves and Memphis Mayor Willie W. Herenton.

Kathaline Bins, Annette Washington and James Young (background), Customer Service Field Operations, installed air conditioners as part of MLGW's efforts to help seniors and needy families during the summer heat wave.



Governor visits MLGW

Governor Phil Bredesen hosted a task force on energy policy meeting August 15 at the MLGW Administration Building. MLGW Board Chair **V. Lynn Evans** and local homebuilder Phil Chamberlain are on the 17-member task force. Learn more about the task force at <http://www.tennesseeanytime.org/energy>.



*Strong neighborhoods, youth activities, "going green," programs for seniors, grants and reverse mortgages were a few of the community-related topics addressed at MLGW's annual **Neighborhood Leaders Conference** held August 8 at MLGW's Training Center.*

MLGW in the Community

MLGW's Communications and Public Relations department has been active in community outreach and volunteer programs this summer, providing staff, informational booths, volunteers and programs for:

- Summit for Neighborhood Leaders, June 28
- Hispanic Job Fair, July 12
- National Convocation of the Christian Church, July 25-28
- "Heal the Hood" on Mud Island, Aug. 1
- MLGW Neighborhood Leaders Conference, Aug. 8
- Mid-South Minority Business Council Economic Development Fair, Aug. 26-28
- Delta Fair at the AgriCenter, Aug. 29 - Sept. 7

Call 528-4820 to request MLGW Community Relations staff members to participate in your event.

My Account Grows

Less than nine months after launch, more than 75,000 UserIDs have been created through My Account online so customers can access their MLGW accounts. And more than 26,000 MLGW customers now maintain paperless eBilling accounts, saving paper and postage costs. Sign up for My Account and eBilling online at www.mlgw.com.

You can still receive a **Free Energy Kit** from TVA through December 31 when you complete the *Home Profile* and *My Appliances* home energy audit questions through your My Account access at www.mlgw.com.

Give One for Plus-1

The Plus-1 program is available to assist those experiencing an unavoidable loss of income or family crisis. YOU can help by donating \$1 or more per month to

Plus-1 on your utility bill. The Plus-1 program administered by MIFA helps those in need of utility-bill assistance. Sign up online at www.plus1memphis.org or call 544-6549 to enroll.

Plus-1

Time to Prepare for Winter

Winter is right around the corner – time to prepare for the cold weather! There are many ways you can prepare, conserve energy and save on your utility bills, so get started early before it starts to get cold. For energy-saving tips, visit MLGW's Web site at www.mlgw.com, click on the "Save Energy" link at top right, highlight "Energy-Saving Tools" in the left hand column and look for winter tips.



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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