



Light and Water Departments adopt four-day workweek with expanded coverage: Schedule aims to save energy, cut costs, improve customer service

May 2006--With extraordinary fuel costs showing no signs of abating, the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments (LELWD) have formally adopted a four-day, ten-hour workweek in an effort to save energy and promote conservation. But unlike the recently concluded six-month pilot program, the new schedule will offer expanded coverage for both business and operations functions, according to General Manager Savas Danos.

He said the goal of the new schedule will be to utilize the benefits of both a 4x10 workweek and the traditional 5x8 week by increasing business office coverage from 40 to 44 hours per week and electric and water operations from 40 to 50 hours per week. All employees will still work a 40-hour week, with added coverage accomplished through rotations, Danos explained.

Under the schedule, business office hours are Monday through Wednesday, 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., closed Friday. Danos said opening Thursday evenings aligns LELWD with hours offered by Town Hall and the transfer station, and expands opportunities for customer service.

On the operations front, hours are Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with one water and one electric crew working Fridays. On a rotating basis, Danos explained, the Friday crews will work Tuesday through Friday, to eliminate the need for overtime. Having crews in the system should significantly enhance response time to outages and emergencies, he said, and reduce overtime pay. Danos emphasized that emergency coverage is unaffected by the program, and remains available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Danos pegged estimated savings at up to 10 percent for fuel and 20 percent for electricity costs. "With fuel costs so high, and electricity following the oil and natural gas market, we need to do everything we can to manage costs proactively," he said.

Danos said the departments expect to realize savings by keeping buildings dark and vehicles garaged for longer periods of time. A preliminary review of trouble calls indicates that most calls occur in the late afternoon hours, he explained, so he also anticipates finding some savings through the departments' ability to respond during the extended daily hours.

“As an organization, LELWD has always prided itself on being a progressive utility, using the latest tools and technologies to offer outstanding value for our services. We hope that this program furthers that tradition,” he said. By leading by example, Danos said, “we believe our conservation program may inspire other organizations, public and private, to consider the compressed work week as a means of saving energy.”