



Watt's News

November 2009

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Official Newsletter of Brainerd Public Utilities, PO Box 373, Brainerd, MN 56401

Miracle Space Heaters No Better than Cheaper Plug Ins

A typical question we receive at Brainerd Public Utilities, "I have seen full page ads advertising space heaters and electric fireplaces for around \$350-\$400. Will these portable space heaters really save 50% on energy bills?"

Infra-Red Space heaters, like all electric heaters, are nearly 100% efficient, and this has been true for decades. The new wonder space heaters being advertised lately are no more efficient than any other electric heater. 1500 watt electric heaters put out enough to heat a 200-300 sq. ft. room and cost about 12 cents per hour to operate. This is true of any 1,500 watt electric heater.

If you read the fine print of the ads for the 'miracle' heaters, it usually states that the heater saves you 50% on your heating bill if you turn off your central heating system or lower your thermostat to 50 degrees and only heat one room at a time.

You can get the same heat from a lightweight 1,500 watt portable space heater, with a fan, for under \$100, at your local hardware store.

Also, some of the ads we've seen tell you to totally shut off your central heating system. Lowering your central heating system too far or shutting it off totally could cause freeze-up of water pipes.

Finally, be safe when using a space heater. Electric space heaters cause an average of 3,000 fires each year in the U.S often because of improper use, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Savings With A Twist

Change a Light, Change the World.

Mills Fleet Farm, Menards and Ace Hardware have Instant Rebates for CFL bulbs. (Prices as low as 99 cents on a variety of CFL bulbs.)

Oct. 1-Nov. 30, 2009

Watt's Weather

Total Precipitation
 October 2009 7.27"
 October 2008 4.40"

Average Temperatures
 October 2009 Hi 46 Lo 31
 October 2008 Hi 56 Lo 35



Brainerd area broke the rain record set back in 1948!

Frozen and/or Broken Water Meters

It is BPU Policy if a water meter freezes and breaks, BPU will replace it the first time. If it happens again, the customer is responsible and will be billed the cost of a new meter.

Fee for Check Readings and Test/Change Meters

If a BPU customer requests BPU to check the reading of their electric and/or water meter, there will be a \$25 fee for this service if it is requested more than one time, by the customer, within a 12 month period.

In the event a BPU customer requests their electric and/or water meter to be tested and changed more than once in a three (3) year period, the customer will be charged a \$25 fee. If the meter test indicates that the meter is not accurate, the meter will be repaired or replaced, and the \$25 fee will be returned to the customer.

NOTICE: All electrical work performed in the City of Brainerd requires a "Request for Electrical Inspection" form to be filed, and work inspected by our inspector. Please call **825-3210** or **829-2193** for more information.

Business & Repair Office Hours

7:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Business: 829-8726

Repair: 829-2193

Emergency 24 hour service 365 days a year: 218-829-2193

EMAIL@BPU.ORG WWW.BPU.ORG

BEFORE DIGGING: Call Gopher State One at **1-800-252-1166** for water and electric locations. All requests for locations must be made by calling the above toll free number at least **48 hours** before digging begins.



HeatShare

Some of your neighbors will be cold this winter
YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Join your neighbors who care by giving to HeatShare.

HeatShare is a voluntary program administered by The Salvation Army. When you give you are helping warm the lives of the elderly, disabled, and others who have nowhere else to turn. It helps the needy survive our long winter by providing funds for heating bills and heating related repairs. HeatShare is a last resort for many who have no other resources available to see them through the winter.

Who is eligible for HeatShare?

- ⇒ Seniors with low incomes and no alternate source of help.
- ⇒ Disabled people whose physical capabilities limit their ability to maintain income to adequately cover energy bills.
- ⇒ People who have had unexpected emergencies within the last 12 months and as a result cannot pay for household energy costs.
- ⇒ People who meet income guidelines and have received or applied for all other possible public funds.

Who supports HeatShare?

You, neighbors, friends, people in big cities, people in small towns, and businesses all help by sending a tax deductible contribution with the form provided below.

HeatShare is one way a small amount can help in a big way.

COLD HANDS *Warm Hearts.*

YES! I want to contribute to HeatShare!

I am making a one-time contribution of: \$ _____

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

City/State/Zip: _____ **Account Number:** _____

Signature: _____



Please make check payable to HeatShare & enclose this form with your utility payment in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your generous tax deductible contribution!



Informational Notice

Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) routinely monitors Brainerd's public water system for the presence of drinking water contamination. BPU staff took 63 water samples during the month of October. Of the 63 samples tested, 16 percent showed the presence of total coliform bacteria. The standard is that no more than 5 percent of the samples taken may do so. BPU staff flushed the system and the increased repeat samples have shown no coliform bacteria present.

If you have any questions, please call Brainerd Public Utilities at (218) 825-3218.