

Winter heating: how you can combat rising costs

The U.S. Department of Energy expects winter heating costs to be slightly lower than last year. And, natural gas prices are near a two-year low. Good news, right? Unfortunately, no one knows if natural gas prices will go



up—or down—next. That’s because energy prices, in general, change drastically.

Did you know?

- Heating is the largest portion of a utility bill
- 35% of Norwich residents heat with natural gas
- About 14% heat with electricity
- The remaining 51% heat with oil or propane

John Bilda, NPU’S General Manager says, “Using less energy helps to keep prices stable.”

How is the price of natural gas determined?

Natural gas is bought and sold on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), where traders speculate (guess) as to when natural gas prices will be at their highest in any given winter season. This is called futures trading.

Any of the reasons listed below can affect the price of natural gas, causing prices to rise again. NPU has no control over these price changes. Additional day-to-day factors can affect the price of

natural gas, too. Traders take all factors into account when setting the price on the exchange market.

- The forecast of harsh or mild winters, hurricanes
- Volatile weather patterns
- Futures trading (Natural gas prices often closely follow the price of crude oil, which changes continually)
- Supply and demand

“The futures market is the major contributor to the price of home energy fuel costs,” comments John Bilda, NPU’S General Manager, “but consumers can make a difference. Using less energy helps to keep prices stable.” When you make

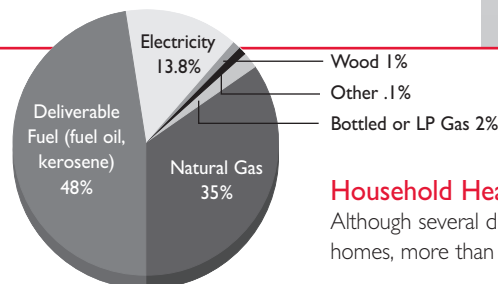
energy efficiency practices a way of life, you can then begin to manage your own energy costs.

Little things make a big difference in lowering high winter heating bills

- Lower the thermostat by a few degrees
- Make sure your heating system is properly maintained
- Regularly clean or replace furnace filters and heat pump filters
- Make sure warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators are not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes; clean as needed
- When operating efficiently, a gas flame should be blue; If your gas flame is yellow, it is not operating efficiently; Have the appliance serviced by a licensed contractor
- Caulk leaky windows and add weather stripping to windows and doors

To learn more about energy efficiency tips? Visit www.norwichpublicutilities.com or www.eere.energy.gov.

You may also contact Norwich Public Utilities at 887-2555 or communitymatters@npumail.com.



Household Heating Systems

Although several different types of fuels are available to heat our homes, more than half of us use natural gas.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Energy assistance programs are here

Winter is just around the corner. During this time of year, home heating is a major household expense. So, where can you turn for help? Thankfully, there are energy assistance programs available.

Are you eligible for assistance?

To be eligible for Connecticut's energy assistance program, a household must earn less than 200% of the federal poverty level* or 60% of the state's median income. For a family of four, this equals a monthly gross household income of \$4,466. This year's maximum basic benefit is \$675.

Additional benefits are available to customers who heat with deliverable fuel (oil, wood, propane, etc.).

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

# of people in household	Monthly Income
1	<\$2,322
2	<\$4,037
3	<\$3,751
4	<\$4,466
5	<\$5,181
6	<\$5,895

Sign ups available by appointment only

Representatives from Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) are processing sign-ups by appointment now through the end of the 2007 heating season. To make an appointment, contact TVCCA at 889-1365, then press 2 for "energy assistance."

NPU is hosting those appointments on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at its Customer Service Center. The center is located at 173 North Main Street in Norwich.

Other programs available

For customers who don't qualify for the state's energy assistance program, other resources are available: the Community Assistance Review Team (CART), a program from NPU and Norwich Human Services; Operation Fuel; and the United Way's Project Warm-Up. For more information on these resources, please contact a Norwich Public Utilities customer service representative at 887-2555 or communitymatters@npumail.com.

NPU's Energy Efficiency Programs

Energy efficiency helps individuals, families and businesses alike. That's why Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) provides customers with energy saving programs to help reduce energy use and costs.

NPU currently offers the following programs:

For all NPU customers:

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb

— Save up to 20% on lighting costs when you replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Visit www.estarlights.com or call the NPU Service Center to request a catalog of energy efficient lights and fixtures.



For residential customers:

Appliance Rebates — Get \$60 back from NPU on the purchase of an ENERGY STAR-qualified front-loader clothes washer purchased between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007. Forms are available at local appliance stores or the NPU customer service center. Plus, you can download it from the NPU website.

For commercial customers:

Cool Choice Program — Get cash rebates of up to 80% to help defray the cost of buying high-efficiency HVAC systems.

MotorUp! Program — Offers attractive incentives to upgrade to premium-efficiency electric motors that provide greater reliability, dramatic reductions in operating costs, electrical consumption and carbon emissions.

For more information, please go online at www.norwichpublicutilities.com/efficiencymain.html, call the NPU service center at 860-887-2555, or visit 173 North Main Street Norwich, CT. Commercial customers can contact Jeff Brining at (860) 823-4522 for additional information on commercial energy plans.

Chairman of NPU's Utility Board Commission awarded

Stanley Israelite, 81, NPU Utility Board Chairman since 1996, was honored as part of the Experience Works Prime Time Awards Program. The Program is the only national program of its kind that honors the contributions of older workers each year. Its purpose is to remove barriers to employment and lessen negative stereotypes for this age group.



Norwich Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition

Working together for a healthy and responsible community.

If you need assistance, don't wait. Contact the Uncas Health District at (860) 823-1189, ext. 16. The Uncas Health District is located at 372 West Main Street, Second floor, Norwich, CT 06360.



Keep children safe this Halloween

As children trick-or-treat this Halloween, the potential for accidental injury increases.

They are four times more likely

to be hit by a car on Halloween than any other night of the year. Darting out into the street is one of the most common causes of pedestrian death among children.

Children ages 12 and under

- Should be accompanied by adults as they trick-or-treat
- Attach name, address and phone number (+ area code) to clothes in case children get separated from adults

Children ages 12 and older

- Teach your child his or her phone number
- Provide children with change for a phone call
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along a pre-established route
- Never allow children to enter a home or building unless they are with an adult
- Set a time for children to return home
- Limit trick-or-treating visits to homes with lit porch lights or outside lights
- Check your child's treats make sure they are safe to eat

Here's how you can help make this Halloween safe.

Visibility

- Decorate costumes, bags and sacks with retro-reflective tape and stickers
- Use costumes that are light or bright to make children more visible at night

Traffic

- Walk, do not run, while trick-or-treating
- Stop before crossing the street; cross only at intersections and crosswalks
- Look left, right and left again before crossing; look both ways while crossing
- Never to dart out onto a street or cross between parked cars

Motorists

- Slow down in residential neighborhoods
- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Watch out for children
- Enter/exit driveways slowly and carefully
- Have children exit/enter the car at the curbside, away from traffic

Home owners and renters

- Remove obstacles like tools, ladders and toys from your steps, lawn and porch
- Keep candlelit jack-o'-lanterns away from doorsteps where costumes might brush against the flame

Other recommendations

Bulky costumes and masks can make walking safely through dark neighborhoods difficult. Follow these tips to help prevent injuries due to tripping or falling.

- Face paint is safer than a mask, which can block vision

- If a mask is worn, it should fit securely with large eyeholes for full vision
- Have trick-or-treaters carry flashlights
- Make costumes short enough to avoid tripping
- Secure hats so they won't slip over eyes
- Dress children in shoes that fit; adult shoes are unsafe, making it easy to trip
- Carry only flexible props, like swords, to avoid injury if a child falls
- Do not to cut across yards to avoid tripping on lawn objects in the dark

Fires and burns are the third-leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children. Follow these tips to help prevent burns.

- Look for "flame resistant" labels on costumes, masks, beards and wigs
- Use fire-resistant material when making costumes
- Avoid costumes made of flimsy material and outfits with big sleeves or skirts, which can touch an exposed flame
- Keep candles, pumpkins with candles, matches and lighters out of children's reach

The SAFE KIDS New London County is part of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the first and only national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury—the #1 killer of children ages 14 and under. For more information, visit www.safekids.org or www.nlcsafekids.org

S.P.R.O.U.T.S. — Special People Reaching Out Unconditionally To Students

Norwich Public Schools, in cooperation with the Greater Norwich Community Leadership Team and Children First of Norwich, has been providing a successful mentoring program since the 2001-2002 academic year.

Each year the program is strengthened and expanded to provide more mentors to more students in Norwich. The program begins in September and runs through June. As a routine part of the application process, each mentor is screened and interviewed. After completing the application process, each mentor attends a mentor training session and is partnered with a student.

To learn more about the program, contact Chris Morello (860) 823-4213, ext 6 or cmorello@norwichpublicschools.org.

Ongoing—1st Friday of each month

First Fridays

Downtown Norwich comes alive with arts and entertainment every first Friday of the month! View original art at several galleries or enjoy a musical or theater production in our theaters. Call 886-4683 for more information.

Ongoing—1st and 3rd Friday of each month

Open Mic Night

City Perk, located at 154 Main Street (across from the Court house), every 1st and 3rd Friday each month from 5:30pm-10:00pm. For more information, contact Shawn at 204-8443.

Ongoing—1st Thursday of each month

Taftville Lions Pasta Supper

ALL YOU CAN EAT Pasta Supper at the K of C Hall in Taftville from 4:30-6:30 pm. \$5 per person. Take out available. All profits benefit various Lions Charities and local Taftville projects. Call 889-8300 for more information.

October 29

Lantern Light Graveyard Walk

1-hour Guided Walking Tour at dusk featuring The Old Norwichtown Burial Ground & the Norwichtown Green. Or spend the entire day ghost hunting, which includes brunch at a haunted restaurant. Reservations & lantern or flashlight required. Call 886-4683 for more information. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the CT Graveyard Association.

November 18

Nutcracker On Ice

9th annual event held at the Norwich Ice Rink. General admission. Call the rink at 892-2555 for more information.

November 24

Light Up City Hall

Illumination of City Hall with visit from Santa and carol singing. Other Winter Festival Events take place throughout December such as a parade, & sale of commemorative Christmas ball.

December 3

Winterfest

Annual parade starts at Chelsea Parade Grounds at 1:00 pm and proceeds through downtown Norwich. Float trophies awarded. For more information or to enter, please call Kathy Relyea at 892-1813.

December 8

Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run

Join Mohegan Striders with Billy Wilson's Pub running through the streets of downtown Norwich led by Santa Claus. A 1.5-mile loop course starts at Billy Wilson's at 7:00 pm. Entry fee is one or more unwrapped toy for a boy or girl. Visit www.moheganstriders.org for more information.

2006 Norwich Winter Festival

This year's Norwich Winter Festival theme is "Building Bridges with Community Spirit." Each year, Festival events and projects have seen a steady increase and improvement due to a wonderful community spirit and committed involvement of its many workers, sponsors and participants.

The Festival begins Saturday, November 18th with the "Nutcracker on Ice" at the Norwich Ice Rink. Two performances will be held—5:00 PM Saturday and 4:00 PM Sunday, November 19th. For tickets or more information, call 892-2555 ext. 0.

The 15th Annual Light Up City Hall Ceremony will be held at 5:00 PM on Friday, November 24th.

More Winter Festival events

Wacky Hat Contest — Saturday, November 25th, Rose City Renaissance Design Center, 91 Main Street. Wacky hat creations begin at 11:00 AM. Judging is at 1:00 PM. Refreshments served.

12th Annual Norwich Winter Festival Parade — 1:00 PM Sunday, December 3rd. The parade starts at Chelsea Parade, with viewing locations on Broadway, Broad Street, McKinley Avenue, Franklin Street and Main Street.

NFA Band Breakfast with Santa — 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM Sunday, December 3rd. Enjoy breakfast with Santa at the NFA Cafeteria before the parade.

Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run — 7:00 PM Friday, December 8th. Admission is one or



more NEW, unwrapped toy. The Run starts at Billy Wilson's Ageing Still, on Broadway.

Norwich Citywide House-Decorating Contest — Judging starts at 5:00 PM on Thursday,

December 14th. Applications will be available in the Norwich Bulletin.

For more information on Winter Festival events, contact Kathy Relyea at (860) 892-1813.



Here to Serve You

Visit a special link on our web site for more information:
www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.
Norwich Public Utilities, 173 North Main Street Norwich CT 06360
Tel: 860-887-2555 | Fax: 860-823-4172 | Email: communitymatters@npumail.com

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