



Monthly Newsletter of Emerald People's Utility District

January 2010

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## High Winter Bills

January brings some of the coldest temperatures of the year to Oregon and is when we receive the most calls from Customer-Owners wondering why their bills are so much higher than normal. Here are a few things to keep in mind this winter season if you are trying to shrink your EPUD bill:

**Holiday Lights**— 'Twas the season to deck your home with holiday lights. If you still have lights up, consider using LED lights for big energy savings. For a typical holiday tree illuminated with 1,100 lights, on six hours every day, you can save up to \$8/month by using LED lighting. Outdoors, you could save \$10-\$20/month.



**Cooking/Baking**—It's estimated that Americans use their kitchens 25% more in the holiday/winter season than any other time of the year. Extra appliance use means higher electricity bills. When cooking on top of your range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. More heat will get to the pan and less will be lost

to the surrounding air. A 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner will waste more than 40% of the energy. Remember your microwave. Fast, efficient microwave ovens use about 50% less energy than conventional ovens.

**Heating**—Each degree you decrease your thermostat will save 3% on your bill. From 72° to 68° could save \$12-24/month. Make sure your water heater is set to 120°. If you have a heat pump, be cautioned that in extremely cold weather it may automatically switch to back-up heat in order to defrost the outside compressor. This uses more electricity than the heat pump's usual mode of heating.

**Guests**—If you have guests in your home, chances are your utility bill will rise. During busy home-use times it can be hard to save on utility bills, but even small things like turning off lights and taking shorter showers can make a difference.



For more information on how to decrease your EPUD bill in winter, visit [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org), High Bill Resolution Center.

## Help a Neighbor Today



With temperatures dropping along with the economy, more and more families are struggling to pay their bills. Help is available. Information on available programs is on the back of this section. If YOU want to help a neighbor stay warm this winter, please consider signing up for the EPUD Helping Hands program below:

- Please add \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my monthly bill, to be donated to Helping Hands.
- I want to Round Up for Helping Hands. My bill will be rounded up to the nearest dollar, and the extra cents will be donated to Helping Hands. For either of the above options, I understand that I am free to choose each month whether to pay the pledged amount, and that the pledge will appear on each month's bill until I notify EPUD to change the amount or to discontinue it.
- Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation to Helping Hands.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to EPUD, 33733 Seavey Loop, Eugene OR 97405, or return with your bill, or sign up at [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org).

## Electricity Safety Tip Extension Cords



Did you know over 3,000 fires are caused by extension cords each year, resulting in 50 deaths and 270

injuries? Make sure you are not overloading an extension cord. Add the total wattage from each device powered by the cord and divide by 120 to calculate the total amps. If it's more than the rating of the cord, you must use a higher rated cord.

For more information, visit [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org), About EPUD, Electric Safety.

## EPUD Office Hours

EPUD is considering changing to a 4-day work week. We've conducted multiple surveys asking how YOU feel about this potential change and the results have been overwhelmingly positive. The new schedule would allow EPUD to be open longer hours for better customer service. It would also save money on services and reduce our carbon footprint by not requiring employees to commute on Fridays. The change will NOT result in any loss or reduction of positions within EPUD.

The next step is to get approval from our Board of Directors. If approved, EPUD office hours would change from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, to 7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday. The office would be closed on Fridays, though we'd be available for emergency outage assistance. The proposed start for the new schedule would be Monday, April 5, 2010, and would be reviewed over a six-month trial period before final adoption.

Let us know what YOU think! Attend a Board meeting on January 12 or January 26 and voice your opinion before the final decision. You can also call us at 541-746-1583 or email [customerservice@epud.org](mailto:customerservice@epud.org).

## Meeting Power Needs

### Conservation, Renewables & Technology

Northwest utilities expect a significant increase in the need for electricity in the coming decade, fueled by population growth and new technologies relying on electric power. At the same time, the cost of power is going up.

"Our responsibility is to provide reliable power at reasonable costs," says Frank Lambe, EPUD General Manager. "To that end, we plan to diversify energy resources, intensify conservation efforts, and explore new technologies."



Traditional resources, hydropower and coal—which are currently 70% of our region's resources—will continue to be a big part of the equation. Development of wind power already tops the list of renewable resource projects and is expected to grow. Geothermal, solar, wave energy, and biomass are just a few other technologies being explored.

"Renewable resources protect the environment, but also present challenges," says Lambe. "They cost more to build and deliver, and they require a backup power source for when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining. Our focus is to keep the lights on while investigating new opportunities to meet our growing needs."

EPUD participates in the **Plan Today Power Tomorrow** regional energy project, [www.pnucc.org](http://www.pnucc.org). For more information, visit [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org), News & Events, Current Issues.

## Board of Directors

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Board meetings are 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. and 1<sup>st</sup> Mondays at noon, and are open to the public. Join us!

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## Payment Assistance Programs

We know our customers want to pay their bills, but can't at times because of loss of work, family illness, or other emergencies. Call us at 746-1583 to discuss alternate payment options:

**ERAP** (Emerald Rate Assistance Program) provides up to \$200, spread over four months. It is administered by the Lane County Health and Human Services Division at 682-3378.

**REACH** (Residential Energy Assistance Challenge) provides in-home energy education and \$300 for copayments.

**Helping Hands** is funded primarily from contributions from EPUD customers. To sign up to contribute, fill out the front of this form or call EPUD at 746-1583.

### Other Resources

- [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org), click on High Bill Resolution Center
- [www.oregonhelps.com](http://www.oregonhelps.com) covers 28 different services and programs in Oregon to help your family
- [www.211lane.org](http://www.211lane.org), click To Find Help, provides online information about local social services
- For more information, visit [www.epud.org](http://www.epud.org), My Home, Bill Assistance