

A report on activities of interest to SUB customers

SUBreports

Volume 10 Issue 3 Autumn 2011

JOIN US AT THE SPRINGFIELD UTILITY BISTRO!



SUB invites all its customer-owners to celebrate Customer Appreciation Week at SUB! Just stop by our main office during the first week in October for a FREE latte, hot cocoa, or a hot cup of delicious coffee. And while you're here, pick up a set of energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs for your home.*

Our barista will be serving up coffee drinks at our annex building (right across from our main office) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday. Grab a cup to go, or feel free to linger over your coffee in our Board Room. That's also where you'll find our Conservation Connection staff giving away CFLs, although please note that the bulbs will only be available weekdays until noon.

As always, Customer Appreciation Week is also Public Power Week, a time to reflect on the value that public utilities provide their communities.

Keeping rates low for customers – instead of profits high for investors – is at the heart of the public utility promise, a commitment that SUB takes seriously. With the lowest electric rates in the area and consistently high customer satisfaction, SUB is thankful to play a vital role in the life of our Springfield community.

So come on by, and let us show our thanks by serving you up a fresh cup of your favorite hot drink!

Trust. Tradition. Service. That's SUB.

**Limit three free CFLs per Springfield household.
Proof of Springfield address required.*

Customer Appreciation Week
October 3 - 8
Monday – Friday: 8:30 – 5:00
Saturday: 9:00 – noon
Free lattes, hot cocoa and coffee
Free CFLs*



Affordable housing meets affordable heating

Super efficient ductless heat pumps replace inefficient heating systems in dozens of Springfield homes

With a still-struggling economy, it's no wonder ductless heat pumps (DHPs) have become so popular. They're easy to install, relatively inexpensive, and they are so efficient they can cut heating costs in half.

That's good news for anyone, but for families on a low or fixed income, it's huge.

And that's why DHPs were on the radar at the Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County, says Jack Foster, an energy services representative at Springfield Utility Board. "Just as one of HACSA's goals is to improve the quality of affordable housing in our area, SUB aims to support worthwhile energy conservation projects. Providing incentives that help folks of limited means access an affordable way to heat their homes helps do that."

Jack says that early this year, HACSA asked SUB to work with them on a large-scale project to install 172 ductless heat pumps in 86 existing duplexes, all of which had inefficient ceiling, wall or baseboard heat.

"Conserving electricity helps everyone."

"The renters are responsible for paying the utility bills in those units, so they're at the mercy of whatever heating source happens to be installed in the home. By changing out the old, inefficient heating systems for ductless heat pumps,

the people in those homes should see a good-size decrease in their heating bill this winter."

In fact, ductless heat pumps typically slash heating costs anywhere from 25 percent to 50 percent, as

compared to ceiling cable, baseboard or wall heaters. To make the most of the DHPs, SUB is using other weatherization incentives to upgrade insulation in the attics of these homes. "Efficiently heating a home is important, but so is making sure the heat stays in," Jack says.

SUB worked closely with HACSA representatives to make sure program specifications were met. Then, once work began in June, things went fast. After just one month, all of the DHPs had been installed – a rate of about six per day. Compare that to a traditional ducted heat pump, where installation of just one unit takes two to three days.

Although this project was unique because of its size and scale – SUB's incentives totalled \$258,000, ductless heat pump incentives are available to all qualified SUB customers. Bonneville Power Administration, the federal agency that sells power to most of the northwest utilities, funds the incentives. This in turn allows SUB to offer to its customers a choice of either a \$1,500 rebate or a zero percent loan of up to \$7,000. SUB's staff is available to help facilitate the process, including answering questions and assisting with paperwork.

"Conserving electricity helps everyone," says Jack. "There's the immediate savings customers will see in their monthly utility bill. But conservation also helps reduce the total load on SUB's system." That's good, he says, because SUB has to build its infrastructure to provide enough electricity during peak usage times, which for our area generally occurs during the winter heating season.

"Anything SUB can do to reduce our peak demand helps, because it means we can keep from building new, costly substations, which drive rates up. SUB prefers to drive rates in the other direction, or at the very least, keep them as flat as possible." And conservation, he says, is one of the best tools we have to achieve that.



Jack Foster

MEET the Board

SUB's water and electricity services are provided under the direction of SUB's Board of Directors, five Springfield citizens who are elected to four-year terms, and who serve at-large and without pay. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The public is invited and encouraged to participate in these meetings, at which SUB policies and procedures are formulated and adopted.



Ken Boyst
Chair, Position 4
Term exp. 12/31/14



Bobbie Jean Adams
Vice-Chair, Position 5
Term exp. 12/31/12



Ted Johnson
Position 3
Term exp. 12/31/14



Virginia Lauritsen
Position 2
Term exp. 12/31/14



Joe Mathieu
Position 1
Term exp. 12/31/12

Don't Agonize. Winterize!

You can't keep Old Man Winter from knocking on your door, but you don't have to let him in.

Winter is full of fun. Snowmen and snowflakes. Ice skating and sledding. Ski trips and roaring fires.

But with the cold weather come challenges as well. Keeping your house warm is a big one, and so is making sure your pipes don't freeze when the temperatures dip.

Keeping your space warm

Your best bet is always a properly insulated home. If you're ready to take that step, call SUB's Conservation Connection at 541-746-0963 and our staff of experts can guide you through a menu of rebates and loans that make weatherizing your space more affordable. Or, check out SUB's website at www.subutil.com for a complete listing.

But there are lots of low- or no-cost ways to keep your home safe from the worst of winter:

- **Find and seal drafts.** Doors and windows are the obvious places, but also check your attic, holes in wallboards or places where plumbing and wiring enters the house. Caulk small gaps, and use an expanding foam sealant or weather-stripping for larger gaps.
- **Close off unused rooms** and place a rolled-up towel under the door to prevent drafts.
- **Dress warmly.** Nothing beats back the cold like socks and sweaters, and it's far cheaper than cranking up the thermostat.
- **Rearrange your furniture!** Walls along the outside edges of a house may be several degrees cooler than center areas or walls that separate rooms. Consider moving chairs, beds or other furniture you spend time on away from cold walls.



Keeping your pipes from freezing

Nothing can ruin your day – and your floors and your walls – like a burst water pipe. Protecting your pipes from freezing is the best way to ward off an unwelcome surprise. Here's how:

- **Make sure all pipes** located in unheated areas of your home are insulated.
- **Wrap pipes** that are prone to freezing in special "heat tape" available at hardware stores.
- **During extended periods of freezing weather,** open cupboard doors to expose pipes to warm inside air.
- **Disconnect hoses** from outside faucets, and cover hose bibs with inexpensive foam insulator caps.
- **Know where the master shut-off valve is** for your home's water supply! To find it, look near your clothes washer hook-up, near your water heater, or at the property side of your water meter. The most common master valve looks like a round wheel attached to a larger pipe. Turn the wheel valve clockwise to shut the water off. **NEVER FORCE THE VALVE!**

SUB holds the line on electric rates

Bonneville Power Administration, the power marketing agency from which SUB buys all its power, is raising the wholesale rates it charges SUB to about 7.5% beginning this month. However, because that number came in lower than earlier estimates, SUB's Board of Directors



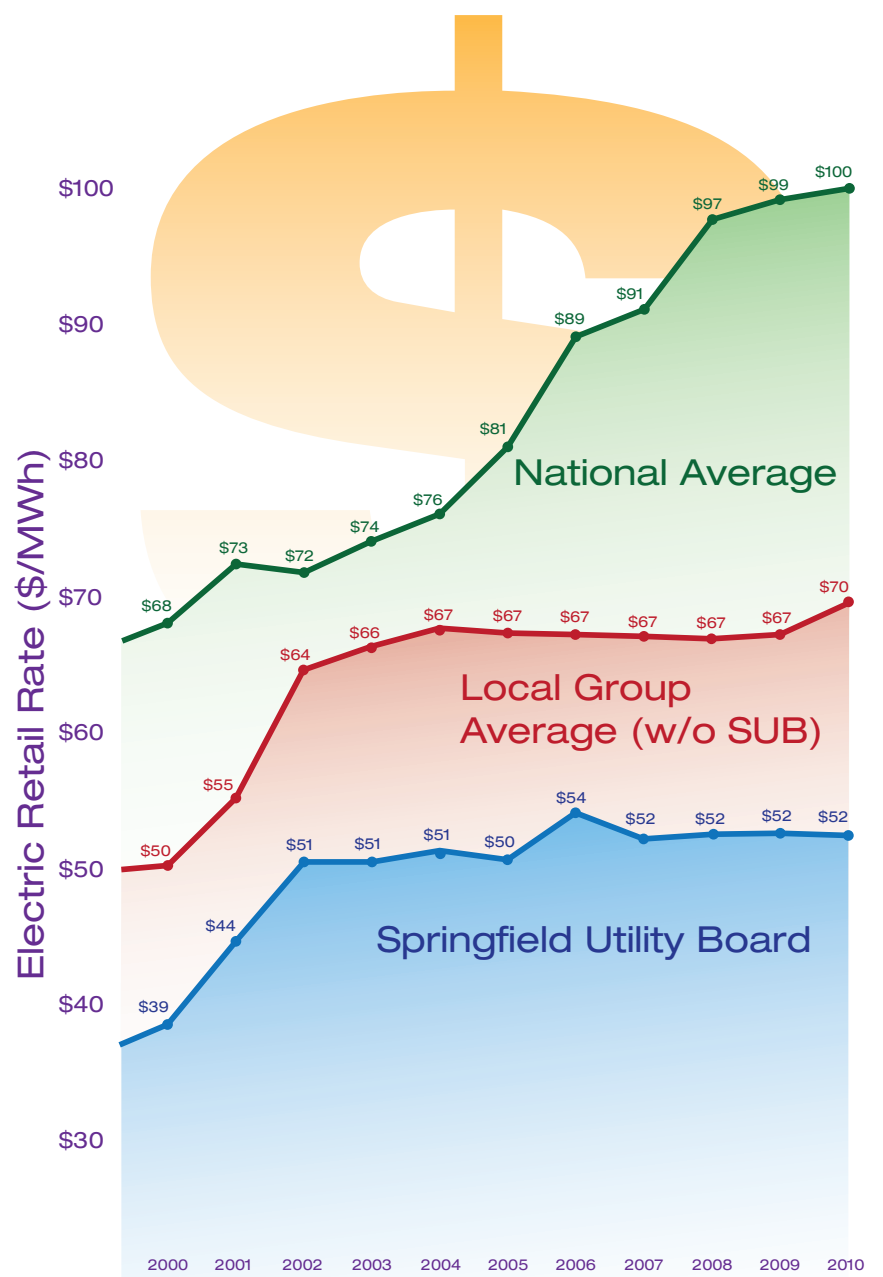
Bob Linahan

has decided to absorb the cost of the increase and keep the rates charged to customers flat, at least through the 2011 heating season.

While an electric rate increase can't be forestalled forever, SUB's General Manager Bob Linahan says the utility is working to make sure rate increases are as small as possible, and that they are only approved when absolutely necessary. The Board will look at electric rates again in the Spring.

The Board will also consider a water rate increase at its November meeting. Fortunately, water rates tend to have a far smaller impact on customer bills than electric rates. As always, SUB and its Board encourage and welcome customer input.

How SUB electric rates compare



Watts Happening



Calling all customers!

Or a few hundred of you, at least! If you've been a customer with SUB for a year or more, you may receive a call from a research firm that periodically contacts customers on our behalf to talk with them about the job SUB does on your behalf, and to make sure that your concerns and ideas are heard. So, if you get the call, please take a few minutes to let us know how we're doing!

Ho ho holiday fun

Mark your calendar for Springfield's Holiday Parade. Don't miss SUB's annual appearance as we fly Santa down Main Street in one of our festive bucket trucks. The parade is coming Saturday, December 3rd – and note the new start time of 1:00! Information on the parade route, parking and other details can be found at www.springfieldchristmasparade.org



Independent spirit. Low rates.

The Springfield Utility Board is a customer-owned municipal utility operated independently from the city and responsible only to its ratepayers. We deliver exceptional service, and some of the very lowest utility rates in Oregon!

SUBreports is a regular publication of SUB's Community Relations Department. We welcome your feedback. If you have questions, comments or story ideas, please call 541-744-3794.

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