

Energynews

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you can use | n o v 2006

DID YOU KNOW?

Q: Why is the workman leaving my neighborhood when my lights are still out?

A: The troubleman or serviceman who responds first to assess and inspect is not necessarily able to repair all types of problems. Damage that requires more extensive repairs is referred to a specialized crew, who returns with the equipment needed to restore service. Troublemens or servicemen sometimes also “patrol” the lines to assess the extent of damage and the specific source of problems. Such information helps us determine how to restore service to the largest number of customers as quickly and safely as possible.

If you have a question that you would like to see appear in this column, please send it to:

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Know How Electricity Is Supplied, Delivered to You

Most of us begin our lives the same way, every day – with electricity. The alarm clock goes off, the light goes on and our day begins. But did you ever wonder what it takes to get that electricity to your door?

Simply put, it takes “supply” and “delivery.”

Supply refers to the generation of electricity. Atlantic City Electric buys electricity from the wholesale market for its customers. Coal, natural gas and oil are the principal fuels used to generate electricity. As you know, the cost of all these fuels has risen dramatically in recent years. In fact, between 1995 and 2005, the prices of these fossil fuels rose anywhere from 100 percent to an estimated 400 percent.

With the advent of deregulation, some Atlantic City Electric customers have chosen to purchase electricity from a supplier other than Atlantic City Electric. If you look to Atlantic City Electric to purchase your electricity supply, we do so at the market price set at a state-wide auction. This cost is passed directly to our customers.

The other piece of getting electricity to your door is called “delivery,” which is Atlantic City Electric’s core business. For the typical residential customer, the cost of getting

electricity delivered to you is less than 30 percent of the total bill.

Electric delivery costs pay for just about everything it takes to get the electricity from the regional transmission grid to you, the customer. This includes the cost of substations, power poles and lines, transformers and equipment, system maintenance and employees, from linemen to meter readers to customer service representatives.

Across Atlantic City Electric’s service territory, delivery rates have remained relatively stable during the past decade. This hasn’t been easy to do since electrical equipment and personnel costs are up.

While Atlantic City Electric remains committed to controlling its operation and maintenance costs, we also know that our customers do not want us to sacrifice reliability in the name of keeping delivery rates flat. Atlantic City Electric is committed to maintaining and improving its electric delivery system to ensure the continued, reliable flow of electricity to our customers.

As always, we will continue to give customers the Energy Know-How they need to get the most for their electricity dollar. You can find a few of our energy- and money-saving tips in this issue of Energy News and on our Web site at www.atlanticcityelectric.com.



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Know How Heat Pumps Work

During these energy-conscious times, many homeowners are wondering if their heating and cooling systems need a tune-up or, perhaps, replacement.

One safe, clean and energy-efficient way to heat your home this winter is with a heat pump.

Heat pumps use electricity to move heat from a cool space into a warm space. Because they move heat, rather than generate it, heat pumps can provide up to four times the amount of energy they consume.

During the summer, the heat pump serves as an air conditioner by absorbing heat from the indoor air and pumping it outdoors. During the winter, the heat pump absorbs heat from the outdoor air and pumps it inside – even cold winter air contains some heat.

The heat pump does require a backup heater that goes on automatically to provide additional heat when the outside air temperature is extremely low. Geothermal heat pumps seldom need a backup heater since they draw heat from the ground or a nearby water

source, which are more constant year round.

If you have a heat pump or are thinking about purchasing one, here are some energy efficiency tips to consider this winter:

■ Leave your thermostat at the lowest comfortable degree – setting it back while you're away and increasing it when you return is not an efficient way to run the unit. When you attempt to reheat the house by increasing the thermostat by more than 2 degrees, the heat pump will overreact and the backup heater will come on, which is more expensive to run.

■ Don't close or block cold air returns or heat registers. It is important to leave supply and return registers open, AA even if the room is not in use.

■ Change or clean filters monthly and have the heat pump serviced yearly to ensure it is running properly.

■ Clean and inspect the outdoor unit periodically to prevent any build up of leaves and other debris.

CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE:

Atlantic City Electric is installing a new customer service phone system aimed at better serving its customers.

The new phone system, called Natural Language, enables customers to complete a variety of services 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week. Some of the services customers will be able to do include paying their bill, calling in a meter reading and reporting a power outage – all without having to talk to a Customer Care representative.

The customer's voice response or touchtone input will be all the phone system needs to make sure the customer's request is fulfilled. We're hopeful customers will find the phone menu easy to navigate, enabling them to perform multiple tasks with just one call.

The new self-service phone system, however, will not replace the friendly, live assistance of a Customer Care representative, meaning customers will always have the option to speak with a representative. Keep in mind, though, Customer Care representatives are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, while the automated phone system serves customers anytime on any day.

And, most importantly, our Customer Care number has not changed. It remains: 1-800-642-3780.



Delaware (Area code 302)

Dec 1-3: *Delaware Hospice Festival of Trees* (Sussex); Del Tech & Comm. College, Georgetown; 800-838-9800

Dec 3: *13th Annual Arden Christmas Antiques & Collectibles Show*; Gild Hall 2126 The Highway, Wilmington

Dec 9: *Nur Shriners Pet Show*; 198 Dupont Hwy; www.nurshrine.org/pet_show.htm

Dec 15-17: *Annual Family Holiday Play*, Reedy Point Players, DE City Community Center; DE City; 838-9228

Dec 22: *Holiday Brown Bag Concert Series*; Grace Episcopal Church, Talleyville; 478-9533

Maryland (Area code 410)

Dec 1: *Centreville Christmas Parade*; Commerce St., Centreville; 410-758-1180

Dec 2: *Victorian Christmas Celebration*; Julia A. Purnell Museum, Snow Hill; 410-632-0515, www.purnellmuseum.com

Dec 2: *Christmas Open House*; Steppingstone Museum, Quaker Bottom Rd., Havre de Grace; 410-939-2299, 888-419-1762, steppingstonemuseum@msn.com

Dec 9: *Grand Illumination*; Adkins Arboretum, Ridgley; 410-634-2847, www.adkinsarboretum.org

Dec 9: *Ocean Bay Chapter Sweet Adelines*; 3rd Annual Christmas Festival of Harmony; Wicomico High School, Salisbury; www.oceanbay.com, 410-749-1194

New Jersey (Area code 609, 856)

Dec 1-10: *What's Cookin'?: Two Centuries of American Foodways*; Harrison Township Historical Society's Old Town hall Museum, Mullica Hill; 856-478-6673, 856-478-4787, www.mullicahill.com

Dec 2: *Yuletide Tour of Historic Salem*; Salem; 856-935-3635, salemnyuletidetour@yahoo.com

Dec 2: *A Cress Holmes Christmas Candlelight Tour*; 504 Rt. 9, Cape May County Museum; 609-465-3535

Dec 16: *Santa in the Tropics*; Cape May County Museum and Zoo; 609-465-3535

Virginia (Area code 757)

Dec 2: *Chincoteague Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade*; Chincoteague; 757-336-6161, chincochamber@verizon.net, www.chincoteaguechamber.com

For more events: Click on "In Your Community" at our Web site. Atlantic City Electric Region, visit www.atlanticcityelectric.com; Delmarva Power Region, visit www.delmarva.com. To include a future event either in ENYCU or online, fax to: 302-283-6095, or send an e-mail to EnergyNews@pepcoholdings.com.

