

October 2018

The Hartselle

Connection

Serving Hartselle's People, Building for Hartselle's Future

When Temps Drop: Tips to Keep Your Energy Costs Down

Last year on Christmas Day, many Hartselle residents were wearing shorts because the weather was so mild. It was easy to overlook the extremely cold days in January, until February and March utility bills arrived. With record-setting cold temperatures in January - Tuesday, Jan. 7 set an all-time high for energy usage across TVA's system - many Hartselle Utilities were caught off-guard when they received their utility bills.

"Shocked is the better term," says General Manager Bob Sittason. "People had not seen a high bill in two years. We all remembered the mild Christmas Day, but in January temperatures dropped to single digits several times. February bills were much higher than what many of our customers expected.

"The Farmers Almanac, TVA forecasters and others have predicted this coming winter will be wet and chilly, and possibly just as extreme as last year," Sittason adds.

When the temperature drops outside, there are things you can do to keep your energy usage - and your utility bill - lower. Here are some tips:

1. Turn down your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. For every degree you consistently lower your heat in the 60-degree to 70-degree range, you'll save three to five percent on heating costs.

2. Set the thermostat back to 55 degrees when leaving home for

Every degree
BELOW 68°

70
67°

SAVES 3%
on your energy use and helps keep
the power system reliable

TVA

facing windows on sunny days to naturally heat your home with sunlight. Close the curtains at night to reduce any chill or drafts.

You can find additional energy-saving suggestions on TVA's Energy Right Solutions website at energyright.com.

an extended time. Please note that heat pumps should only be set back 2 degrees to prevent unneeded use of backup strip heating, which carries higher costs.

3. Check air filters. Dirty air filters increase your energy usage and can also damage your heating. Be sure to use filters approved for your specific system.

4. Caulk around windows and replace old weather stripping around doors to keep the cold air out.

5. Reduce cold-air drafts around windows - typically seen in older homes - by using heavy-duty, clear plastic sheets or tape clear plastic film inside your windows. Ensure the plastic is sealed tightly to reduce cold-air drafts.

6. Close your fireplace damper when not in use.

7. Schedule service for your heating system, and ask what maintenance is required to keep it running optimally. Keep up with maintenance milestones.

8. Open curtains on your south-facing windows on sunny days to naturally heat your home with sunlight. Close the curtains at night to reduce any chill or drafts.

Spread Out the Impact of High Utility Bills with Levelized Billing

Making your home more energy efficient is the best way to lower your utility bill. However, during a really cold spell, unless you turn your heating unit completely off, you are going to be using more energy.

To help customers budget utility bills, Hartselle Utilities offers Levelized Billing. Levelized Billing is a tool that changes the timing for when you pay your bill - it removes the high peaks and low dips and spreads them out through the rest of the year.

Levelized billing calculates a customer's payment each month by utilizing a rolling

average of the most recent 13 months billing data, plus a factor that is calculated based on the customer's over/short amount. The calculation has a preset maximum to prevent the account holder's payment amount from increasing more than 120 percent from one billing cycle to the next.

The result is a utility payment that, while it still fluctuates throughout the year, doesn't have the extreme peaks and valleys of actual utility usage, making it easier for customers to budget for their utility payments.

Customers that participate in Levelized

Billing receive a bill that shows their actual energy usage each month, along with previous month and prior year's usage. However, the billed charges and the amount due will be different.

There is no charge to set up Levelized Billing. To be eligible for the program, you must have a 12-month history with Hartselle Utilities.

To enroll, download the form from hartselleutilities.org or call the Hartselle Utilities Customer Service Department at (256) 773-3340.

Employee Promotions



Bo Cowart

Hartselle Utilities is pleased to announce the promotion of Bo Cowart to the position of Gas System Operator in the Engineering Services Department. Bo joined HU in November of 2003, so he brings with him nearly 15 years of experience in the utility industry. Bo is excited to expand his knowledge base as he moves into this new position, and he is driven to continue to provide safe, dependable and affordable natural gas service for our community.



Michael Halbrooks

HU is also excited to announce the promotion of Michael Halbrooks to the position of Support Crew Leadman in the Field Operations Department. Michael has worked with HU since August 2011. He is an accomplished equipment operator and a hardworking, driven individual who will serve our customers and his coworkers well in his new role.

Helping Neighbors in Need Through Operation Warm

No one likes paying more for their utilities during extremely cold or hot weather. But for some residents – the elderly, people with disabilities, families with a health crisis and those with low incomes – high utility bills can bring heartbreakingly difficult choices, such as having to choose between paying for food or keeping the heat on.

Federally funded assistance programs help low-income families and seniors on fixed incomes pay utility bills throughout the year. Unfortunately, these programs don't receive enough funding to help everyone who needs assistance. Community and donation-funded programs, such as Operation Warm, help to bridge that gap. Operation Warm is administered by Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, and all monies donated go directly to those in need.

"Assistance programs can be a lifeline to someone on a fixed income during winter and summer temperature extremes," explains HU Customer Service Manager Terri Harris.

If you would like to help support Operation Warm with either a one-time or monthly donation added to your utility bill, please call HU Customer Service at (256) 773-3340 or visit our website at hartselleutilities.org.

Hartselle Utilities will be closed on the following holidays:

- Veterans Day: Monday, November 12
- Thanksgiving: Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23
- Christmas: Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25
- New Year's: Monday, December 31 and Tuesday, January 1
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Monday, January 21

A reminder from the Hartselle Fire Department
Turn Your Attention to Fire Prevention



Working
Smoke Alarms
Save Lives

Change your clock,
Change your battery

National Fire Prevention Week: October 7-13



Rate changes effective October 1

There will be an increase in HU's Electric rates effective October 1, 2018. HU's residential customer charge will increase by \$1.00 per month and the energy charge will increase by \$.00047 per kWh. The monthly increase for our average residential customer, who uses 1,238 kWh per month, will be \$1.58. HU will also pass through a TVA rate increase in the electricity it buys from TVA. This increase for our average residential customer will be \$2.55 per month. The combined monthly increase to the average HU residential customer will be \$4.13.

Hartselle Recycling Calendar

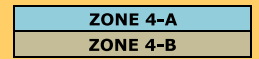
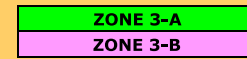
Here are the next three months of Hartselle's new Recycling Calendar. If you have a question about sanitation pickup, containers, or need to know your Recycling Pickup Zone, visit hartselle.org or call Public Works at (256) 773-2643.

October '18						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November '18						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December '18						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

For the full Recycling Pickup Calendar and Zone Map, visit hartselle.org



Have a non-emergency question or a question about your bill? Email us at inquiries@hartselleutilities.org. We try to respond to billing and general questions within 24 hours; service issues that need investigation may take up to 48 hours. To report a gas leak, sewer backup or power outage, call our office. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During business hours (M-F, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm), call (256) 773-3340. After hours, call (256) 773-2533 or (256) 773-2588.



256-773-2533 or 911



The Hartselle Connection is published quarterly by Hartselle Utilities.

1010 Sparkman St NW
Hartselle, AL 35640
256-773-3340
HartselleUtilities.org

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