



# Connections

FALL 2009 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)

**EastonOnline**  
(410) 763-9400  
(Customer service  
and technical  
support)



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

**Easton Utilities**  
201 N. Washington St.  
P.O. Box 1189  
Easton, MD 21601

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

## Electric & Gas Energy Prices decline more than 30 percent

Easton Utilities customers paid 30 percent less for electric energy and natural gas energy this summer than they did at the same point last summer. Electric energy prices were 34.6 percent lower in July 2009 than July 2008 and natural gas energy prices were 33.4 percent lower.

"The news on prices continues to be good for utility customers," said Hugh E. Grunden, President & CEO of Easton Utilities. "To be certain, the market will bottom and prices will stabilize. But for now, the respite from high energy costs has been a welcomed one."

Easton Utilities purchases the gas and electricity that customers need, and sells them to customers without a markup. Roughly three quarters of each residential electric and natural gas bill goes outside of Easton to energy providers. Easton Utilities uses the remaining one quarter to pay for the operation, maintenance and administration of the electric and gas systems.

The Department of Energy's most recent estimates project that retail electric prices nationwide will increase 4.7 percent in 2009, but that prices will increase a more modest 3.3 percent in 2010. Nationwide natural gas prices are projected to begin to increase in 2010 as market forces rebalance.

## From the kitchen to the fuel tank

Two of Easton Utilities' electric generators will be powered using diesel made from plant oils, animal fats and even recycled kitchen grease. A 10,000 gallon biodiesel storage tank was set on a new concrete pad recently and will contain the new fuel for generators No. 13 and 14. In addition to recycling waste material, the biodiesel produces lower emissions than other fuels.



## Five ways to save money this fall

**Subscribe to Easton Cable's Triple Play**—you can save almost \$20 on your cable, Internet and phone service with the Triple Play package. Call Customer Service for details.

**Replace your panes**—you can save from 7-24 percent on your monthly heating bill by replacing old windows with Energy-Star rated windows. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for more details.

**Install an Energy-Star rated programmable thermostat for your gas heating system**—you can save money, energy, and help fight global warming.

**Fix leaking faucets and toilets**—Save up to 500 gallons of water each month.

**Use Direct Debit payment to avoid late fees**—don't waste your money on late fees. Set up a direct debit payment or pay online to make paying easy and worry free. Call the Customer Service Center, (410)822-6110.

# SMELL GAS?

Call (410) 822-6110  
and We'll Be Right There  
...ANY TIME

## Safe, Clean & Efficient

Natural gas is a safe, clean and efficient way to heat your home and cook food. Easton is unique in Maryland as the state's only municipal gas utility. This means better service and lower costs for you. As with any source of heat, you should be careful to operate your natural gas appliances properly and safely. An unmistakable odor is added to natural gas as a built-in safety signal. If you smell gas, take the following steps.

### If you smell gas outdoors

Call Easton Utilities immediately. Our special equipment will detect the source of the leak and we will make necessary repairs. There is never a reason to be embarrassed about calling Easton Utilities if the suspected leak turns out to be something else. Always err on the side of safety and call us any time.

### If you smell gas indoors

If the odor is faint, chances are the pilot light is out or a burner valve is partially turned on. Check them. If either is the case, you can easily and safely correct the situation. If the pilot light or burner valve is not the cause of the odor, call Easton Utilities at (410) 822-6110 immediately.

## Easton Utilities teaches elementary students about electricity

Fourth grade students from Moton Elementary School had a real-world look at their lessons as Easton Utilities' Electric Department members talked about electricity. Russel Miles, David Cummings and Dan Tarrant demonstrated various aspects of delivering electricity.

The presentation was designed to help students learn how to use electric safely and more efficiently. They also received a demonstration of the operation of the bucket truck used in the Electric Department.



## Customer Service reorganization nears completion

Over the past year Easton Utilities has designed a program to reorganize our Customer Service Department with the goal to increase our efficiency and our Customers' already high level of satisfaction. The renovations in the Customer Service Department are the final phase of the Customer Service Reorganization program designed to improve the quality of service we deliver to our customers. The improvements have included merging the Cable and Utility Customer Service staffs and creating a Call Center where the majority of Customer questions can be handled without transfers. By reorganizing existing staff, and making some physical improvements to the Customer Service Center, Easton Utilities implemented improvements that have already increased customer satisfaction by 6 percent for service over the phone and 14 percent for service in-person. Easton Utilities paid for the entire cost of the renovations in the first year through a 17 percent reduction in labor.

"Our goal is to quickly and completely meet our customers' needs each time they call, walk-in or drive through," said Hugh E. Grunden, President & CEO of Easton Utilities. "This reorganization is already exceeding our expectations."

## Join us for Public Power & Gas Week, Oct. 5-9

As a municipally owned utility company, Easton Utilities brings a range of benefits to the community that privately held utility companies generally do not. Across the nation, public power companies offer favorable rates, local customer service, and a commitment to the local community. Visit the Easton Utilities Customer Service Center during the first week of October to learn more.

## *Committed to our Community*

In keeping with our mission to enhance quality of life in our community, Easton Utilities is proud to support many local organizations and events including...

*Memorial Hospital Foundation  
Dave Haslup/Lou Gebrig Athletic  
Scholarship Foundation  
Choices for Life*

*Easton Main Street Fourth of July  
Celebration and Carnival  
Senior Center  
Spring Hill Cemetery*