

# The Holland Board of Public Works

Your hometown utility.

SPRING - SUMMER 2003

## NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication for HBPW Customers

### HOLLAND BPW RATE INCREASES FOR ELECTRIC & WATER SERVICES EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2003

The Holland BPW has implemented rate increases effective May 1, 2003 that affects residential and commercial customers using electric and water services.

The HBPW produces about 15% of its electricity from electric generation that uses natural gas, and purchases about 20% of its electricity from the wholesale market. During the past two years, the cost of natural gas used for producing electricity and the cost of purchased power have risen dramatically. In order to continue to meet rising costs, a small rate increase in electric service has been implemented.

#### Electric rate



The new HBPW electric residential rate (Rate A) increase implements a seasonal rate where the charge per kilowatt-hour (kWh) is increased from May through October.

The new charge for electricity, May through October, is \$0.067 per kWh.

The charge for electricity used during the months of November through April, remains at the current \$0.062 per kWh.

It is estimated that the average residential customer with home air conditioning will experience an annual increase of around \$23 per year.

For the average residential customer without air conditioning, the annual increase should be around \$18 per year. This is about a 4% increase in cost for HBPW's residential customers.

#### Water rate



The continuing rising cost of materials including chemicals and the electricity for treating water, and the cost of constructing new water tanks and distribution lines have necessitated an increase in the HBPW water rates.

The water rate increase represents an overall average increase of 9%. This rate increase implements a seasonal rate where the charge per hundred cubic feet (ccf) of water is increased from May through October.

The new charge for water, May through October, is \$0.78 per ccf and from November through April remains at the current \$0.68 per ccf.

The monthly customer charge for water also increased from \$3.85 per month to \$4.15 per month. Customers who sprinkle lawns will see a larger increase, up to 14% in the summer months. Customers who do not use city water for lawn sprinkling, will see about a 7.5% increase in their bill.

We recognize that particularly in these difficult economic times, any increase in costs to our customers is not helping you cope with meeting your budget. The Holland Board of Public Works is concerned about the impact of these rate increases and is working hard to keep our prices as low as possible. If you need further information about these rates or are looking for tips on reducing your usage and cost for electricity or water, visit our web site at [www.hollandbpw.com](http://www.hollandbpw.com) or call us at 616-355-1500.

#### Beware Persons Posing as Utility Employees



Holland BPW employees carry official photo identification cards with their name and department affiliation. In addition, all HBPW meter readers also wear the HBPW uniform when conducting business.

If a person requests entry onto your property for HBPW utility purposes, the HBPW encourages customers not to let the person into your home without requesting to see company ID and determining the reason for the visit. If you are still concerned, call the HBPW at 355.1500 to confirm the person's identity.



## 2002 WATER QUALITY REPORT AVAILABLE

The HBPW recently released its 2002 Water Quality Report. The document indicates that the Holland Water Treatment Plant met all federal and state drinking regulations without exception during the period from January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2002.

A state certified microbiological laboratory, the HBPW's Water Treatment Plant in conjunction with three independent laboratories, conducted over 50,000 tests for more than 200 contaminants during 2002.

Federal law requires that community water systems provide customers with an annual water quality report. The report includes details about where the water comes from, how it is treated, and how it compares to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and State standards.

The Holland BPW has been providing water to the area for over 100 years, and is presently responsible for providing water to more than 50,000 residents in the City of Holland, City of Zeeland and portions of Holland, Laketown, Park and Zeeland Townships.

For additional information or to request a copy, call 616/355.1589.

# Keeping the Power Running



Power outages happen infrequently, but when they do – they are disruptive to all of us. There will always be situations that are difficult to control. However, we continuously look for ways to prevent an outage. We do this in a variety of ways:

1. By insuring that trees don't interfere with overhead lines or energized equipment. Holland BPW contracts with a tree cutting service, which annually trims trees that are near power lines.
2. Making ongoing improvements to our electrical system.
3. By performing regular maintenance on our power plant, power transmission and distribution systems.
4. Having crews available around the clock if necessary to get the power back on as quickly as possible.

In fact, during the past year, the average frequency of outages per customer was 0.7.

**Why do we have power failures?** In most situations – storms, high winds, ice on lines, traffic accidents, construction work, or small animals and birds interfering with substation equipment – are the cause of an outage.

Restoring power, particularly after a major outage involves more than just throwing a switch. The first priority is to address any immediate problems that are unsafe. Critical customers such as individuals on life support systems, police, fire and hospitals are also given priority. Substations are then checked, with staff working their way out

along the main distribution lines, to those lines that supply power to large groups of customers and then to the individual consumer.

### If you experience a power outage:

1. Wait a few minutes to see if the power comes on by itself.
2. Check the circuit breaker panel or fuse box to see if it's functioning.
3. Check with a nearby neighbor to see if the power is out in their house or building.

Once you've confirmed that there is a power failure, call the HBPW at 355.1500. Our phones are answered 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Your call will be answered as soon as possible.

### How you can help to keep the power running

- Report any damaged electric equipment, such as power lines.
- Call MISS Dig before any excavation work. This will help to avoid damage to underground lines.
- Do not fly kites or airplanes near overhead power lines.
- If a member of your home uses medical equipment that is dependent on electricity (i.e., oxygen), ask the physician to submit a letter to the HBPW, so we can put you on a priority power restoration list.
- If you have a pad-mounted transformer (green box) on your property, keep at least six feet clear in front. If the transformer needs working on, an outage could be extended while crews remove landscaping.