



## Cost Reductions Minimize Increases for Customers

Just like our customers, Greenville Utilities has to operate within a budget that allows us to pay our monthly bills. Guiding all budgetary decisions is our commitment to provide excellent service while maintaining the financial integrity of GUC. It's a balancing act. Because GUC is a not-for-profit service organization, we do everything within our power to minimize the impact of cost increases to our customers.

This budget year has been particularly challenging. Just like organizations all across the country, Greenville Utilities is dealing with increased costs and a national economic downturn. Not only are we in a time when we're seeing less revenue, we're also seeing an increase in the cost of doing business.

While cost containment measures have always been the rule at GUC, the current economic situation has called for stronger measures. As a result, we implemented a cost management strategy that cut a total of approximately \$15.4 million from our 2008-09 and 2009-10 budgets. There have been reductions across the board. Several projects have been delayed, and overtime has been reduced through shift work and scheduling changes. There have been reductions in contract services, vehicle/equipment purchases and travel and training. The FY 2009-10 budget does not include a cost-of-living increase for employees, and merit increases have been deferred. In addition, a cap on personnel has resulted in the equivalent of an 8% reduction in force.

We are pleased to report that there are no rate adjustments for natural gas or water rates in our Fiscal Year 2009-10 budget. To have a balanced budget and to meet current and future environmental requirements as well as long-term costs for system expansion, we will adjust sewer rates 4.9%, effective July 1, 2009.

The impact of the increase will be \$1.37/month for a typical residential customer using 6,000 gallons of water per month. Even with the increase, GUC's sewer rates are competitive, and below the \$32.37/month median for 6,000 gallons when compared with current rates of 32 other regional providers.

Successful cost-cutting measures will allow us to continue to absorb a 4% wholesale increase in electric through September, which is longer than expected. Since it became effective

See **Cost Reductions** on the back page



## Simple Ways to Save

We encourage customers to actively pursue ways to lower their energy/water usage and costs. The total impact of both the electric and sewer increases will be less than \$5.00/month for the typical residential customer, or a total of \$60/year. Rate increases do not automatically mean you have to accept an actual increase in your overall utility bill. Most people unknowingly waste 20% or more of their energy/water dollars each month.

This occurs by unnecessary use of electric, water and gas. Here are some simple ways to reduce this waste which will in turn reduce your utility bill and more than offset an increase of \$5.00/month.

- Start with the biggest energy user in your home – heating and air conditioning. Lowering your thermostat setting by one degree in winter or raising the setting one degree in summer easily saves over \$5.00 per month. Better yet, in the summer, turn off your air conditioner when the home is unoccupied. This can save half or more on your cooling costs. It does not cost more to re-cool the home when you return.
- If you are someone who does not change your furnace filters regularly, changing your filter monthly can yield an additional 10% to 20% saving in heating and cooling costs. Just by changing your filter, you can save \$5.00/month.
- Lower the thermostat setting on your water heater to 115° or 120°. If it was set at 130° to 140° you can save \$10.00 to \$15.00 each month.
- Saving on hot water use (showering, bathing, clothes washing, etc.) can yield a triple savings on your utility bill. When you reduce your hot water use you save on the water bill itself, and you also save on the dollars it costs to heat that water and on top of all that, you save on the sewer costs.
- Take shorter showers. If you take 15-20 minute showers, try taking 8-10 minute showers. With a three-person family, this can save over \$10.00 each month.

Our Energy Services Office provides a number of programs to assist customers in keeping utility bills as low as possible. Call Energy Services at 551-1525.

## Beat-the-Peak and Get Up To \$70 in Credit

Beat-the-Peak (BTP), Greenville Utilities' residential load management program, marked its 30th anniversary last year. GUC began the program in 1978 to lower our community's cost of power. By reducing peaks, which occur when all of our customers use the greatest amount of electricity, we hold down the cost of wholesale power we purchase. Since GUC pays a premium rate for energy consumed during that peak period each month, the lower the peak, the less we all pay.

Load management programs like Beat-the-Peak provide economic and environmental benefits to communities. Under normal load conditions, power producers run their most efficient power plants. However, when high loads occur, power producers will run their less efficient plants to meet the energy demands during those peak periods. By lowering peak demand, we, as a community, are reducing the need to use less efficient power plants. As a result, we are conserving our natural resources.

If you have an electric water heater, central air conditioning unit or heat pump, you can receive a credit of up to \$70 a year on your utility bill by helping us "Beat-the-Peak." Signing up is easy. To get started visit [www.guc.com/btp](http://www.guc.com/btp) or call 551-1583. We'll be happy to answer any questions.

# GUC Receives National Recognition for Reliability



**Underground Electric Distribution Supervisor Jeff Stokes, Underground Construction Crew Leader Kevin Willoughby, Underground Lineman II Eddie Baxter and Substation Lineworker I Robert Scott at the Dickinson Avenue substation construction site. The new substation will eventually send power to the Heart Institute, as well as increase reliability for the surrounding area.**

Greenville Utilities is one of 60 of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities to earn Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3®) recognition from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for providing consumers with the highest degree of reliable and safe electric service. This is the second time GUC has received RP3 recognition.

The RP3 designation recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Criteria within each category are based on sound business practices and represent a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity.

"It is an honor to be named a national RP3 designee," said Tony Cannon, GUC's Assistant General Manager/Chief Operating Officer. "This recognition is a testament to the quality work our employees do every day."

## Can You Recognize a Natural Gas Leak?

Though natural gas pipeline incidents are uncommon, you should know their signs:

- LOOK.** Blowing dirt, bubbling creeks or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead plants surrounded by live, green plants may indicate a natural gas leak.
- LISTEN.** Near a gas appliance or line, there may be a hissing sound when natural gas is leaking.
- SMELL.** Stay alert for the distinctive, rotten-egg-like smell of natural gas. You should take action anytime you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. If you suspect a natural gas leak, take action!
- LEAVE.** If you ever detect a natural gas leak, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY. Don't try to find or stop the leak. Do not touch anything electrical before you leave or use a telephone, even a cell phone. Do not smoke, turn appliances or lights on or off, or operate any vehicle or equipment that could create a spark.
- CALL.** Once you are out of the suspected area, immediately call our 24-hour Emergency Hotline at 551-1567 or 752-5627. If the smell of gas is particularly strong, you may also call 911.

### Cost Reductions, *continued from the front page*

February 1, GUC has absorbed the entire increase and will continue to do so through September, at a total cost of over \$4 million. Effective October 1, a portion of the increase (2.8%) will be passed on to customers. For a Beat-the-Peak customer using 1,000 kWh, that will be an increase of \$3.67/month in summer and \$3.38/month in winter.

The adjustment has been timed to avoid the higher summer usage months (July, August, September), and minimize the impact to customers as much as possible. Even with the increase, GUC's new electric rates are competitive and below the median of \$131.90/month (summer) and \$123.18/month (winter) when compared with the current rates of 14 other providers in our region.

## Fifth Natural Gas Rate Decrease Passed On To Customers

Greenville Utilities reduced natural gas rates for its customers, effective May 1. As a result, a residential user of 50 ccf would see a decrease of approximately \$3.54 per month. Depending upon the amount of gas used, residential customers will see a decrease of approximately 5%.

Natural gas prices have continued to decline due to increasing supply and decreasing demand. Therefore, the market price of natural gas has decreased significantly, and GUC is passing those projected savings on to our customers.

This is the fifth natural gas rate decrease that GUC has passed on to customers in recent months. In addition to the current 5% decrease, we also reduced residential gas rates approximately 9% in March 2009, 5.5% in January 2009, 6% in October 2008, and 16% in August 2008, for a total decrease of about 41% or \$36.36/month based on average residential usage.

## Should I Be At Home When My Utility Services Are Connected?

You must be home when your natural gas service is connected. For your safety and protection of personal property, we also encourage you to be home when your electric and water services are connected.

Make sure all heat-producing appliances (stoves, ovens, toasters, space heaters, clothes dryers, hair dryers, etc.) are off or unplugged before your electricity is turned on.

You should also make sure that all water connections (faucets, ice makers, washing machine hookups, etc.) are completely off when your water is turned on.

For additional information about getting new services connected, visit [www.guc.com](http://www.guc.com) or call 252-752-7166 to speak with a Customer Service Representative.

## Working Safe for You!

In April, a number of Greenville Utilities' work groups received Gold or Silver Safety Awards from the North Carolina Department of Labor in recognition of our 2008 safety excellence. These awards are presented to employers who maintain safety incidence rates significantly below the average for their industry. At GUC, we value the safety of our customers and employees in everything we do.