

Community OUTREACH

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

March/April 2024

Community Outreach is now only available electronically
 Community Outreach is now only available online or by email. You can visit mlgw.com/communityoutreach to read or print this and future issues, or receive an email link of the publication by request at: commrelations@mlgw.org.

MLGW's "all hands-on deck" response to winter storm Heather

Mid-January winter storm Heather dropped snow across the Tennessee Valley. Temperatures fell below freezing and stayed there. By Wednesday, January 17 the demand for electricity reached an all-time high for provider Tennessee Valley Authority.

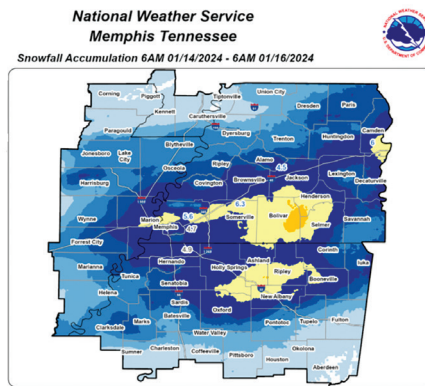
Water pipes froze and burst, water mains began to break, and on Thursday, January 18 water pressure started to drop across MLGW's system, and the Division issued a precautionary boil water advisory for approximately 15 percent of customers, specifically those in the northwest and southeast parts of the service area. Pipes continued to break and leak, and on Friday, January 19 MLGW amended the precautionary advisory to include all water-service customers.

Despite dangerously frigid temperatures, Division employees worked around the clock to find leaks and fix them. "I want to first of all call out the frontline folks at MLGW," President and CEO Doug McGowen told the Memphis City Council Tuesday, January 23. President McGowen explained the challenges as "incredibly cold temperatures, digging in the ground, working with water in sub-freezing temperatures is not fun, but they do it and they all showed up."

Showed up in force! Employees from the Water Meter, Electric Meter and Gas Meter Shops responded to winter storm Heather. So did workers from Water Distribution,

Water Operations, the Water Laboratory and System Operations. Saturday, January 20, employees from multiple departments joined the "find and fix" effort. "If you work in Transportation at MLGW, if you work in the Gas Division and things are going great, if you're Safety, if you're Water Distribution, if you're an Engineer at MLGW, if you're in the Meter Reading Department, if you're an Admin, it doesn't matter where you work," McGowen told the Council. "It's all hands-on deck."

MLGW repaired 89 water main breaks, responded to nearly 4,000 customer water leaks (residential and commercial) and around 100 broken fire suppression systems. With clearance from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), MLGW lifted the precautionary boil water advisory on Tuesday, January 23.



New life for old streetlights

As the LED upgrade project nears its end in Memphis, the work to dismantle MLGW's old streetlights is ramping up! Enter Binghampton Development Corporation's (BDC) Business Hub warehouse-based job training program. In the past year, BDC has hired 58 people to take apart the more than 77,000 old, cobra head lights and separate out the copper, steel and aluminum for resale or recycling. The BDC Business Hub offers a range of recycling services for materials that are currently difficult or impossible to recycle in Memphis, including mattresses, tires, Styrofoam, and light fixtures. BDC will do the same thing for the LED upgrades in Bartlett and Collierville; they will also dismantle lights from Nashville Electric Services (NES). BDC has been working for 20 years to improve housing in the Binghampton neighborhood while also providing workforce training for residents. Training includes soft skills (i.e. financial planning, communication, workplace culture) and hard skills (i.e. forklift operation).



KUDOS

A word of praise from MLGW customers:

"I want to thank everyone who worked so hard getting the water pipes repaired after the snow/ice storm! I really appreciate you and hope all of you know how valuable you are to this city! Thank you!!!"

– Cordova resident Stephanie Wrasman

"Grateful to Mr. McGowen for the updates during the latest weather event. Grateful for every MLGW employee who braved the frigid temps, so my loved ones stayed warm and well-informed about the risks of low water psi. Well done. It seems like the storms never end, and you guys need a break."

– MLGW Customer Stephanie Rodriguez

"My phone call was answered quickly, and my wait time wasn't long. The two employees I spoke with this morning regarding my account were very professional and handled



everything I needed. With all that MLGW is dealing with right now, I wanted to provide some positive feedback."

– Mary Maclin,
MLGW Neighborhood Advisory Council member

"To the Payments and Banking Department. For all the employees who had to work during the winter storms, had quite of a challenge. All your work was appreciated for my Edinborough home! I respect your work!"

– MLGW Customer Patricia Lyerly

Ursula Madden joins MLGW Leadership Team

During a recent MLGW Board of Commissioners meeting, MLGW CEO Doug McGowen announced that Ursula Madden will serve as the next Vice President of Corporate Communications for MLGW.



"As we work to make MLGW more reliable, resilient, and ready for the future, it is critical that we build a team that can help accelerate progress and communicate with our customers," said McGowen. "I'm excited that Ursula Madden will join the transformational work underway at MLGW, and confident that her years of experience in broadcast journalism, as Chief Communications Officer with the City of Memphis, and her recent experience with Blue Oval SK will be an asset to our leadership team and our customers."

Ms. Madden began her role at MLGW on Monday, March 4. "MLGW has a dynamic vision and a dedicated team working hard to provide customers with the reliable service they deserve. I am excited to have the opportunity to be part of MLGW's transformation and to serve the people of Memphis and Shelby County in a meaningful way," said Madden.

MLGW Board of Commissioners Chairman Leon Dickson added, "As the Chairman, improving communications with our customers is a top priority for me. I am very pleased that Ursula will bring her many talents to the organization and look forward to working with her as we modernize our systems, and plan for our future."

Spring is coming: Remember to call 811 before you dig

Winter is slowly phasing out while the spring season is bringing nicer weather. At this time, many homeowners plan home improvements, tree planting, or the installation of a fence or deck, all of which may require digging. Whether you are planning a do-it-yourself project or hiring a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs – requires a call. The depth of utility lines varies and usually there are multiple lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you, and potentially result in fines and costly repairs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences. Getting your lines marked is quick and easy with 811. When you dial, your call is forwarded to the One-Call Center for processing. Local One-Call Center operators record the location of the dig and notify the corresponding utility companies of your digging plans. Your utility companies then dispatch a professional locating crew to mark the location of your lines within a few days. You should be sure to call 811 at least three 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 you can dig safely. Knowing what's below will protect you, your family, and your neighbors. And it's the law!

Rate increases for grid modernization

The recent approval of MLGW's rate adjustments is a positive step, aligning with our commitment to adapt to economic shifts. Since 1985, a 4.7% rate increase over 35 years has demonstrated our dedication to balancing affordability and fiscal responsibility. From 1985 to 2022, a cumulative 7.2% increase, in sync with a 2.74% inflation rate, paving the way for the recent 12% increase (4% each in 2024, 2025 and 2026). This marks our seventh adjustment, totaling 23.9% over 41 years, with an average annual increase of 0.58%. Crucially, the 2024 increase funds our grid modernization initiative, specifically Distribution Automation (DA). DA enables remote control and automatic circuit reconfiguration, boosting power system resilience. Despite delays, we've installed 441 devices (of 1,100), aiming to reduce outage durations by 40%.



This rate adjustment is vital for a more reliable and efficient electrical system. As we move forward, each of us can play a crucial role in understanding and positively communicating these changes. Your engagement and support are essential as we work together to build a community that adapts to change and thrives in the face of evolving challenges.

Did you know?

Natural gas is the predominant source for residential heat in Shelby County, which lets us use less electricity in the winter. MLGW gas service is reliable too. During winter storm Heather, MLGW customers enjoyed reliable gas service, with no requests for conservation.

Thanks to smart financial decisions, MLGW customers will pay less for natural gas in 2024 than they did last year. Electricity costs are up because



of TVA increases and rate increases to cover system improvements. The average customer will pay about \$9 more a month for electricity, and \$14 less for gas service.

MLGW issues scam alert

Memphis Light, Gas and Water urges customers to remain vigilant in safeguarding the security of their online account information. Protecting My Account passwords and maintaining up-to-date contact details are essential to thwart scams.

MLGW never solicits payments via prepaid debit cards or 1-800 numbers.



If you receive a suspicious call:

- Immediately hang up.
- Do not give out personal information.
- Customers who have fallen victim to scammers should report it to the police.
- Residential customers can report any issues by calling 544-6549.
- Regularly monitor online account balances. To learn more about utility scams, visit mlgw.com/scamalerts. To track or report scams in our area, go to the Memphis Better Business Bureau website at bbb.org/us/tn/memphis/news/scams.

GRID MODERNIZATION PLAN Projected Total \$280 MILLION

Foundation Projects - \$114 MILLION

- Communication system - \$58 million
- Spectrum / broadband purchase
- Buildout (towers, hardware, devices)
- Relay replacement - \$40 million
- Replace old electro-mechanical relays with modern microprocessors
- Mesh with automated switched
- Modernize control systems - \$16 million
- Advanced distribution management system (ADMS)
- Implement full automation

Distribution Automation - \$138 million

- Increase number of switches to 1,980

Training and utilization - \$28 million

- Lab and operations center - \$11 million
- Training documentation and equipment - \$7 million
- Device management and security - \$10 million

The winners of the 2023 MLGW "ElectRock" Art Contest are...

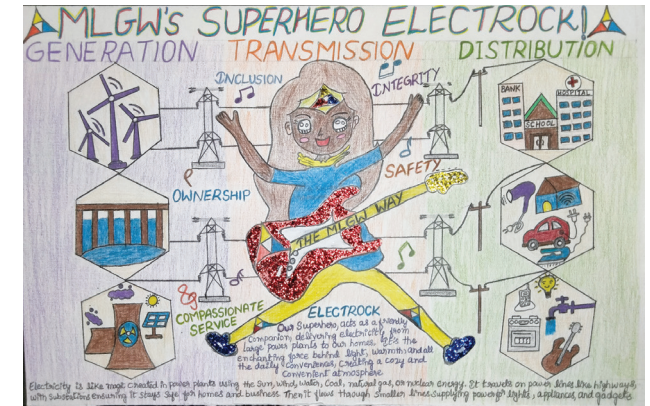
The winners of MLGW's 2023 "ElectRock" Poster Art Contest have been announced. With the partnership of Memphis-Shelby County Schools and the Children's Museum of Memphis, MLGW received 51 art submissions from schools within Shelby County, for four defined categories: Kindergarten-2nd grade, 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade. The theme for the 2023 contest was "Electric generation and distribution." The judging, done by three non-MLGW experts, was based on creativity, originality, and adherence to the contest rules. The winners are:

Category K-2 winning student: Marley Harris, 2nd Grade.
Teacher- Sybil Dotson, Balmoral Ridgeway Elementary School.

Category 3-5 winning student: Anvi Vijendra, 5th Grade.
Teacher- Cali Smith, Bailey Station Elementary School.

Category 6-8 winning student: Sedra Murshed, 8th Grade.
Teacher- Morgan Sollis, Bon Lin Middle School.

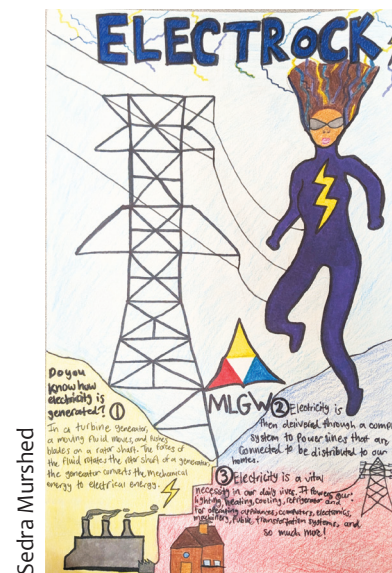
Category 9-12 winning student: James Mooneyham, 11th Grade.
Teacher- Jennifer Harants, Collierville High School.



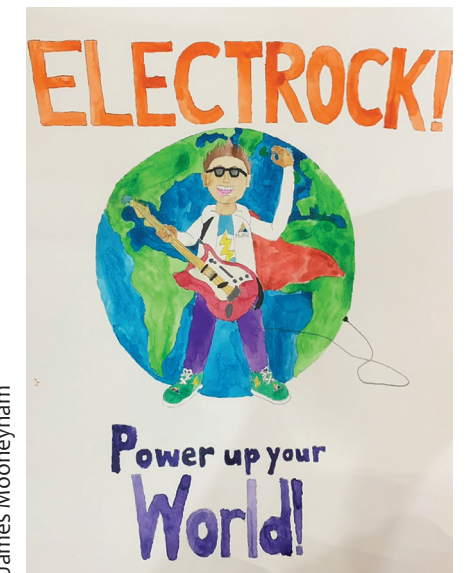
Anvi Vijendra



Marley Harris



Sedra Murshed



James Mooneyham

MLGW and the Community

Some of the upcoming community events in our area include the following:

March 23 – Pearls of Wisdom Senior Group, House of Prayer Church, 4609 Knight Arnold, noon – 2 p.m.

March 26 – Bartlett Senior Health and Home Expo, Bartlett United Methodist Church, 5675 Stage Rd., 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

April 6 – Frayser Community PTSA MLK Family Fun Day, Ed Rice Community Center, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

April 13 – Wolfchase Galleria Community Fair, Wolfchase Galleria, 2760 N. Germantown Pkwy, 1 – 4 p.m.

April 16 – Raymond James Sustainability Expo 2024, 889 Ridgeland Blvd, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

April 16 – Germantown Senior Commission, Pickering Center, Poplar Pike, Germantown, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

April 20 – Earth Day Festival, Shelby Farms Park, 415 Great View Drive East, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Community outreach and volunteer programs are always part of MLGW's schedule. If you would like MLGW to participate in your meeting, fair or festival, please complete the form at www.mlgw.com/speaker.



Community Outreach is produced by MLGW's Corporate Communications department. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about Community Outreach, please call (901) 528-4820 or (901) 528-4557.

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