

# The Holland Board of Public Works

Your hometown utility.

## NEWSLETTER



SPRING/SUMMER 2007

A Publication for HBPW Customers

### POWER YOU CAN COUNT ON



Reliable power is something our customers should never worry about. That's why keeping customers supplied with continuous power is a top priority. Through careful planning, servicing, maintaining and replacement of electric equipment, the Holland BPW works hard to keep your power on.

**Why power outages occur?** Overhead and underground lines that deliver electricity may be exposed to any number of events. Common reasons for outages include: lightning, wind and heavy rain that causes objects to be blown onto the exposed lines, tree limbs falling onto the lines, small animals that get onto the power lines or into ground mounted equipment, vehicles that run off the road and hit power poles, equipment failure, or a construction crew that accidentally digs into the lines while building.

In many cases, we can't prevent a storm or even an animal from interfering with power lines and equipment. However, by maintaining equipment, performing tree trimming in vulnerable areas, replacing aging equipment, and installing upgrades helps us limit the number of outages.

Our crews are ready 24-hours a day to respond quickly to any power interruption. In addition, we keep equipment on hand so we're ready with a replacement whenever it's needed.

The HBPW collects data on outages throughout the year. This information assists us in identifying specific areas that may experience multiple outages so that we can do preventive maintenance. During 2006, the Holland BPW's Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI) which represents the average outage duration time was 17 minutes.

Our outage management process is backed by a strong commitment to provide reliable energy, up-to-date information technology, capital and circuit improvement programs, an ongoing maintenance program, and employees who are dedicated to excellence in providing the most reliable and safe transmission and distribution system possible.

### Holland BPW's FY2008 Budget

Recently, the HBPW submitted its FY2008 budget to the Holland City Council. The expense budget calls for \$93 million to meet short-term and long-term needs and operation expenses.

Like many utilities, the HBPW has experienced huge volatility in fuel expenses, as well as increased costs for chemicals and materials for critical infrastructure. In addition, capital investments related to construction of new facilities and improvements to existing plant facilities are needed; as well as upgrades to meet more stringent environmental standards.

According to projections, in order to meet anticipated expenses, in the likelihood of present expenses and income remaining the same -- rate increases in all three utilities would be necessary.

To date, rate increases have not been finalized, nor determined when they would become effective. Customers will be given ample notification.

The Holland BPW is a public service institution, whose mission is to serve customers, not stockholders. The HBPW and the City Council have the responsibility to provide for the costs of the operations, maintenance, and replacement obligations of the water, wastewater, and electric systems. We measure success by how much money stays within the community through low rates and contributions to the city budget.

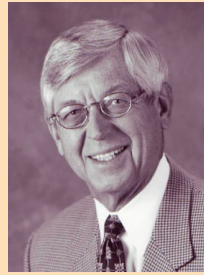
We strongly believe that by preserving these utility systems in good repair and working order, and by maintaining a reserve for the development of future needs, this will help to stabilize future rates and help us to continue to find ways to pass on more savings to our customers.

The Holland BPW board and employees understand that any increase is difficult for its customers. HBPW board and staff have already made numerous efforts to avoid rate increases, including conversion to lower cost western coal, expansion of wholesale power sales, efficiencies in staffing, and health care cost sharing.

The HBPW will continue to do everything possible to maintain costs and to keep rates as low as possible.

## New Board Member

Paul Elzinga has been appointed a member of the board of the Holland BPW for a term running from January 2007 through 2010. Appointed by Mayor Al McGeehan, Elzinga fills the board position recently vacated by Leslie Lanser.



Elzinga served as president of Elzinga & Volkers, Inc., and is presently chairman emeritus. Recognized throughout Western Michigan for his construction expertise, his experience includes directing, planning and construction of power, municipal water and wastewater plants, as well as major bridge, healthcare and industrial projects. A registered Professional Engineer, Elzinga provided project management for Holland Community Hospital, the City of Holland Streetscape/Snow-melt project and the HBPW's coal-fired and gas turbine power generation, wastewater and water treatment plants.

Active in the community, Elzinga has participated in the planning and construction of facilities for the Hope College-Haworth Conference & Learning Center, TransMatic, Meijer, Inc. and the Terminal 2000 renovation of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

Paul Elzinga is a graduate of Michigan Technological University, with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. A native and resident of Holland, Michigan, Elzinga is a private pilot.

## Before you dig

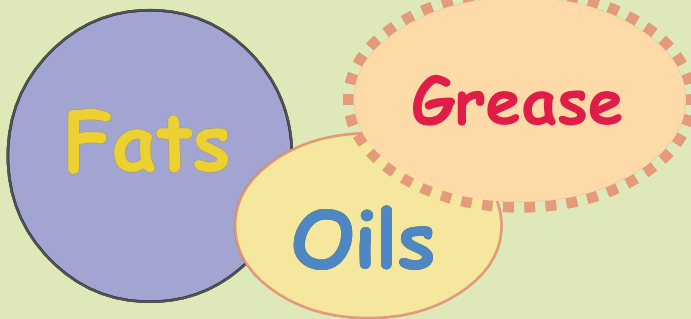


Warmer weather means time for outdoor activities and -- a time for landscaping and gardening.

Before you plan an excavation project, the Holland BPW wants to remind you to call MISS DIG at 1-800-482-7171.

The MISS DIG service is easy to use -- and it's free! Call at least three days before you plan to dig. The MISS DIG System operator will get your address and then notify member utilities who will mark the location of the underground public utility equipment with flags, paint or do both using utility color code colors.

For more information and to find out the utility color code colors, visit the MISS DIG website at [www.missdig.org](http://www.missdig.org). It's the law!



Fats, oil and grease found in food ingredients such as meat, cooking oil, shortening, butter, margarine and sauces can cause major problems if not disposed of properly. A build-up of grease, fats, and oil in the sewer system can clog sewer lines, causing sewage back-ups and flooding.

Additionally, fats, oils and grease can enter storm drains and flow directly into water bodies creating serious environmental conditions. You can do a lot to help eliminate fats, oils and grease from entering the sewer system. Here's how:

**DO NOT** dump cooking oil, bacon grease, poultry fat and grease into the kitchen sink or the toilet bowl.

**DO NOT** use hot water and soap to wash grease down the drain, because it will cool and harden in your pipes or in the sewer down the line.

**DO** place cooled cooking oil, poultry and meat fats in sealed non-recyclable containers and discard with your regular garbage.

**DO** use paper towels (not cloth) to wipe leftover grease or oil off of dishes, pots and pans before washing them.

Following these dos and don'ts will help you and your neighbors avoid expensive sewer backups, plumbing emergencies, and expenses to cover sewer maintenance and repairs, while helping protect water quality in our community.

## Keep transformer boxes clear of obstructions

HBPW customers with neighborhood high-voltage equipment and transformers in their yards can help themselves, their neighbors and HBPW crews by maintaining clearance around the green metal boxes that house utility equipment.

When planting trees, shrubs or building fences, remember to keep eight feet of space around this equipment. Proper clearance helps HBPW crews restore power more quickly and safely during a power outage.

For your safety, remind family members to never climb on, plant or dig around neighborhood electrical transformers.