

# Watts & Drops

Newsletter of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments

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Fall 2005

## System reaches new peak in electric usage

On July 27, 2005 LELD set a new peak for electric demand of 49.1 megawatts. This represents an increase of 11% over the previous peak set in June of 2003. The New England region also hit a new peak on the same day. Supplies were adequate; therefore, there was no need to call for any energy advisories.



## Expand your fall cleaning

There are a few things you should remember to do this fall that may increase the efficiency of your home. You should periodically clean the coils of your refrigerator. This is especially important if you have pets; pet hair and dust can build up in and around the coils causing the compressor to work harder than necessary. You can find special refrigerator brushes designed to work in those hard to reach areas.

Also remember to have your furnace or boiler cleaned and tuned annually. You reduce the efficiency of the heating system if you neglect this important step.



## LELWD mourns Jim Hill

The LELWD community has been saddened by the death of Jim Hill at the end of July. Jim retired from LWD in 1985 after 26 years of service to the department. Jim was a longtime resident of Littleton and former foreman for LWD. Our condolences go to his wife Barbara and the entire Hill Family.



## Fall tree trimming in progress

LELD has begun its annual fall tree trimming. Again this year, Ajax Tree will be conducting the trimming. If you notice any limbs hanging over the power lines in your neighborhood, please send an email to [cssupport@lelwd.com](mailto:cssupport@lelwd.com) and we will investigate. The annual tree trimming is essential to maintain the reliability of our distribution system.



## Fall flushing ongoing

Please be advised that LWD will be conducting the annual water main flushing during the month of October. A listing of streets scheduled for flushing will appear weekly in *The Littleton Independent*, on the department's web page, [www.lelwd.com](http://www.lelwd.com), and via a recording at 486-3104, ext. 460. The schedule is subject to change without notice based on the progress of the utility specialists, so residents are advised to regularly check the newspaper, consult the website and call the recording for the most current, accurate information.



Residents are also advised to restrict water use while their neighborhood is being flushed to avoid drawing dirty looking, but perfectly safe, water into their homes. Fluctuations in water pressure – including periods of low- or no-flow – may occur as well during the flushing, but normal pressure will be restored when the procedure is completed. Residents in the general area of direct flushing may also experience these conditions. The purpose of this yearly maintenance is to remove mineral buildup from the interior surfaces of the water mains. Water is flowed through hydrants in the opposite direction of its normal flow until it runs clear.

# Protect your home from frozen pipes

**T**ake some time before the cold weather approaches to prepare your home for winter. During the extreme cold of last winter, many homes with crawl spaces or unheated spaces experienced frozen meters and water lines. The following tips from New England Water Works Association, the region's largest organization of water works professionals, will help you protect your home from frozen pipes:

## **Turn off outside faucets.**

Disconnect the hose. Turn off the water from inside your home or business, then drain the pipe. Leave the outside valve open slightly, so any water left in the pipe can flow out and not freeze in the line.

## **Patch any cracks and holes in doors, windows, and walls near pipes.**

When temperatures drop to near zero, a high wind blowing through a small opening can freeze a nearby pipe. When patching these openings, do not block the air vents that your furnace needs for proper combustion.

## **Make sure that heat can circulate around pipes.**

Pipes inside or outside walls, or in an enclosed area can freeze, especially when the wind-chill factor is well below zero and heat is not circulating through these areas.



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## **Insulate pipes and faucets in unheated areas.**

Wrap pipes with pipe-insulating material, which is available at hardware and plumbing supply stores, or use insulation. Be sure to protect all pipes in unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and garages.

## **Do not allow your water to run overnight – this should not be your first option.**

This practice will not necessarily prevent pipes from freezing. Instead, it wastes water and increases your water bill. Check with LWD about the necessity of running water overnight under special circumstances.

## **Check insulation around pipes regularly.**

Older-model furnaces generated sufficient heat to warm basements in cold weather. However, today's energy-efficient heaters limit wasted heat. Homeowners with wood stoves or other heat sources often turn down the furnace, which could lower temperatures in the basement.

## **Never shut off your heat completely.**



If you are planning to leave your home or business for an extended period and you don't drain your pipes, you should lower the thermostat but never shut it off. The lack of heat can freeze the pipes in walls and the basement. If freezing occurs, the pipes will burst. When the area warms up, the thawing water will cause flooding and possible property damage.

If you locate the frozen section of pipe and try to thaw it yourself, be sure to take the following precautions to protect yourself and your property:

## **Do not use a torch with an open flame.**

You risk setting your property on fire. In addition, overheating one area can cause the pipe to burst.

## **Place a warm towel or rag around the pipe.**

## **Make sure you know the location of your master shut-off valve.**

The frozen pipe may already be broken and, when the water is thawed, it will leak. In this case, you will need to shut off the water in your home or business until the leaky pipe is fixed.

Please be aware that LWD will charge customers when they have to repair a meter or service due to freezing.