



GET READY FOR WINTER TEMPERATURES AND RISING NATURAL GAS PRICES

Old Man Winter is bringing colder temperatures our way. The cold temperatures we experience during the winter can bring higher utility bills. That's because outdoor temperatures drive energy usage more than any other single factor. As temperatures drop, we use more electricity or natural gas to stay warm, and that causes higher utility bills. Usage varies due to a number of factors, but on average, the heating system uses 60% of the home's energy.

On top of expected higher usage, we have seen natural gas prices double in the past year. High global demand for gas and low supplies have pushed gas prices to a 7-year high and that is predicted to go even higher this winter. GUC works year-round to strategically purchase natural gas at favorable rates to avoid having to raise the price we charge our customers. We have agreements in place to purchase large quantities of gas at a discount. Our staff also actively monitors the markets to purchase gas when the price is low, and not over-buy when gas is not needed.

GUC does not profit from fluctuations in gas costs. The goal of our purchasing strategy is to keep rates as stable and competitive as possible, however we must periodically adjust our rates when the price we pay goes up. This winter, we are anticipating rate adjustments that will translate into natural gas bills that are roughly \$7.00 higher per month for natural gas customers, based on typical winter usage. Even with that, our prices are still below the median of those we compare ourselves to.

If temperatures are really cold, then your usage will likely be much higher than normal, too.

Reduce the Impact of Winter's Bite

While none of us can control the weather, there are steps you can take to reduce energy usage as much as possible during the cold winter months. We encourage customers to:

- Keep air filters clean (usually change them monthly), and make sure your heating system is operating efficiently.
 - Set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature. If you have an electric heat pump, set the thermostat at 68 degrees or lower and "forget it." For other forms of heat, set the thermostat at 68 degrees (or lower), but if you're gone for several hours or more, set it at 55 degrees, or even lower (unless pipes are in danger of freezing) while you're away.
 - Make sure your home is well-insulated.
 - Weather strip or caulk windows and doors to seal small cracks.
 - Insulate your water heater and set the temperature at 120 degrees.
- Also,
- Insulate exposed water pipes to reduce the chance of freezing, which can cause a pipe to burst and then leak.
 - Disconnect water hoses from outdoor spigots.
 - Winterize irrigation systems.



Energy Services

GUC's Energy Services Office has many tips to help you save money. Call them at 252-551-1521 to simply ask them questions about how to save on your utility bills.

WINTERTIME SAFETY TIPS

Hurricane season is over, but snow and ice storms can still cause storm-related outages. If we have winter storms, here are some things to keep in mind.

If you have an outage or other utility emergency, call our Emergency Hotline at 1-855-SOS2GUC (1-855-767-2482). Someone is there to help you get the help you need 24/7, no matter the weather.

If you have a generator, make sure you use it safely:

- If your generator is to be connected directly into your home's electrical system, be sure to use a licensed electrician to do the work.
- Make sure your wiring system is disconnected from Greenville Utilities' system before operating the generator.
- Ensure the main circuit breaker in your electric service panel box is in the OFF position. If you have a fuse box instead of breakers, pull out the main block, remove the fuses and reinsert the empty block. This is necessary to prevent your generator's electricity from going back into GUC's system, which could endanger the lives of line crews and your neighbors.
- Generator exhaust is deadly, so be sure the area is properly ventilated.

Visit guc.com for more details.

PROTECT YOUR PIPES

Freezing Temperatures Can Be A Pain In The Pipes!

Here are some ways to make sure your pipes survive freezing cold temperatures:

- Insulate pipes in unheated parts of the home (like crawl spaces).
- Open doors on cabinets below sinks to allow warmer room air to circulate around the plumbing.
- Disconnect water hoses from outdoor spigots.
- Protect your lawn sprinkler systems. Irrigation line breaks and sprinklers spraying onto sidewalks and roadways will quickly lead to serious public safety hazards and expensive repairs.
- Locate the master water shut-off valve in your home now in case you experience a burst pipe and need to cut your water off in a hurry.

Find out what to do if your pipes freeze at guc.com.



FERRELL BLOUNT III JOINS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bethel native Ferrell Blount III was recently appointed by the Greenville City Council to a three-year term on the Greenville Utilities Board of Commissioners. He is the President of Blount Petroleum Corporation and serves on the Bethel Town Board. He replaces Parker Overton who completed two terms of office.

Greenville Utilities is owned and operated by the citizens of Greenville and is governed by an eight-member Board of Commissioners responsible for approving rates, development plans, the annual budget, and setting policy. Board members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two terms.

CAN YOU RECOGNIZE A NATURAL GAS LEAK?

Natural gas is one of the safest, most reliable, and environmentally friendly fuels in use today, but leaks can occur. There are three key ways to recognize a natural gas leak.

LOOK. Blowing dirt, bubbling creeks or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead plants surrounded by green, live plants also may indicate a natural gas leak.

LISTEN. An unusual hissing sound near gas lines or appliances may indicate a natural gas leak.

SMELL. In its raw state, natural gas is colorless and odorless. Natural gas utility companies add a substance to create the familiar, rotten egg-like odor you associate with natural gas.

You should take action even if you detect only the faint odor of natural gas in the air.

Find out more at guc.com/natural-gas-safety.

If you think you have a gas leak, please call our Emergency Hotline immediately at 1-855-SOS-2GUC (1-855-767-2482).

