

# Looking to save energy?



## HG&E offers homeowners up to \$5,000 in zero-interest assistance to install energy conservation measures.

The Residential Energy Conservation Program can provide homeowners with the money they need to make energy-saving improvements to their homes.

The program offers interest-free assistance for home insulation projects, installation of Energy Star replacement windows, or for an upgrade of your home's gas-fired heating system to modern efficiency standards.

The assistance can be repaid over an up to 60 month period, and payments conveniently appear on your monthly HG&E energy bill.

To find out more about this program, visit our website at [www.hged.com/conserv](http://www.hged.com/conserv) or contact us at (413) 536-9300.

### helpful telephone numbers

**HG&E Customer Accounts**  
for general account and incentive program questions **(413)536-9300**

**HG&E Credit Department**  
to discuss past due bills and set-up payment arrangements **(413)536-9374**

**MuniHELPS Audit Hotline**  
for conservation questions or to schedule an energy audit **(888)335-7203**



See the Residential Energy Conservation Program Application for complete details.

also visit our website at: [www.hged.com/conserv](http://www.hged.com/conserv)

## HG&E Helps Customers Save Energy & Money

HG&E has many programs designed to help you save both energy and money this winter season. Customers who participate in these programs help to reduce their energy consumption at times of peak demand.

In turn, these conservation measures translate into lower expenses for our community as we were able to reduce the amount of energy purchased during these expensive peak demand periods. Below are some highlights of the benefits our customer have enjoyed to date in 2006 from our residential energy conservation efforts:

► Our Residential Energy Conservation Program provided **over \$410,000 in zero-interest assistance to help 96 Holyoke homeowners** replace windows, upgrade insulation levels, and install high-efficiency natural gas fired heating systems. Information about this program is presented above.

► Our FREE Energy Audit program surveyed 187 homes this year, installing conservation measures that will **collectively save participants over \$1,200 in energy each year**, and made low-cost efficiency recommendations that could save those homeowners an **additional \$60,000 in energy costs each year**.

► Our Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program has issued **rebates totaling over \$14,000 on 323 Energy Star rated appliances**. These appliances will collectively save their owners **over \$20,000 in energy costs** each year.

► Our free winter check-up offer yielded responses from **688 HG&E customers**. These customers received a safety and efficiency inspection of their gas-fired heating equipment at no cost.

► To date, our toll-free MuniHELPS hotline has fielded calls from **almost 200 HG&E customers**. The hotline offers energy conservation advice and can help qualify you for a FREE in-home energy audit. **You can contact the MuniHELPS hotline toll-free at (888) 335-7203.**

# Mainlines

DECEMBER 2006 / JANUARY 2007

A newsletter for the customers of the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department

## HG&E Continues to Offer Customers Low Utility Rates

Last winter brought unprecedented natural gas costs. Natural disasters and international political situations brought uncertainty to energy markets. Wholesale costs for natural gas skyrocketed, and HG&E unfortunately had to recoup these expenses through increased natural gas rates.

When market situations settled, we were able to implement natural gas rate reductions in both March and June of 2006. To date, HG&E has been able to continue offering our customers these low favorable rates.

As you can see from the graph on the lower right, HG&E is proud to offer its customers one of the lowest gas rates in the Pioneer Valley.

We hope to hold this low gas rate throughout the duration of this winter heating season, but given the unpredictable nature of energy markets we are unable to make any commitments at this time. As always, HG&E will continue to work diligently with multiple fuel suppliers and utilize existing storage mechanisms to secure natural gas at the lowest possible delivered costs.

We also encourage our customers to take conservation measures to reduce their home's energy consumption, and in turn their energy bills. We invite you to visit our website at [www.hged.com/conserv](http://www.hged.com/conserv) to learn more about these programs. You will also find a list of helpful telephone numbers on page 4 of this newsletter.

► **Residents of Northampton and Springfield pay about 50% more for their home's electricity than Holyoke homeowners!**

► **Holyoke homeowners pay \$35 less per month for their gas and electric services than Springfield residents!**

# Happy holidays!

Your December bill reflects **an extra 10% holiday discount on gas and electric services**, granted by the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department Commission. This discount does not apply to customers who are participating in an economic development incentive offer.

Economic development incentives include the First-Time Homeowner program and the Economic Development discount program. Bills must be paid by discount date to receive discounts.

## Electric Rate Comparison

December 2006 - Residential customer consuming 500 kwh per month. Amounts shown include all discounts and use the fixed default generation supply price.

HG&E	\$55.54	plus an extra 10% holiday discount !
Western Mass Electric	\$80.82	+45% <small>serving Springfield</small>
National Grid	\$87.84	+59% <small>serving Northampton</small>

## Gas Rate Comparison

December 2006 - Residential gas heating customer with a 1500 sq. ft. home. Amounts shown include all discounts.

HG&E	\$248.70	plus an extra 10% holiday discount !
Baystate Gas	\$254.22	+2% <small>serving Springfield</small>
Berkshire Gas	\$269.56	+6% <small>serving Greenfield</small>

## 8 WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY

# Tips for staying comfortable all winter long.



gas | electric | steam | telecom

### ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT TO SAVINGS

- 1 Lowering your home's thermostat just 3 degrees from 75° to 72°, will cut your heating costs by about 10%. And lowering the thermostat from 72° to 62° each night while you sleep can reduce your monthly heating bills by another 10%.
- 2 Make sure to lower your thermostats if you are leaving the home for any period of time; you'll use much less energy to warm your home upon your return than to keep it heated while you're away.
- 3 Install a programmable thermostat to automatically adjust your home's temperature at night or when you're away at work. You'll save up to \$100 in just the first year, and you'll still always awake or return to a warm comfortable home.
- 4 Heating your whole bedroom is the most expensive way to stay warm at night. Consider using flannel sheets, a down or plump fiber-fill comforter, and an electric mattress pad or blanket to stay comfortable at night.

### FOUR MORE WAYS TO SAVE

- 5 Before you turn up the thermostat, turn on your kettle. Drinking something warm really does help to warm your body up.
- 6 That half-empty extra refrigerator in the garage or basement is a real energy waster. Is it worth an extra \$15/month or more just to keep leftovers and beverages cold?
- 7 Even on the coldest day of the year, an engine block heater only takes 1 ½ hours to warm your engine. If you currently use a block heater 10 hours per night, adding an inexpensive timer can save you \$20 month on your electric bill.
- 8 Check the age and condition of your major appliances, especially the refrigerator. New energy star appliances can save you a lot of money. (\$60/year for a fridge, \$110/year for a clothes washer) HG&E also offers a \$50 rebate on qualifying models.

visit our website at:  
[www.hged.com/conserv](http://www.hged.com/conserv)

## Winter heating help

These agencies have programs to help needy families pay their winter heating bills.

Contact them directly at the telephone numbers listed below or please call the HG&E Credit Department at 536-9374 for more information.

**Valley Opportunity Council**  
fuel assistance programs

**552-1545**

**The Salvation Army**  
Good Neighbor Energy Fund

**532-6312**

**Citizens Energy / Distrigas**  
Heat Assistance Program

**866-427-9918**  
(a toll-free telephone call)

### Energy Conservation Help

You may also wish to contact our MuniHELPS energy conservation hotline, toll-free at 888-333-7525 where representatives can discuss simple measures your family can take to help reduce your home's energy consumption.

## A convenient new location to pay your HG&E bill...

We have added a payment dropbox at the Stop & Shop Supermarket on Northampton Street. Payments made at this location are credited to your bill on the next business day.

### Payment Drop-Box Locations

- CVS/Pharmacy, 223 South Street, 536-1432
- Brooks Pharmacy, 1504 Northampton St, 533-7985
- Stop & Shop, 28 Lincoln Street, 536-1247
- Wally's BP Shop, 297 Apremont Highway, 533-1631
- Arrow Prescription, 492 Westfield Road, 536-5506
- Stop & Shop, 2265 Northampton St, 536-9287

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**United Congregational Church**  
Corner of Maple & Appleton Streets  
for more information call 532-1483

**Samaritans & Friends Concert**  
January 21st • 2:30PM • FREE

**Silent Movie: The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse** (with live organ accompaniment)  
March 24th • 7:30PM • Suggested donation:  
\$8 adults / \$4 seniors

## Protect your family from Carbon Monoxide poisoning

Whether you heat your home with oil, natural gas, propane, coal or wood, your heating system can produce carbon monoxide (CO) if it is not working properly, or if it is inadequately vented. CO is also produced from internal combustion devices such as cars and small gasoline engines. Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless and tasteless, but very toxic. Signs indicating the presence of carbon monoxide in the home include stuffy, stale or smelly air, very high humidity or soot coming from a fireplace or heating system.

### What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often confused with those of the flu, and the highest incidence of poisoning occurs during the flu season.

Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea, unclear thinking, shortness of breath, weakness, vision problems and loss of muscle control. High concentrations of carbon monoxide can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death. However, a victim may not experience **ANY** of these symptoms, or only one or a few symptoms. You should suspect the presence of carbon monoxide if symptoms tend to disappear when you leave your home.

### What should you do if you suspect the presence of CO in your home?

- ▶ **Open the windows and doors**
- ▶ **Contact HG&E at 536-9300 (24-hours a day) or a licensed heating contractor immediately for an emergency inspection.**
- ▶ **If carbon monoxide is detected, seek medical attention immediately.**