

8 WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY

Close the window on home energy losses this winter.



For more ways to save money contact our toll-free hotline at (888) 335-7203 with any questions concerning energy conservation in your home.

CLEAR TIPS FOR ENERGY SAVINGS

- 1 Use window coverings as insulation to keep out the cold. (Drapes work better than blinds) Close them at night to keep heat from escaping through your windows, and open them during the day to let in free heat, even when it is slightly overcast.
- 2 If you have single-paned windows, consider installing storm windows or Energy Star thermal replacement windows. HG&E offers homeowners up to \$5,000 in interest-free assistance towards the purchase of Energy Star replacement windows.
- 3 A less expensive alternative to replacement windows is clear plastic sheeting, which can be temporarily fastened over windows and doors to prevent drafts and retain heat.
- 4 Even the most efficient window is much less efficient than an insulated wall. Installing heavy curtains in front of your largest windows will keep you more comfortable and save you money.

WINTER TIPS FOR HOME COMFORT

- 5 For baseboard heaters located under windows, use deflectors to steer heat into the room and away from windows and drapes. Be sure to use deflectors that are approved for use with baseboard heaters.
- 6 The right insulation house-wide can save you up to 30% on your heating bill. If your attic has less than 12 inches of insulation, you might need to add more.
- 7 If you have steam radiators in your home, consider placing a piece of aluminum foil between the radiator and the wall to reflect heat back into the room.
- 8 Ceiling fans set at a slow speed push warm air away from the ceiling and help circulate baseboard heat. As long as the room fan is on low, and not blowing directly on you, you should not feel a draft.

watch for more tips next month

Help a needy family keep warm

The Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Fund helps needy families with up to \$275 in fuel assistance per winter season. **Contact them at (800) 262-1320 if you need help or to learn how you can make a donation to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund.**



Mainlines

DECEMBER 2005/JANUARY 2006

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

HG&E Helps Customers Save Energy & Money

HG&E has many ways to help you save both energy and money this winter season. Here are some highlights of our residential energy conservation efforts:

► Our new Residential Energy Conservation Program has already provided **over \$200,000** in zero-interest assistance to help Holyoke homeowners replace windows, upgrade insulation levels, and upgrade heating systems.

► Our FREE Energy Audit program surveyed 109 homes this year, installing conservation measures that will collectively save participants over \$1,000 in energy each year, and made low-cost recommendations that could save those homeowners an additional **\$40,000 in energy costs** each year.

► Our Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program has issued rebates on 266 Energy Star rated appliances. These appliances will collectively save their owners **over \$11,000 in energy costs** each year.

► Our new E-Star Lights Program offers compact fluorescent light bulbs for as little as \$1 each plus shipping. Each one of these bulbs has the potential to save its owner **over \$40 in electricity** over its 8-year life when compared to a conventional incandescent bulb.

► 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.

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.

notice of purchased gas cost adjustment

Effective with this billing cycle, the purchased gas (PGA) portion of natural gas customer's bills has been adjusted to \$1.25 / ccf. For the average homeowner, it is projected that this adjustment will translate into a 8.8% increase in your monthly natural gas bill.

Recent hurricane activity in the Gulf of Mexico severely damaged many of the nation's natural gas wells and processing plants. This damage has restricted the ability to deliver natural gas to New England, and thus has increased the price that HG&E pays for the natural gas your home consumes.

HG&E continues to work diligently to reduce our natural gas costs, and to help our customers conserve energy during this unprecedented and troubling winter heating season.

We are not pleased to deliver this unpleasant news to you. In an effort to aid in this situation, HG&E has developed a number of programs designed to help homeowners save both energy and money. You will find information about these programs throughout this newsletter. If you have any questions about these programs, please do not hesitate to contact a Customer Accounts Representative at 536-9300.

Free Tax Preparation! Refunds Fast!

Starting January 21, 2006 free electronic filing will be offered by the Holyoke Tax Coalition at Mass Justice Project and Valley Opportunity Council to income eligible households.

Mass Justice Project - Telephone 533-2660
Monday & Wednesday 4-8pm / Friday 9:30-4:30pm
Saturday 9:30-1pm

Valley Opportunity Council (Holyoke) - Telephone 315-6020
Tuesday & Thursday 4-8pm / Saturday 9-2pm

Holyoke Council on Aging - Telephone 322-5625
providing free tax preparation to ages 60+ by appointment.
Monday 9am-12pm / Friday 9am-12pm

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.**

information prepared by
the Northeast Gas Association

A bright idea from HG&E

Special savings on Energy Star lighting products exclusively for HG&E customers!



Stop by our Suffolk St offices to pick up your FREE catalog!

or you can view the entire lighting collection on-line at: www.estarlights.com

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs from just \$1 each!

Savings on Energy Star lighting fixtures and LED Holiday Lights!

Shipping & handling charges are additional. Limit 6 bulbs and 6 fixtures per HG&E account per year. Pricing and availability subject to change.



gas | electric | steam | telecom



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.

Taking these conservation steps can save the average homeowner over \$100 per month in winter heating costs.

To find out more about this program, visit our website at www.hged.com/conserves 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**

Valley Opportunity Council
to apply for low-income fuel assistance programs **(413)552-1548**

Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Fund
offers eligible families up to \$275 to help pay heating bills **(800)262-1320**

also visit our website at: www.hged.com/conserves

Are you working and need help paying your Heating Bills?

Help is available! The Fuel Assistance program helps income-eligible households pay part of their winter heating bills.

If your gross household income falls within the limits shown in the chart below, you may qualify for fuel assistance and a discount on your telephone bills.

For information on how to apply, call your local Fuel Assistance office:

Valley Opportunity Council
300 High Street • Holyoke, MA 01040
Call: 413-552-1548

Household size	Maximum 4 Weeks Income
1	\$1,472
2	\$1,973
3	\$2,475
4	\$2,976
5	\$3,478
6	\$3,980
7	\$4,481
8	\$4,983
9	\$5,372
10	\$5,487

See the Residential Energy Conservation Program Application for complete details.