

# Community OUTREACH

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

September/October 2022

## Community Outreach is now only available electronically

Community Outreach is now only available online or by email. You can visit [mlgw.com/communityoutreach](https://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](mailto:commrelations@mlgw.org).

## New LED lights for Memphis

Starting in September 2022, Memphis Light, Gas and Water and the City of Memphis are launching a \$42 million LED streetlight project in which all 84,000-plus streetlights will be replaced with new LED lights.

Mayor Jim Strickland and MLGW President and CEO J.T. Young made the announcement at a press conference recently at City Hall. “Improved lighting improves safety” in every neighborhood in Memphis, Strickland said. “With these new lights, no longer will criminals have safe harbor to operate under cover of darkness. People will feel safer on their streets.”

“MLGW is pleased to work with the City of Memphis and Ameresco to upgrade MLGW’s street lighting system within the City of Memphis to provide enhanced lighting, substantial energy savings, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and lower maintenance costs,” J.T. Young, President and CEO, MLGW said. Once the project is finished by the fall of 2023, Young predicted, “We will see about a 55 percent energy savings in street lighting so our greenhouse footprint will be reduced.”

During the press conference, MLGW Electric Matrix Manager Brad Gates demonstrated the contrast between the LED and the high pressure sodium or cobra head lights. At night, the LED light appears brighter because it provides more directional lighting than an existing streetlight, whereas the high pressure



sodium lights produce more of an orange-white light.

The project is starting in September and will generally go in a west to east direction. Workers will be replacing high-pressure sodium – or cobra head lights – that were first installed in the late 1950s.

The new LED lights will have a “smart” photocell attached to the fixture. A smart connected lighting system notifies MLGW if a light is out or malfunctioning. The new lights come with a 10-year warranty but are expected to last up to 20 years or more. Only the lighting is changing. No streetlight poles will be moved or replaced.

## MLGW Pilot Light-Up appointments

To ensure the safety of gas appliances, MLGW offers pilot light-up safety inspections. The service is FREE through Sept. 30 for all customers. After Sept. 30, there’s a \$55 fee, which covers up to three gas heating appliances. (There’s never a fee for

customers who are disabled or are 60 years and older.)

To schedule an appointment, call (901) 544-6549 using MLGW’s Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. You will need your 16-digit account number or your phone number.

## MLGW receives TDEC grant for fast charge TN network

Memphis Light, Gas and Water is among the recipients of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) grant funding to install direct current fast charging (DCFC) infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs) along prioritized interstate or major highway corridors across the state.

MLGW already plays an integral role in supplying electricity to EV owners who charge at their homes and businesses, as well as the more than 100 public charging sites in Shelby County. MLGW is pleased to join TDEC, TVA and other local power companies who were awarded Fast Charge TN Network grants.

“Together, we will expand public access to convenient, fast EV charging, alleviating fears of range anxiety and making EV charging a more visible activity so that when residents and businesses consider their next vehicle purchase, they also consider electric vehicle options,” stated J.T. Young, MLGW President and CEO. “MLGW is grateful to TDEC for this funding opportunity, and we look forward to operating fast charging



sites that serve Shelby County residents, businesses and travelers.”

Learn more about MLGW’s EV efforts at [mlgw.com/ev](https://mlgw.com/ev), also at [energyright.com/ev](https://energyright.com/ev) and [driveelectrictn.org](https://driveelectrictn.org).

## MLGW contracts for a multiyear distribution automation program

Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) is partnering with engineering, construction and architecture firm Burns & McDonnell in planning a five-year, \$132 million state-of-the-art distribution automation program. The work is designed to improve overall service reliability of the electric distribution grid and enhance system performance for the utility’s 439,000 customers in Memphis and Shelby County.



Nick Newman

The leading-edge distribution automation initiative will utilize fault location, isolation and service restoration (FLISR) capabilities – otherwise known as self-healing, smart grid technology – to help reduce the duration of power outages, reduce storm impacts, and restore service faster when outages happen.

“We are proud of the future-forward approach we’re taking with our self-healing, smart grid program in Memphis and

Shelby County,” says Nick Newman, Vice President of Engineering and Operations at MLGW. “One of the most critical components of this robust, modern electrical infrastructure system is the automated fault detection equipment, which will considerably improve overall service quality and reliability by being able to detect everything from minor surges to major outages.”

As part of the distribution automation, MLGW is launching its Accelerated Recloser Deployment Program, which calls for the installation of hundreds of intelligent devices each year on distribution lines across the area. Reclosers, which are frequently used in place of traditional fuses, test if faults are temporary and, if so, can restore power rapidly with minimal noticeable interruption. When a fault occurs, the devices automatically open, interrupting electrical current, and then automatically close to detect if the fault is still active.

The next phase of implementation of the program is set to begin later this year and will result in numerous short-term job openings in construction and engineering.

## Customer thanks Hickory Hill crew for repair during heat wave

“A limb fell from my tree, landing on a transformer and sparking a ground fire. The fire department was called to extinguish the fire. (Note, the heat index was north of 112 degrees.) Your MLGW team arrived to cut the branch from the power line and get the service up. I wanted you to know your team was excellent.

“With temperatures high, heat index and humidity, working conditions were egregious at best. The MLGW team was kind, friendly, concerned, and above all, there to restore service as quickly as possible. The linemen went above and beyond what was required, which was very much appreciated by my neighborhood and myself. Please know I have shared my experience with fellow Memphians and will continue. Many thanks to you and your team.”

–Daniel Reid





## And the APGA Award goes to...

The APGA (American Public Gas Association) honored MLGW’s Senior VP and COO Alonzo Weaver with their Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for APGA, their community and the natural gas industry, and have a long record of such commitment.

In his 38 years with MLGW, Alonzo Weaver hasn’t shied away from belting out a tune when the occasion called for it. So, it wasn’t a surprise for many of the 250 who attended the recent American Public Gas Association conference in Minneapolis. As chairman, Weaver sang the national anthem a cappella to kick off the convention.

As outgoing chairman, Weaver touted the benefits of gas as being reliable, affordable and abundant with few interruptions of natural gas getting to customers’ homes. “If you have a power outage, gas can get you through,” he said. Through the hard work of the APGA, Weaver also pointed

out that public utilities can apply for federal grants to repair or replace its natural gas distribution pipeline systems. The federal legislation earmarked \$200 million a year in grant funding over the next five years for a total of \$1 billion. MLGW is seeking almost \$60 million in grant funding for five projects.

APGA honored Weaver with is distinguished service award. While stepping down as chairman, Weaver will continue to serve on its board of directors.



(L to R) Gloria Smith; George Wright, Servant Leader, Oak Spring Baptist; Rhonda Thompson; Argileia Taylor, Servant Leader, Oak Spring Baptist; Michael Martin, Pastor, Oak Spring Baptist; Gale Jones Carson, MLGW, VP of Community & External Affairs; Chester Ragland, Servant Leader, Oak Spring Baptist and Beverly Perkins, MLGW, Supervisor of Corporate Social Responsibility at a recent Board meeting.

## Arlington church pays utilities for 100+ MLGW customers

Oak Spring Baptist Church leadership believes in “corporate” tithing. Just like they want their 600 members to tithe 10% of their income to the church, the church donates 10% of its income to the community.

Recently, MLGW’s Board of Commissioners recognized the church’s generosity to MLGW’s Gift of Comfort program.

The church gave the program \$40,000 to pay the utility bills in full of 103 customers in the Millington and Arlington area.

Rhonda Thompson was among the recipients. The funds also helped two of her aunts on a fixed income and most, if not all, of her elderly neighbors. “This is over and beyond financial

relief for them,” she said. Because of the \$250 credit on her utility bill, she donated \$250 to a scholarship fund.

“Everybody will be starting fresh,” said Beverly Perkins, who oversees the Gift of Comfort program for MLGW. Perkins said this is the third time Oak Spring has given to Gift of Comfort in the past 18 months. Previously, the Arlington-based church gave \$14,000. Oak Spring Pastor Michael Martin explained why: “It’s just a need we have identified. It doesn’t stop the bleeding, but it does slow it down a little bit.”

To donate, go to [mlgw.com/giftofcomfort](http://mlgw.com/giftofcomfort). The program gives individuals or organizations the chance to make a payment towards a customer's utility bill.



## Craigmont Middle School sign unveiling

Craigmont Middle School is MLGW’s Adopt-a-School, and we strongly support the school and its exemplary students and teachers. MLGW President and CEO J.T. Young previously attended their 8th grade commencement in May, addressing the students and handing out awards to outstanding Craigmont Middle students.

Recently, an event took place at Craigmont Middle to unveil a new digital marquee erected in front of the school with the school’s name and team logo, an MLGW logo at bottom and an electronic text display saying, “Thank You MLGW Family for Your Commitment to Craigmont Middle and the Memphis

Shelby County Schools community.” In attendance were MLGW President and CEO J.T. Young, Craigmont Middle administration, teachers, the school band and cheerleaders who performed, and school board executives. Also, MLGW Human Performance and People Development staff from MLGW U and MLGW VP/ CPO Jacqueline Jones attended in support. The school principal presented President Young with a certificate of appreciation and a lovely swag bag filled with a Craigmont Middle T-shirt, hoodie and other fun items. President Young addressed the group in the school library, then everyone proceeded outside to unveil the new sign.

## MLGW in the Community

**Community outreach and volunteer programs are always part of MLGW’s schedule. Some of the upcoming events that MLGW will be participating in include the following:**

**Sept. 1** – City of Memphis Office of Neighborhood Taste of Memphis, Tiger Lane, 5 – 10 p.m.

**Sept. 2-11** – Delta Fest, Agricenter International, various times

**Sept. 3** – WLOK Stone Soul Picnic, Levitt Shell, 3 – 9 p.m.

**Sept. 15** – Neighborhood Christian Centers Neighbor Day Community Resource Expo, 223 Scott St, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Sept. 17** – Ambassadors Airways Police Department Community Health and Wellness Fair, Airways Police Department, 2234 Truitt St, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Oct. 4** – Taste of the District, Health Sciences Park, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Oct. 8** – Feria MLGW One-Stop Latino, El Mercadito de Memphis, 3766 Ridgeway Rd, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Oct. 21** – University of Memphis Safety Palooza, Community Resource Expo, University of Memphis-Plaza, 3720 Alumni Ave, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Nov. 3** – Germantown Senior Advisory Commission Senior Expo, Great Hall & Conference Center, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Nov. 8** – Collierville 50 Plus Health & Home Expo, Collierville United Methodist Church, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**If you would like for MLGW to participate in your meeting, fair or festival, please complete the form at [mlgw.com/speaker](http://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