

Watts & Drops

Newsletter of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments

Jennifer A. Pederson, Editor

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Special "Energy" Edition

LELWD to start four-day work week to help save energy

In light of extraordinary fuel costs and the looming energy price crisis, the Board of Electric Light and Water Commissioners has authorized the departments to adopt a four-day, ten-hour work week in an effort to conserve energy and promote conservation.

According to general manager Savas Danos, after watching oil and natural gas prices soar over the last several months, department staff began looking for ways to conserve energy and realize cost savings.

This compressed work week program will begin on November 28, 2005 and end on April 6, 2006. During this trial period, an internal review committee will report monthly on the status of the program, with a particular focus on true cost savings, customer service and productivity, Danos explained. "If we do not find actual savings or if we determine a negative effect on customer service or a loss of productivity, the program will be ended with a two week notice to allow for customer reorientation and employee planning," he added.

The departments' business hours will be from 6:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The office will be closed on Fridays. Emergency coverage is unaffected by the program, and remains available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Danos said the departments expect to realize savings by keeping buildings dark and vehicles garaged for three consecutive days. 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.

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Despite increase, LELD rates remain region's lowest

The Board of Electric Light Commissioners approved an average 1.5 cent per kilowatt hour increase in its power cost adjustment (PCA) charge beginning November 1, 2005, citing the need to cover rising power costs. Despite the action, our residential rates still remain the lowest in the region, averaging more than 30 percent lower than those charged by both Mass Electric and NStar for the same usage.

"With the costs of oil and natural gas so high, we have had to raise the PCA to recoup those extraordinary costs," explained Savas Danos, general manager of the department. "While we are continuing to do everything we can to keep rates stable, we have reached a point where we need to offset the skyrocketing market prices," he said. The cost of electricity in New England is controlled by natural gas, he added, and prices have nearly doubled in a year.

In stark contrast to private utilities, which are poised to raise rates even higher in the first quarter of next year, LELD has consistently kept rates among the lowest in the state. The latest statistics compiled by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC), which tracks the rates of both public and private utility companies, show that LELD's residential rates regularly beat the competition. For purposes of comparison, a

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New Hours

Monday-Thursday

6:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

CLOSED FRIDAYS

Assistance may be available to help you pay your winter heating bills

The Fuel Assistance Program helps income-eligible households pay a portion of their winter heating bills.

If your gross household income falls within the limits shown on this chart, you may qualify for fuel assistance.

Household Size	Maximum Gross Annual Income
1	\$19,140
2	\$25,660
3	\$32,180
4	\$38,700
5	\$45,220
6	\$51,740

For information on how to apply, write: South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) Fuel Assistance Program, 300 Howard Street, Framingham, MA 01701 or call (508) 620-1230 - Framingham 1-800-286-6776 - Toll Free outside Framingham or visit www.smoc.org.

LELD has allocated \$5,000 from our energy audit budget toward SMOC's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and Heating and Energy Retrofit Tasks WAP (HEARTWAP). This money will help supplement federal programs for variety of energy saving measures including weatherstripping, attic insulation, heating system repairs and tunings. You must already be qualified for fuel assistance to be eligible for these programs; however, fuel assistance eligibility does not mean automatic qualification for any program. After a household is determined eligible, an energy inspection of the home will be scheduled.



If you need additional information on these or other programs, you may also contact your local Council on Aging office. In Littleton the number is 978-952-2362; in Boxborough the number is 978-263-1116, ext. 106.

For limited income households not eligible for fuel assistance, contact The Good Neighbor Energy Fund operated by your local Salvation Army at 1-800-334-3047 or visit magoodneighbor.org for more information.

Online appliance calculator helps determine costs

LELD is pleased to announce a new product to help you calculate your energy bill. The appliance calculator, designed by Energy New England will allow you to select the various appliances in your home and it will give you an estimate for what your monthly bill should be. You can access the calculator on our website, www.lelwd.com.



Please remember that the calculator is based on certain assumptions regarding the wattage and run time for the appliance. If the default is not correct for your particular appliance, simply type in the correct information and it will calculate the cost to run the appliance based on LELD rates.



Four-day work week, continued.

“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.”

Danos had some advice for other municipal departments. In a letter to town officials in Littleton and Boxborough, he urged serious conservation efforts at all municipal buildings.

“Scheduling different activities on the same evenings may allow you to shut down buildings for an additional evening or two. A small inconvenience can sometimes result in significant savings,” he wrote.

Also along those lines, Danos said that the Light Department is preparing to offer technical training for facility operators and managers, both in private business and municipal government, in Littleton and Boxborough. The seminar, comprised of two one-day classes, will address the use of electricity and other fuels, with the emphasis on teaching ways to conserve energy and lower costs.

LELWD Compressed Work Week Highlights

- ◆ LELWD to adopt a four-day ten-hour (4X10) work week to achieve energy savings and promote conservation efforts.
- ◆ Program is for a trial period, Nov. 28, 2005 to April 6, 2006, to cover high usage months.
- ◆ Business hours will be Monday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Fridays.
- ◆ Emergency coverage is unchanged. LELWD still available 24x7.
- ◆ Extraordinarily high energy costs have prompted a focus on all opportunities to save.
- ◆ Program to set an example for other organizations and businesses, public and private, for which the compressed work week may be an option.
- ◆ Administration building and both garages to be closed on Fridays, “cold and dark,” in an effort to maximize savings by keeping power and heating systems off for three consecutive days.
- ◆ Savings are also anticipated from keeping company vehicles garaged for an additional day per week.



Generator safety

Although most service interruptions are of short duration, some customers have opted to purchase generators to power critical electrical equipment. Should you consider such a purchase, please be certain to observe the safety tips listed below.

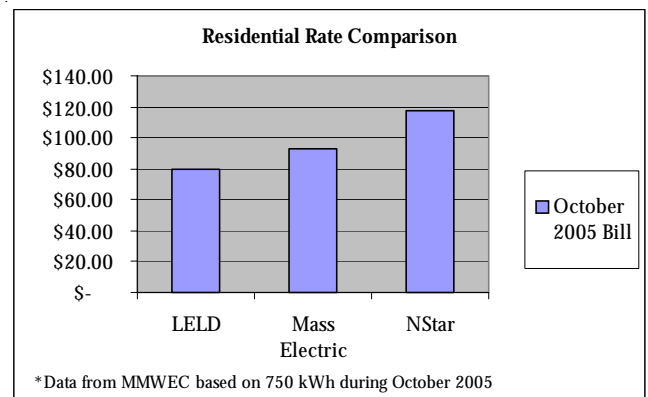
- ◆ Follow all manufacturers' instructions for operating your generator safely.
- ◆ Store fuel in approved containers and out of the reach of children.
- ◆ Never run a generator inside a building.
- ◆ Choose a clean, dry, well ventilated location for the generator.
- ◆ Check and follow all federal, state and local electric codes.
- ◆ Do not remove any safety devices on the generator.
- ◆ Store a fire extinguisher near the generator.

- ◆ Opening from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday may give customers increased opportunities for service.
- ◆ Ongoing assessment to be made by LELWD Review Committee, which will report monthly on findings.
- ◆ Particular focus on facilities and vehicles (calculation of actual cost savings), and effects on customer service and productivity.
- ◆ Program ends with two-week notice, if no savings, negative effect on customer service or loss of productivity.



Rates, continued.

Littleton customer using 750 kWh per month during October of 2005 had a monthly bill of \$79.93. The same usage in Ayer, served by Mass Electric, cost \$93.12; while in Acton, served by NStar, that usage cost \$117.92.



Danos explained the challenges of power purchasing in a rapidly evolving industry marked by instability and increased market manipulation. He said that although the department has entered into favorable contracts to supply longer-term, lower cost power, two of those companies have been unable to deliver – one declaring bankruptcy and the other exiting the business. Until those contracts are reassigned or replaced, he said, the department must fill the gaps by purchasing in a volatile market. “I know of no other utility, public or private, that has been able to hold the line on power costs as well as we have, Danos said.

“We continue to aggressively pursue agreements that will help us retain our status as the region’s low-cost electric utility,” Danos said. “We look forward to keeping our commitment to competitive rates, outstanding reliability and superior service.”

Consider purchasing conservation products

When looking for ways to conserve energy, you should investigate water saving devices, in addition to other measures, such as light bulbs and weatherization. The products below not only help you conserve water, they also help you save energy by reducing your demand for hot water. When you are not using as much water, you will not need as much oil, gas or electricity to heat the water.

Flip aerators attach to your faucet and allow you to shut the water off and on without turning the faucet off. By keeping the water temperature constant, this is a must-have for anyone who does dishes by hand! At \$1.50 each, they are an inexpensive way to save water and energy.



Plumbing regulations require low-flow showerheads (3.3 gallons per minute or less), but shower quality is sometimes less than desirable. This showerhead (2.0 gallons per minute) promises a quality shower that doesn't feel "low-flow." It was rated #1 in the USA by a leading industry magazine. At only \$3.00, this showerhead is an excellent value.



Our office also sells several types of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). We currently offer a 15-watt fluorescent bulb, which replaces a 60-watt incandescent bulb, a 20-watt fluorescent bulb, which replaces a 75-watt and a 24-watt fluorescent bulb, which replaces a 95-watt incandescent bulb. The advantages of CFLs are that they last 7-10 times longer than an incandescent bulb while using less energy. The bulbs are available at our office for \$5.00 each.



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One of the 40 Municipal Electric Utilities of Massachusetts... **localight**

Energy saving tips for the winter

Consumers can do more than hope for mild weather this winter as they watch heating oil and natural gas prices hit record highs. They can take actions that could help reduce their bills and offset soaring energy prices. The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) offers 5 practical steps for consumers to take right now at little or no cost:

- ◆ Change furnace filters. Monthly replacement of furnace filters in forced-air heating systems can save as much as 5% on heating bills.
- ◆ Install a programmable thermostat to set different temperatures during the night and day. Program it to warm up the house in the morning, keep it cooler during the day while residents are away, and warm it up again in the evening until bedtime. Consumers can save about 2% on heating bills for every degree thermostats are turned down.

- ◆ Insulate windows with coverings. Close blinds and drapes at night to keep cold air out and open them in the day to let warm sun in. Cover windows with insulating shades or plastic sheeting to cut down heat transfer from inside to outside.



- ◆ Seal doors with draft-reducing weatherstripping and door sweeps to cut down on spaces where cold air can enter the house.
- ◆ Lower the water heater's thermostat to the lowest level that meets your hot water needs, typically to 120°F (midway between the "low" and "medium" setting on many units). Each 10-degree reduction could help you save 3% to 5% on water heating costs.

In the face of significantly higher winter energy costs this year, consumers can use smart energy practices and energy-efficiency technologies to save significantly on their monthly energy bills, and contribute to energy conservation.

For more Energy Conservation information, please call Energy Services at 978-486-3104 or Energy New England's Energy Hotline at: 1-888-772-4242.