

Newsletter 88 – Winter 2004

How about those Natural Gas Prices? Eh?

Last year at this time, Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) was selling gas for \$1.06 per hundred cubic feet (CCF), not counting customer charges. Now, it costs \$1.36 per CCF – a 30% increase. Yikes!

Last year at this time, PECO Energy gas was about \$0.85 per CCF. Now, it's \$1.01 – up 19% – and forecasted to increase even more. In New Jersey, the cost of natural gas from Public Service Gas and Electric also increased 30%, from about \$0.80 per CCF a year ago to \$1.04 last month.

Cold weather could make things heating season was about 30% before. Even though it was experts describe last year as more heating seasons before that of than normal. Some predictions winter anticipate another normal winter approaches, some getting nervous.



worse. The last colder than the one colder, the weather normal. Several 2002-3 were warmer for the coming one. So, as the congregations are

Why is this happening? The running out of natural gas in Much of the gas we burn now

but even Canada is running out. This is why Alan Greenspan called this summer for more imported liquefied natural gas and why we may build a pipeline from Alaska to the lower 48 states. In June 2003, even the Bush White House uncharacteristically called for conservation of natural gas.

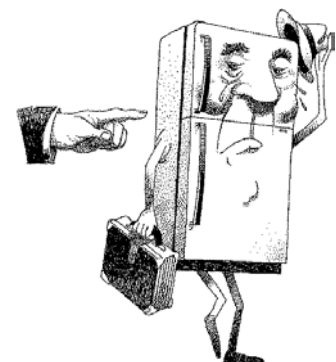
answer is that we are North America. comes from Canada,

The Department of Energy shows that about 42% of natural gas used in the United States is used for industry. About 23% is residential, and 15% for commercial buildings. On their website, the Natural Gas Supply Association explains that gas-intensive industries have already cut back. For example, fertilizer production relies heavily on natural gas. 20% of the US fertilizer capacity has been permanently shut down, and another 25% temporarily shut down. If industry comes out of the recession, there will be increased demand for natural gas, which could make shortages even worse.

The best solution to these increases is to take your energy destiny into your own hands. This means tuning up boilers and furnaces, turning down the temperature in any heating zone or building that is not occupied, converting to budget plans that spread deep winter heating costs over many months, and lowering the temperature of domestic water. Also, Newsweek magazine suggests it is time to “pull those sweaters out of storage.” ICE

A List of Efficient Appliances

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) lists energy consumption for refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, room air conditioners, central air conditioners, air source heat pumps, water heaters, furnaces and boilers. When replacing such equipment, consult their website to see the ratings. They are listed at



Balancing Warm Air Flow

Let's say you heat with a warm air furnace, and that some rooms overheat, while others are too cool. Since this imbalance is permanent, you really should call in a good heating contractor to balance the distribution of heated air. Another way is to cover the metal air discharge grilles in rooms that overheat. Home Trends now sells large sheets of magnetic material that can cover vents. It's like a large flexible refrigerator magnet. A set of three 8" by 15" covers is about \$10. A larger 24" by 30" sheet is about \$17. Visit www.hometrendscatalog.com or call 800-810-2340 for more information.

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Very Low Wattage Holiday Lights



Brookstone has started to sell holiday lights made from light emitting diodes (LEDs). Strings of 70 colored LED lights cost about \$20 each. Strings of white LEDs cost about \$30. We bought one and tested it. The lamps are a cool gray blue more than white, but the string of 70 little lamps used less than 2 watts. That's less than a dime a month for light when it is dark outside. Their advertising says they are using commercial grade LEDs that are brighter than conventional ones, can be used inside and outside, and last up to 200,000 of continuous burning. Of course, we prefer that you turn them on only when you need them. It seems that each season brings greater varieties of LED holiday lighting. Call 800-926-7000 or visit their website <http://www.brookstone.com/> Brookstone guarantees what they sell. You can return the lights if you are not satisfied.

ICE

New Jersey's Great Deal on Compact Fluorescent Lamps

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, the US Department of Energy and the US Environmental Protection Agency have teamed up with retailers to offer New Jersey residents very low priced, EnergyStar rated compact fluorescent lamps. The offer also applies to indoor and outdoor permanent light fixtures, portable light fixtures and ceiling fans and ceiling fan light kits that use compact fluorescent lamps. You cannot purchase them over the internet or in a catalog; you have to go to one of over 800 New Jersey retail stores listed on the BPU website www.bpu.nj.us. The name of the program is "Change a Light, Change the World," and it lasts only until the end of December 2003. Colleagues in New Jersey found 15-watt to 23-watt lamps for only 99 cents, but that many stores were out of stock. So, call ahead to see if they have any.

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If we have helped you save money...

If we have helped you save money, please send us a check today. We are supported only by people of faith, which means we don't solicit financial support from governments, foundations, utilities or corporations. We are supported by you. So, if we have helped you, please help us. Send us a generous check today!!

ICE

New electric and gas suppliers

Some PECO Energy customers have received or will receive information in the mail from Dominion Retail or It's Electric and Gas (IEG). As part of a program called Market Share Threshold, each company was selected by auction to provide electricity (and gas for IEG) at a lower price than PECO Energy. We have looked at their offers and suggest that you take them up on their offer, which means that you don't have to do anything if you receive their paperwork. If you have any questions, call ICE. For those congregations with dual fuel boilers, we can advise you when to it is less expensive burn oil, based on how much you pay for oil and natural gas. Contact us for more information. ICE

Temperature Recording – a new service from ICE

We have grown to like tiny temperature recorders. They are very small and record over 2,000 time/temperature events. We can program to start at a specific time and to sample each one-minute interval, or up to each 255- minute interval. From the resulting charts, we can see how fast the air warms up, how fast it cools off, whether thermostats are working properly, temperature settings, and so on. If you would like us to record temperatures in your buildings, call us for an estimate. For example, if you wanted us to send you one recorder and then to send you a graph of the results after you returned it to us, we would charge you \$50. ICE



Thermochron next to a thermostat

Even More Information on City Water Meters

Two years ago, ICE intervened in a hearing about increases in City water rates that tripled the monthly cost for commercial-size water meters. The Philadelphia Water Commission ordered the Philadelphia Water Department to assure that congregations had the smallest practical water meters, and that they were receiving the 25% Charitable Discount. In mid November 2003, ICE met with the Philadelphia Water Department. We learned the following:

- The PWD is phasing out 3/4" meters, automatically replacing them with 5/8" meters.
- The PWD will likely file a rate increase before July 1, 2004.
- ICE furnished the PWD with a list of 1,649 congregations, but PWD does not recognize the addresses from many of them. ICE will send letters to 661 congregations asking that a sample water bill be sent to ICE, who would then forward it to PWD.
- All congregations qualify for the Charitable Discount for their worship buildings and schools, but not for rectories, convents and parsonages.
- Any congregation wanting the Charitable Discount must not be currently in arrears on their water bill. If they remain in arrears beyond 60 or 70 days, they lose the Discount.
- The person in charge of the Charitable Discount is Shirlean Sawyer at 215-685-9681.

The PWD sent us two documents concerning the Charitable Discount. One lists the regulations for obtaining the Discount, and the other is an application to get it. Remember, this applies only to congregations within the city limits of Philadelphia. ICE

Don't Allow Estimated Bills

There are fewer and fewer excuses for estimated meter readings. More and more water, electric and gas utilities have adopted automated meter reading, which eliminates the need for a person to read meters. Because rates are rising, sometimes every month or two, congregations should insist on actual meter readings by sending a letter by certified mail, or with US Post Office "Delivery Confirmation,"

to the utility asking for an actual reading of any meter with an estimated bill. Also, demand recording electric meters need to be read every month. Otherwise, the estimated demand from one month is applied to subsequent months with estimated readings. ICE

New Environmental Study Guide

The Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign has published a new 28-page study guide called “The Cry of Creation.” The Campaign is a joint effort of the National Council of Churches in Christ and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life. The booklet was edited and compiled by Earth Ministry in Seattle and serves as an outline for a three-meeting course of study about our effect on our environment. The first meeting considers the human place in creation. The second discusses religion and energy policy, and the third outlines some action steps that congregations and individuals might take to use less energy. ICE has a few copies of the booklet, or you can get it at www.earthministry.org or www.protectingcreation.org. Each booklet is \$5. ICE