

Community matters

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES DEC 2008/JAN 2009

Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich Upgrades begin in February

Norwich Public Utilities introduced the Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich community wastewater project in 2007. This project will replace aging wastewater infrastructure, minimize treatment plant odors, increase the city's sewage treatment capacity, and clean our local waterways.

In February 2009, the project's first major construction phase begins with the cleaning and upgrade of the digester portion of the treatment plant. The digester is the large, round, brick structure visible

while driving over the Route 82 bridge to Salem Turnpike.

Using heat and microorganisms, the digester breaks down solid wastes and debris. During this process, methane gas, a renewable energy source, is produced. The Sound Norwich upgrade project will enable that methane gas to be captured and used to create energy for the plant, thereby eliminating the plant's dependence on foreign fuel oil and reducing Norwich's energy costs.

How will Norwich be affected during the upgrade of the digester?

Upgrading the digester involves emptying and cleaning the existing tank. Not surprisingly, the biggest potential impact on the community is odor.

The digester tank has been in use for 35 years — ten years longer than its projected useful life — during which time it has remained sealed. To clean and upgrade the existing tank, it must be taken off-line. Meanwhile a temporary system is put in place to keep the wastewater plant operating. Once off-line, the remaining liquefied sludge at the top of the tank is drained and treated. Next, the tank's cover will be removed so that any solids, which have settled to the bottom of the tank, can be removed.

The risk for odors will be greatest when the digester cover is first removed. Yet, performing this work during the

The Sound Norwich Wastewater Upgrade project has four primary objectives:

- Remove nitrogen from treatment plant discharge. Nitrogen promotes algae growth and oxygen depletion in local waterways, which affect fish and other wildlife
- Upgrade the plant to replace an aging infrastructure and insure that Norwich facilities can support projected population and economic development growth
- Reduce -- if not eliminate -- treatment plant odors, which affect the reviving harbor area
- Eliminate 15 combined sewer overflows that cause the discharge of diluted, but untreated, waste into the Thames River basin

coldest months of the year is the best strategy for minimizing the potential for odors. That is why all work on the digester is scheduled to begin in February and be completed in early spring.

Any odors should be apparent only in the immediate vicinity of the treatment plant and are likely to be short-lived. This is because as the cleaning progresses, the source of the odors — the remaining sludge on the bottom of the tank — is eliminated.

For more information on the Sound Norwich project, please visit www.norwichpublicutilities.com



We're in on the Act... the FACT Act, that is!

Every seven seconds, someone's identity is stolen. Identity theft occurs when someone, unbeknownst to you, acquires a piece of your personal information and uses it to commit fraud.

The problem has become so significant in our country, that Congress passed legislation entitled the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions (FACT) Act.

Part of that legislation assigns some responsibility for identifying, preventing, and mitigating identity theft to certain key industries... including utilities.

We're pleased to report that NPU's Customer Service Representatives were the first in the United States to be trained as "Certified Secure Information Specialists." This means that, as always, we're watching out for you.

Under what is referred to as the "Red Flags Rule" within the FACT Act, companies like NPU are required to implement new plans and procedures for protecting the public.

NPU's Customer Service Representatives were the first in the U.S. to be trained as "Certified Secure Information Specialists."

As a result of these new procedures, you may notice a few changes in how we gather and protect identity or account information.

These may include requests for additional forms of identification, or greater caution before we provide account specifics over the phone. While some customers may be surprised or feel inconvenienced by these requests, be assured that our ultimate goal is your protection.

Identity theft is one of the world's fastest growing crimes. Some say it can happen to anyone. At NPU, we say "Not if we can help it!"

Norwich receives national recognition for environmental efforts

This October, Norwich was given an award for its environmental awareness and efforts at the America in Bloom National Symposium. Many factors contributed to receiving recognition.

When the national America in Bloom judges were shown around Norwich in late July, they were given an extensive tour of over 80% of the city. Stops included historical sites, a visit to the transfer station, as well as tours of these NPU facilities:

- Occum Hydro-Dam
- Greeneville Fish Lift
- Waste Water Treatment Plant
- NPU's CNG fueling station (open to the public)

In addition, Norwich was cited for its impressive total of 89 environmentally compliant vehicles including 42 school buses along with its aggressive recycling program.

Energy Efficiency Program increase helps you save

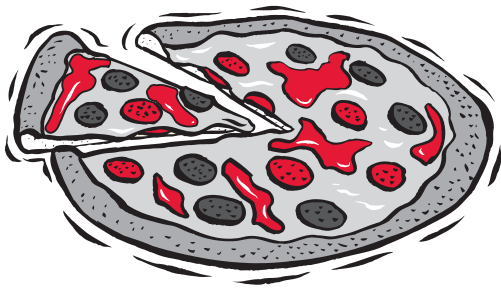
As a result of new Connecticut legislation requiring utility companies to do more to help their customers reduce their usage, the energy efficiency charge in your electric bill will increase slightly in January 2009. Presently, the energy efficiency charge is equal to the number of kilowatt hours used by each home or business multiplied by 0.00167 cents. In January, the charge will increase by 0.00055 cents per kilowatt-hour, to 0.00222 cents. For the average residential customer using 750 kilowatt hours, this would mean an increase of 41 cents on their monthly electric bill.

While even the slightest increase in these tough economic times seems difficult, Norwich electric customers have been cashing in on savings as a result of the energy efficiency program. For example:

- Over 200,000 compact fluorescent bulbs have been installed in Norwich homes and businesses
- 572 rebates have been issued on ENERGY STAR appliances like front load washers, dishwashers, and refrigerators
- Over 1,000 no-charge energy walkthroughs have been completed throughout local homes and businesses

- 65 Commercial/Industrial lighting and HVAC upgrade projects have occurred and more than 80 projects are in progress
- NPU is piloting renewable projects such as a 10.5-kW solar system at the Norwich Fire Department, in partnership with the City of Norwich and the Community Development Block Grant Fund

Our Energy Efficiency Team has more in store for 2009 to expand our energy-saving efforts. For more information on how you can take advantage of NPU's efficiency programs, visit our website at www.norwichpublicutilities.com/EnergyEfficiency.



Marcel Bouley, owner of Engine 6 Pizza Company on 195 West Thames Street in Norwich, was stunned when he filled his tank with heating fuel.

He told NPU, "The first thought that entered my mind was 'how are people going to afford this and what can I do to help?'"

Bouley contacted NPU and announced his intention to the Customer Service Representative who answered his call. "I'd like to speak to someone about how I can support energy assistance for Norwich."

Order a pizza on Tuesday and keep a neighbor warm!

NPU directed him to Operation Fuel, which runs a statewide network of fuel banks and provided over \$50,000 to Norwich area residents last year alone.

"Mr. Bouley pledged to contribute \$1.00 from every small pizza, \$2.00 for every large, and \$3.00 for each jumbo pizza that he sells on Tuesdays through Christmas to Operation Fuel," said Bill Zagorski, Development Director for Operation Fuel. "What a great idea from a thoughtful and responsible business owner."

So far, Bouley has raised over \$800 that will go directly to help needy households

in our area. Norwich Public Utilities applauds Marcel and Engine 6 not only for their great pizza, but also their great hearts!

You can contribute to Operation Fuel directly through their website at www.operationfuel.org or by adding a dollar or more to your utility bill.



Operation Fuel, Inc.
WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.

When circumstances get difficult, you have a partner in the community



The mission of Norwich Public Utilities is clear — make Norwich a better place to live, work and do business.

Having a strong community partner like NPU is a big plus, especially during difficult economic times. Not only do we provide at-cost electric rates, saving customers over 20% in energy costs compared to other utilities, we also offer the following programs and services to help customers manage costs:

- Free compact fluorescent light bulbs
- No-cost energy audits by our trained efficiency experts to help you reduce energy usage
- On-going public service messages to educate customers on energy-saving tips
- Rebates on ENERGY STAR appliances including natural gas-heating systems and on-demand water heaters
- Budget-billing plans to evenly spread annual utility costs across 12 months, so you can plan ahead
- On-line bill payment services designed to save trips to our office and the extra gasoline it takes to get here
- Matching payment programs for income-qualifying customers
- A friend in Washington and Hartford, advocating for repair of broken energy markets that have contributed to our nation's economic distress
- Support through energy assistance funds like Operation Fuel and the United Way's Project Warm-Up

Talk to us when there is a problem...

Remember, every strong partnership requires communication. NPU will do our part to provide customers with the lowest rates possible and the tools to help you manage energy usage. But, if you are like one of the many families struggling with a job loss, illness, disability, or just overwhelming expenses, it is critical that you communicate with us, too!

NPU is here to help!

NPU customer service representatives are available to help you work out a payment plan or point you in the direction of local resources that can help. But, we can't help you if we don't hear from you in response to a delinquent utility bill or shut-off notice. Please contact our customer service center at (860) 887-2555. Only through open communication and cooperation can any partnership succeed.

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

Breast Cancer Remembrance

Honor a woman's battle with breast cancer with her name in pink on the breast cancer memorial Sail of the Valiant. Free. Sponsored by Chelsea Groton Bank, Dime Bank. Call (860) 889-3424 for information or to register. Sail of the Valiant is a Del Function nonprofit breast cancer program.

December 5, 2008

Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run

Join the Mohegan Striders in association with Billy Wilson's Pub running through the streets of downtown Norwich led by Santa Claus. This 1.5 mile loop course starts at Billy Wilson's at 7 pm. Visit www.moheganstriders.org for more information.

December 7, 2008

Winterfest

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

December 20, 2008

Holy New Martyrs Annual Christmas Cookie & Bake Sale

Festive platters, trays and tins of assorted holiday cookies, candy and sweets. Held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 364 Canterbury Turnpike. For information contact 822-6688.

January 10, 2009

Medieval Feast

Medieval food and entertainment at Unitarian Universalist Church of Norwich at 148 Broadway. Doors open at 6:30 pm with dinner at 7 p.m. For more information, call the church at 889-1062.

Tighten up your home!

Air leaking in and out of your home can end up wasting a lot of the money you spend on heating and cooling. Look at these areas to spot air leaks:

- Window frames
- Door frames
- Attic entrances
- Plumbing and utility access
- Electric outlets and switches located on outside walls
- Heating and cooling ducts
- Water and furnace flues
- Chimneys
- Sill plates around your home
- Basement windows
- Recessed lights
- Drop ceilings

A quick and inexpensive way to tighten up your home is to purchase caulking or weatherstripping. By sealing all cracks, seams and openings to the outdoors, you

can save about 10% on your energy bills!

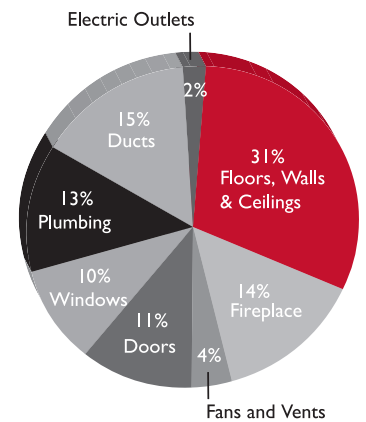
The U.S.

Department of Energy offers the following tips for sealing air leaks:

- Caulk and seal leaks where plumbing, ducting or wiring enters through outside walls, floors, or ceilings
- Install foam or rubber gaskets behind outlet and switch plates
- Dirty spots on insulation can show where air is leaking into your home; A simple fix for these leaks is to staple plastic over the hole, then caulk around the edge of the plastic

How does air escape from or come into your home?

Air infiltrates into and out of your home through every hole, nook, and cranny. As shown in the pie chart above, about one-third of this air infiltrates through openings in your ceilings, walls, and floors.



- If you have single pane-windows, consider replacing them with double-pane windows, or install storm windows over them; Covering windows with plastic sheeting is an inexpensive alternative
- If your home has a fireplace, make sure the damper is closed when it's not in use; You may want to invest in glass doors or a fireplace insert



This bulletin is printed on paper with 20% post-consumer fiber, and it costs about 10 cents to print.

Proudly printed in Norwich.

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.

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