

Watt's News

September 2006
Volume 19, No.9

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



Annual Notice to All Residential Customers

Cold Weather Rule

Bills can pile up just like snow. The Cold Weather Rule is designed to protect people who may have trouble paying their utility bills in the winter.

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule applies from October 15 to April 15. The rule, established by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, means that your utility cannot disconnect your residential electrical service during the winter **IF** the customer meets **ALL OF** the following requirements:

- The customer's account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 15th or the customer has entered into a payment schedule and is reasonably current with payments under the schedule.
- Utility disconnection would affect the customer's primary heat source.
- The customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility. (Note: Customers receiving "any form of public assistance", including energy assistance, are deemed to have qualified for inability to pay status.)
- The household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income level, as documented by the customer to the utility.

If you have trouble paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The Minnesota Department of Human Services recommends you call the county in which you live.

Watt's Weather



Total Precipitation

August 2006 3.64"
August 2005 3.11"

Average Temperatures

August 2006 Hi 79 Lo 55
August 2005 Hi 78 Lo 54

*"Life is what we make it.
Always has been-Always will be.*

— unknown

If you know you are going to have trouble paying your utility bills, please contact Brainerd Public Utilities at (218) 825-3223 and Lori can help you set up payment arrangements.

NOTICE: All electrical work performed in the City of Brainerd requires a "Request for Electrical Inspection" form to be completed, filed, and work inspected by our inspector. If you need the form or have any questions, please contact Brainerd Public Utilities at **825-3210** or **829-2193**.

BEFORE DIGGING: Call Gopher State One Call 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.

BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES OFFERS

CUSTOMERS ENERGY AND MONEY SAVING TIPS

BPU is celebrating Public Power Week, Oct. 1-7, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned electric utilities that collectively provide electricity on a not-for-profit basis to 43 million Americans. As part of this celebration of local ownership and control of vital infrastructure and energy services, BPU is encouraging consumers to use energy efficiently.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the typical U.S. household spends about \$975 each year on electric bills. Unfortunately, much of this electricity is wasted through inefficient use. With fuel costs rising and cold weather around the corner, BPU offers these tips to help community members use less electricity to lower monthly bills and protect the environment.

- Set your thermostat comfortable low in the winter and comfortably high in the summer.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Air-dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.
- Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when equipment is not in use.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.

More tips are available at the DOE's Web site www.doe.gov, where you can also download an "Energy Savers" brochure. And, be sure to check out www.bpu.org for additional helpful information.

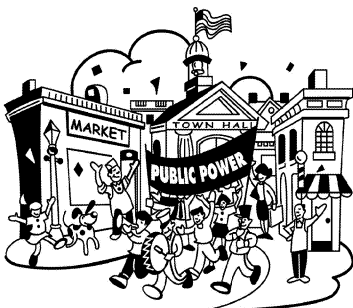
"Our goal is to provide the highest level of service to our customers and we believe that includes educating them about how they can help control their bills and do their part to protect the environment," said Tom Phelps, Superintendent.


Public Power Week is being held in conjunction with the American Public Power Association (APPA) in Washington, D.C., the national service organization for not-for-profit community- and state-owned electric utilities.

Public Power is An American Tradition That Works!

Our community is served by "public power." This means that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, our homes and businesses are powered by an electric utility that is community-owned, not-for-profit, and operated by the people it serves.

Safe, reliable, and efficient:
Our power is hometown power!





PUBLIC POWER
An American Tradition That Works

Brainerd Public Utilities

Public Power Week • October 1-7, 2006

Sudoku Puzzle

	3			9	4			
			3					7
9		2						
4		7						
			6					3
	6				1	8		
	8			1	3	2	4	
				6				5
	5			2	7	3	6	

Sudoku Answer

Fold page to hide answer

8	9	6	3	7	2	6	4	5	1
1	5	1	4	7	8	6	2	9	3
6	4	9	2	3	1	5	8	7	9
4	2	8	1	9	7	3	6	5	8
3	7	9	5	4	6	8	1	2	9
6	1	6	8	3	2	7	4	9	5
5	3	5	6	4	8	9	2	7	1
7	9	6	2	5	3	1	4	8	9
2	8	4	7	9	1	5	3	6	8

Office Hours 7:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Business: 829-8726

Repair/Service Operations: 829-2193

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

Email@bpu.org OR www.bpu.org

LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX FACT SHEET

THE CITY OF BRAINERD HAS RECEIVED AUTHORIZATION FROM THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO ASK THE VOTERS TO ENACT A LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX. BELOW IS INFORMATION RELATING TO THIS ISSUE TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION. **THE PRIMARY USE OF FUNDS WILL BE TO UPGRADE THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT WHICH WILL OCCUR WITH OR WITHOUT THE SALES TAX.**

- **MUST BE APPROVED BY THE VOTERS**
- **MUST BE USED ONLY FOR THE ITEMS AUTHORIZED BY THE LEGISLATURE – FUNDS TO BE PLACED IN SEPARATE ACCOUNT**
 - **WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT MUST BE UPGRADED– TOTAL COST IS \$26M – BRAINERD’S SHARE IS \$17.5M**
 - **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**
 - **TRAILS**
- **THE TAX IS AUTHORIZED FOR 12 YEARS FROM THE DATE OF FIRST COLLECTION**
- **IF APPROVED, THE TAX WILL START ON APRIL 1, 2007**
- **INITIAL PROJECTED COLLECTION OF \$1M/YEAR BASED ON \$200M IN TAXABLE SALES IN BRAINERD**
- **CURRENT TAX EXEMPT ITEMS SUCH AS FOOD AND CLOTHING CONTINUE TO BE TAX EXEMPT**
- **\$20 MAXIMUM TAX ON VEHICLE PURCHASE**
- **ONLY APPLIES TO TAXABLE SALES WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF BRAINERD**

IMPACT ON PROPERTY TAX & UTILITY BILLS FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT EXPANSION

- **PROPERTY TAX INCREASE ON \$100,000 HOME** \$ 237/YR.
- **PROPERTY TAX INCREASE ON \$200,000 HOME** \$ 474/YR.
- **PROPERTY TAX INCREASE ON \$250,000 BUSINESS** \$1,006/YR.
- **PROPERTY TAX INCREASE ON \$500,000 BUSINESS** \$2,190/YR.
- **OR**
- **HOME SEWER BILL INCREASE OF \$30 PER MONTH** \$ 360/YR.
- **OR**
- **½% SALES TAX INCREASE TO MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD**
- **WITH \$10,000 IN TAXABLE PURCHASES/YEAR** \$ 50/YR.