



Connections

SPRING 2005 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

Easton Cable introduces HDTV & DVRs

Easton Cable has launched two exciting new cable services, Easton Cable HDTV and Easton Cable DVR. High-Definition TV (HDTV) offers the highest-quality television picture and sound available. Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) allow customers to record shows without videotape and to pause and rewind live television. Easton Cable HDTV includes up to 18 channels of programming in High-Definition TV—one of the largest lineups of HD programming in the region—including local channels, cable favorites, premium movie channels, pay-per-view events and more. To receive HD programming, subscribers must have an HD-compatible TV and subscribe to an Easton Cable Digital package.



Adding Easton Cable HDTV to a Digital Cable package costs just \$8 per month for one TV and \$2 per month for each additional TV. Adding Easton Cable DVR costs \$8 per month for each TV. Upgrading to both services is just \$14 per month for the first TV and \$8 per month for each additional TV. Movie Plex customers who upgrade to HDTV will receive their premium channel in HD for free. Tier Two Plus customers can enjoy the HD version of their premium channel in HD for an additional \$2 per month.

Rise in global oil prices prompt increases in utility costs

The ripple effect of high global oil prices hit consumers not only at the gas pump, but also at the heat pump as the price of fuel used for heating and making electricity hit new heights this winter. The fuel cost portion of natural gas and electric bills for January increased by 40 percent for electricity and 15 percent for natural gas from 2004 to 2005. Customers may not have noticed the increase in the early part of the winter as mild temperatures led to low usage and relatively low bills; but, during January's cold snap, consumption increased socking consumers with both the increased cost of more usage and a higher cost for fuel.

"We employ a number of strategies to minimize fluctuations in price," said Hugh E. Grunden, President & CEO of Easton Utilities. "But when the global markets drive fuel costs up, customers should take extra steps to keep consumption as low as possible."

Utility customers pay charges in two key areas. First, the base rate charge covers the cost of building, operating and maintaining the system that delivers either gas or electric to a home or business. Second, the fuel charge covers the cost of the electricity or natural gas that a customer used for the month. Easton Utilities passes this cost on to the customer without mark-up. Other, smaller charges include surcharges and taxes paid to the State of Maryland and a gas customer service charge. The fuel charge is normally the largest, accounting for 60 percent or more of the utility bill. Like all natural gas and electric utilities in the State of Maryland, the rates charged to Easton Utilities customers are reviewed and authorized by the Maryland Public Service Commission.

Conservation Tips

- ☞ Shade outdoor air conditioning equipment and keep it low to the ground to reduce energy consumption by 40% or more. Keep outside heat pumps clear of debris.
- ☞ Clean or replace cooling or heating filters monthly and have your equipment serviced or checked at least once a year.
- ☞ Close your wood burning fireplace damper when not in use.
- ☞ Wash full loads in your dishwasher and let the dishes air dry. Air-drying your dishes may reduce your dishwasher's energy usage by 40%.
- ☞ 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.)
- ☞ Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can waste 2,700 gallons per year.
- ☞ Water landscaping during the morning or evening hours and don't water the lawn on windy days. Typically, 50 to 70% of household water is used on lawns and gardens.
- ☞ Landscape with plants that require less water and put a layer of mulch around trees and plants to slow evaporation.
- ☞ Don't let the water run while washing the car – use shut-off nozzles on hoses. A single hose left on uses nearly 300 gallons of water per hour.

For more information, visit www.eastonutilities.com

Bob Smith retires after 31 years

After more than 30 years of service, Bob Smith has retired as manager of Easton Utilities Electric Department. Mr. Smith began his career in 1973 as the staff electrical engineer and he was promoted to Department Manager in 1981. Later, Mr. Smith also served as Easton Cable's first Department Manager. During that time, Mr. Smith navigated Easton Utilities through many challenges including the construction of more than 40 MW of generation from 10 new generators, integration into the PJM Interconnection LLC, and an ever-changing economic, political, regulatory and financial environment.



Arnold Boughner, a 20-year veteran in energy, power, controls and automation, has replaced Mr. Smith as department manager.

Easton Online reduces wireless rates

One year into the launch of Easton Online wireless high-speed Internet service to the Town of Oxford, participation has exceeded initial projections. Now, Easton Online is sharing its success with its customers by lowering rates up to 25% and offering free installation.

“Our relationship with Oxford has been a true partnership that we are pleased to support,” said Hugh E. Grunden, President & CEO of Easton Utilities. “I firmly believe that simply because we live in a rural community, we should not be denied the same level of services available elsewhere at affordable rates.”

Grease in the sewers causes wastewater overflow

Late in January, Easton received a painful reminder why certain things—like cooking grease—shouldn't go down the drain. On January 24, a grease-blocked wastewater main overflowed approximately 24,000 gallons of wastewater into the Tred Avon River. The blockage was the width of a basketball and several feet long.

On notification of the overflow, Easton Utilities dispatched a wastewater crew to clear the pipe and notified the Talbot County Health Department and Maryland Department of the Environment. The advisories warned people not to come in contact with the water in that area.

“Putting a little grease down the drain may not seem like a problem, but when you multiply that over many houses and businesses the results can be severe,” said Hugh E. Grunden, President and CEO of Easton Utilities.

Subsequent testing early in February confirmed that conditions in the area of the spill had returned to normal. As of March 1, the advisories were lifted.

Need help with your utility costs?

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. For customers who need special help with utility bills, the State of Maryland offers three other programs—(MEAP), (USPP) and (EUSP)—to help those who qualify with their bills. For more information, contact the Neighborhood Service Center at (410) 822-5015.