



# Connections

AUTUMN 2004 NEWSLETTER FOR EASTON UTILITIES CUSTOMERS

## Important telephone numbers:

### Main switchboard

410-822-6110

(Customer service)

### Emergencies

410-822-6110

(24 hours a day,

7 days a week)

### Easton Online

410-763-9400

(Customer service and technical support)

### Easton Cable

#### AdNet

410-763-9495

### Easton Utilities

201 N. Washington St.

P.O. Box 1189

Easton, MD 21601

[www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com)

## Easton Cable upgrades to Digital

Easton Cable now features more programming choices, higher quality picture and sound, and a variety of new services thanks to the two-year Digital Upgrade. The system rebuild also allows us to continue maintain reliability and plan for the launch of future services. While Easton Cable's system has operated reliably for more than 20 years, the computer server and software running it are outdated and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. At the same time, cable systems across the country have been upgrading to Digital services over the past decade in order to offer new and improved features.

### Easton's Digital Cable offers features like:

- An interactive program guide that allows you check the channel you want to watch at the time and day you want to watch it
- 160 additional channels of programming including more than 30 Pay-Per-View and 46 music channels
- More movie channels. Where HBO subscribers received four HBO channels with the analog service, they now receive 11
- The potential for exciting new features like High Definition TV



Current customers will notice two changes to their current service as a result of the upgrade. First, converter boxes are no longer necessary to receive Broadcast Basic, Tier One, or Tier Two services. These services are available by hooking the cable directly to a cable-ready TV, VCR, or converter. These services are also available in Digital packages. Second, premium movie channels (HBO, Cinemax, etc.) as well as pay-per-view events are available exclusively on Digital Cable.

To learn more about what Easton Cable can offer you, contact the Customer Service Center at 410/822-6110.

## What's in your natural gas bill

Understanding a few key items in your natural gas bill will help you budget more effectively and save money. Here's a quick look.

**Multiplier:** Once a month we read your meter to determine how many cubic feet of gas you used. Residential meters display this amount in 100 cubic feet (CCF) units. Some industrial and commercial meters display thousands of cubic feet used and have a multiplier of 10.

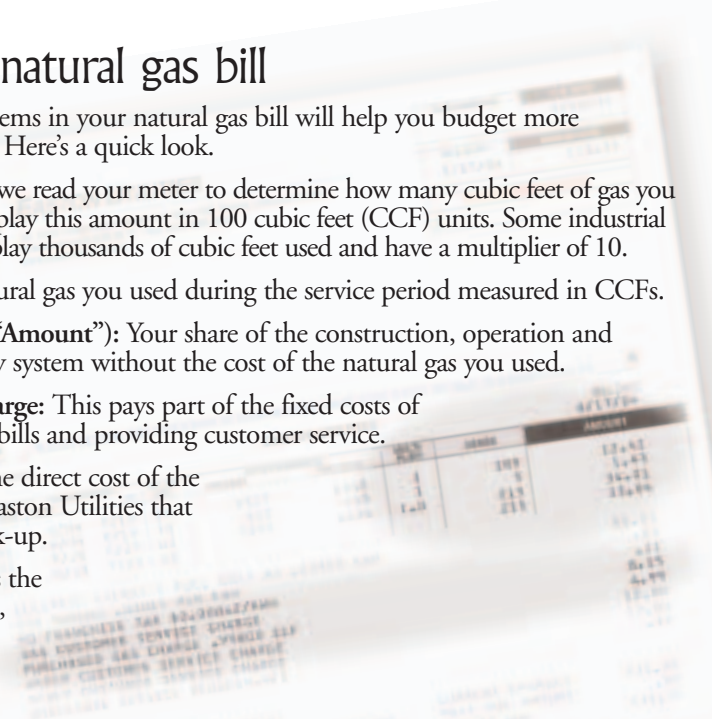
**Usage:** The amount of natural gas you used during the service period measured in CCFs.

**Base Rate Charge (under "Amount"):** Your share of the construction, operation and maintenance of the delivery system without the cost of the natural gas you used.

**Gas Customer Service Charge:** This pays part of the fixed costs of reading meters, processing bills and providing customer service.

**Purchased Gas Charge:** The direct cost of the natural gas purchased by Easton Utilities that you used without any mark-up.

Your total natural gas bill is the sum of the base rate charge, purchased gas charge and customer service charge.



DESCRIPTION	UNIT	RATE	AMOUNT
BASE RATE CHARGE		12.42	12.42
PURCHASED GAS CHARGE	100 CCF	34.22	34.22
GAS CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARGE		28.96	28.96
TOTAL			75.60

## Tips for Energy Efficiency

The winter months are the peak utility season in this region of the country. The longer colder days mean more heating and lighting loads on your system. To keep costs under control, consider the following steps to improve efficiency. Small investments made now can pay big dividends when the mercury drops.

- \* Keep outside pumps clear of debris and snow.
- \* Clean or replace filters monthly.
- \* Have your heating and cooling equipment serviced or checked at least once a year.
- \* Insulate your home and caulk/weather-strip around doors and windows. These openings can consume up to 40 percent of your home's heating and cooling energy.
- \* Seal leaks around wall outlets and switches.
- \* Install door "shoes" or "sweeps" to stop air from sneaking in or out under outside doors.
- \* Insulate your attic.
- \* Make sure your wood burning fireplace damper is closed when not in use to prevent cooled or heated air from escaping up the chimney.
- \* When buying new appliances, look at the yellow Energy Guide label and buy only energy-efficient appliances.
- \* Invest in storm windows or use clear plastic window insulation to help stop cold air from leaking into your house in the winter.
- \* Use electric space heaters sparingly – they are expensive to run.
- \* Place nonflammable insulation or nonflammable pliable materials in gaps around pipes, ducts, fans or other items that enter the attic or basement from a conditioned space.
- \* Reduce the water heater thermostat setting to 120°F and reduce use of heated water for clothes washing. (Caution – some dishwashers require 140°F water.)
- \* Set your water heater temperature control to the pilot position when your home is vacant for two days or longer.

For more information, visit [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com)

## Act now and save this winter

As the more than \$40 price per barrel of oil sustains increases in the cost of natural gas and fuels used to make electricity, early projections by the Department of Energy and others suggest that utility costs will be high this winter. These costs show up on your electric bill as the Energy & Fuel Cost Adjustment and on your natural gas bill as the Purchased Gas Charge. On the line for each charge is the cost per unit (e.g. 05950 KWH or about 6 cents for each Kilowatt hour that you use) and your total charge for the month.

To minimize your fuel costs, Easton Utilities aggressively pursues hedging, advance-purchase and peak-shaving strategies. Moreover, as your municipal utility, Easton Utilities does not mark up the cost of fuels. While these efforts help, they can't change global market forces. Your best defense against rising costs is increased efficiency. Taking steps (see "Tips for Energy Efficiency") now to optimize your utility efficiency can make a big difference in your bills this winter. More tips and information are available at [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com)

Easton Utilities offers a Level Billing Plan that spreads your energy costs evenly throughout the year. Call the Customer Service Center at 410/822-6110 for more information. The State of Maryland offers three programs—the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), Utility Service Protection Program (USPP) and Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)—to help those who qualify with their bills. For more information, contact the Neighborhood Service Center at 410/822-5015.

## Committed to our community

Easton Utilities is proud to have served the Easton community and surrounding areas for nearly a century. As your municipal utility, we work hard to provide reliable utility service at reasonable rates. But we also go to great lengths to contribute to the community in other ways through.

Through our partnership with the Dobson Elementary School, we provide volunteer tutors and educational materials.

We also continue to support the Free Enterprise Workshop that helps teachers learn about local businesses.

Easton Utilities plays an active role in many of the Town's major events as well. We provide electric service to the Fourth of July and Summer Carnival, help with Christmas decorations and festivities and provide assistance to the Talbot County Department of Recreation.

We are proud to support organizations dedicated to helping others in the community including the YMCA of Talbot County, Memorial Hospital, the Easton Volunteer Fire Department and others.

For more information about our efforts to support the community, please contact Geoff Oxnam, 410/822-6110.

