

# Community matters

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

SEPT/OCT 2008

Fall is here —  
**think  
efficiency!**



Efficiency matters  
NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

Fall in New England means back to school, changing leaves and the air turning crisp and cool. That cool air also means the start of the heating season. With skyrocketing fuel costs, this year promises to be tough for everyone. But, before you turn up the thermostat, be sure your heating system is ready to use.

## Heating is 50% of a household's annual energy costs.

That's why it's so important to make sure your heating equipment is operating as efficiently as possible. If you have an old system (20 years or older), you may want to consider replacing it with a new, high-efficiency model. Your old boiler or furnace may only be running at 65% efficiency, meaning 35% of the fuel cost to run it is wasted. With new models, efficiency can be as high as 96% (natural gas). This change could result in saving hundreds of dollars a year in heating costs.

Efficiency ratings vary by equipment type. For instance, new, traditional furnaces have an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) of 80-84%, while new "condensing" furnaces and boilers have AFUE ratings of 90-96%!

The fuel type also makes a difference in terms of efficiency — natural gas or propane furnaces are more efficient than those fueled by oil.

## Choose a new heating system carefully.

When shopping for a new heating system, be sure to consider the cost of owning the system over time. Spending a little more now to buy a better model may end up saving you a lot of money over its lifetime.

## WATER HEATING

A typical household uses about 15% of its energy to heat water. When replacing an old water heater, consider purchasing a high efficiency, "tankless" or "on-demand" unit. These heaters are 40 to 50% more efficient than a standard, storage tank-style model. These tankless, on-demand heaters only heat the water when you need it unlike a conventional unit, which continuously heats the water in its tank. And, because tankless units heat the water on demand, you don't run out of hot water! There are also condensing tank-style water heaters available with efficiency ratings of 90% or more.

## NATURAL GAS EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

**Thinking about switching to natural gas? NPU makes it easy for you!**

Natural gas is a versatile, dependable and clean fuel source. And, unlike heating oil and propane, you only pay for what you use. Compared to oil and coal, natural gas (when burned) produces:

- Less carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas)
- Less sulfur dioxide (a cause of acid rain)
- Less nitrogen oxide (which causes smog)
- Less particulate matter (which can affect health and visibility)
- Virtually no solid-waste residue (ash and carbon buildup)

Natural gas-fueled systems are more energy efficient and easier to maintain than those using other fuel sources. So, if you have natural gas in your neighborhood, now's the time to switch heating fuels or upgrade your natural gas heating system!

## Rebates available!

NPU now offers residential, commercial and industrial customers rebates for the purchase and installation of high-efficiency natural gas furnaces, boilers and on-demand water heaters.

Effective July 1, 2008, you can receive up to \$800 per residential unit or up to \$3000 for commercial grade systems — depending on the type, size and AFUE of the equipment purchased. There's even a \$25 rebate when you install an Energy Star-programmable thermostat with your natural gas system. For program details, visit [www.norwichpublicutilities.com](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com) or call (860) 823-4514.



Did you know the State of Connecticut offers a \$500 rebate for the purchase and installation of a replacement natural gas, propane or oil furnace or boiler that meets federal Energy Star standards? This program is available to all residential homeowners. For more information, contact the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management at 1-866-940-4676, or visit [www.ct.gov/opm/](http://www.ct.gov/opm/)



# Hard facts about rising fuel costs

Deregulation of the electricity market in Connecticut nearly a decade ago, promised lower electricity bills for consumers. But did you know that New England's electricity prices are now the highest in the continental United States?

New England relies heavily on oil and natural gas to generate electricity, and while that's not likely to change in the short term, NPU believes that one of our biggest problems can be fixed. That is, the wholesale electricity market. Encouraged by the federal policy and cobbled together as part of deregulation, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which is supposed to protect consumers, has gotten it wrong. Very wrong.

The ISO-New England was created to ensure reliability of electric supplies in New England. What it has become is an expensive, cumbersome entity that is so committed to a failed concept called deregulation that it has forgotten the consumer suffering at the end of that electric bill.

For example: Since the development of a competitive wholesale electric market failed miserably, the generators (those that produce the power) wanted more money to do their job of building power plants. In response, the ISO developed a new market scheme. Of course, the new plan will cost consumers \$5 billion more between now and the middle of 2010. The original scheme, killed

by Congress after public outrage, would have cost even more.

Then there are the payments to power generators that ISO-New England says the generators need to ensure reliable service.

Legal challenges by consumer groups made the generators cough up \$150 million in refunds and saved consumers more than \$1 billion without compromising reliability.

What's more, because the FERC hasn't been minding the store, power generation companies in many deregulated states have used the new wholesale markets

to jack up prices. In those 20 states, rate increases have been rising twice as fast compared to regulated states.

That's a lot of statistics, and these murky, complicated markets are hard to understand, even for experts.

Exposing them to sunlight isn't easy.

## Consumer Demands

Why should you believe this?

Because the previous examples are all on public record and because the only groups speaking up for customers are consumer advocacy groups and

representatives from the 2,000-plus public utilities like NPU.

We're owned by our customers, and exist to make our communities better places to live, work and do business. So when the big generating companies throw up smokescreens about how the ISO is really fostering competition, you should consider the source.

The process we have now simply does not account for the interests of those of us who pay the bills!

It would make sense for ISO-New England to produce — and federal regulators to consider — cost-benefit analyses before making big changes to our electric markets, but the ISO objects strongly to such logic. So do the region's power generators, fearful the gravy train will slow.

## Get involved

At NPU, we believe that consumers need a stronger voice in the decision-making process that affects our energy and our wallets. That's why we've signed on with the American Public Power Association to the Campaign for Fair Electric Rates. Please visit their website [www.fairelectricrates.net](http://www.fairelectricrates.net) and see how you can help stop the insanity that has become New England's power mess.

Excerpted from the Worcester Business Journal at <http://www.wbjournal.com>

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# Winter is coming!

## How to give or get help with winter heating bills

This winter promises to be one of New England's most difficult in terms of affordable heating. Fuel and energy prices are at all-time highs. Many residents will have to make choices between heating, eating, or filling needed prescriptions. At NPU, we believe that no one should have to make these choices

TVCCA is now accepting applications for heating assistance in Norwich. To see if you or someone you love might qualify, start with the chart below. It shows the eligibility requirements for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP) based on household size and income levels. Both CEAP and CHAP are funded through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP was established in the early 1980s by the federal government to help households deal with the crisis of rising fuel costs. Many households still depend

on this assistance today. But even with heating costs at all time highs, LIHEAP funding levels haven't changed since 1981. NPU encourages customers to urge Connecticut's congressional delegates to support LIHEAP funding.

**In 2007, 920 NPU customers (about 4%) contributed an average of \$7.20 to Operation Fuel. Thank you for your support!**

In the meantime, Operation Fuel runs a Connecticut-wide network of fuel banks. It is often considered a safety net when state/federal programs fall short. Funded by public and private donations, Operation Fuel provides heating assistance to households who have either used all of their state/federal benefits, or are in crisis and need financial assistance with heating or utilities. So, if you don't need heating assistance, please consider helping a Connecticut household that does. You can either add \$1, \$3, or \$5 dollars to your utility bill, or make a donation directly to Operation Fuel.

To sign up for CEAP/CHAP, contact TVCCA at 889-1365. To support Operation Fuel, visit [www.operationfuel.org](http://www.operationfuel.org).

**If your household size and income falls within these guidelines, you may qualify for Energy Assistance through CEAP/CHAP or Operation Fuel**  
**Income Limits for Each Energy Assistance Program:**

Household Size	100% Monthly Poverty Income	100% Annual Poverty Income	125% Monthly Poverty Income	125% Annual Poverty Income	150% Monthly Poverty Income	150% Annual Poverty Income	200% Monthly Poverty Income	200% Annual Poverty Income	60% State Monthly Median Income	60% State Annual Median Income
1	\$ 867	\$10,400	\$1,083	\$13,000	\$1,300	\$15,600	\$1,733	\$20,800	\$2,439	\$29,272
2	1,167	14,000	1,458	17,500	1,750	21,000	2,333	28,000	3,190	38,279
3	1,467	17,600	1,833	22,000	2,200	26,400	2,933	35,200	3,941	47,286
4	1,767	21,200	2,208	26,500	2,650	31,800	3,533	42,400	4,691	56,293
5	2,067	24,800	2,583	31,000	3,100	37,200	4,133	49,600	5,442	65,300
6	2,367	28,400	2,958	35,500	3,550	42,600	4,733	56,800	6,192	74,307

## Winter Energy Efficiency Tips

### Insulation and Weatherization

Poor insulation can result in 60% of your heat being lost to the outside. Reduce heat loss by installing insulation throughout your home. Check your attic, ceilings, exterior and basement walls, floors and crawl spaces for recommended levels (R-values) of insulation.

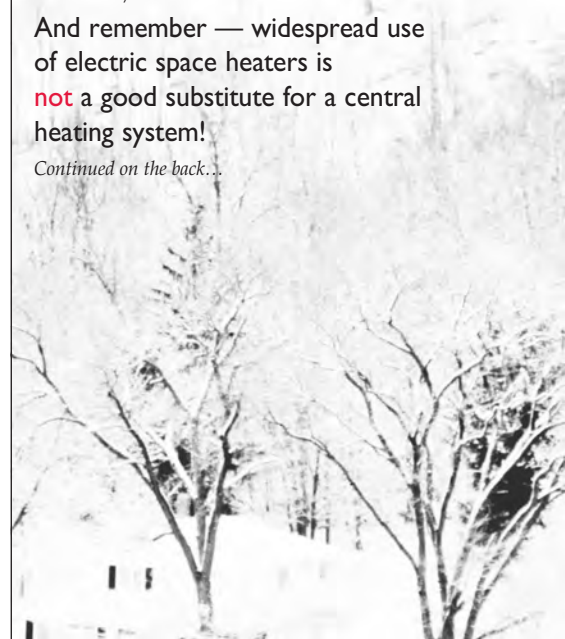
- Weather-strip and caulk around cracks or holes around doors and windows, including attic door hatches
- Install storm doors and storm windows
- Block off unused vents and fans
- Replace broken windows glass, worn weather stripping and improperly fitting doors
- If you have recessed lighting fixtures, make sure they are air-tight models

### Heating

- When you away or asleep, reduce room heating automatically by installing a programmable thermostat
- You can save 2-3% for each degree you lower your thermostat (68 degrees is recommended)
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces monthly or as needed
- Vacuum efficiency reducing dust from radiators, heat and air-conditioning vents
- Insulate your ducts and check for air leaks
- Annually service your heating system
- Don't block radiators or heating vents with furniture or draperies
- Close closet doors as well as doors to rooms that are not often used
- Close the fireplace damper when not in use to prevent heat loss
- Cover window-style air conditioners to keep cold air from leaking in
- Reverse the blades on ceiling fans so the warm air is pulled up and toward outside walls
- Replace old equipment with new high efficiency models

**And remember — widespread use of electric space heaters is not a good substitute for a central heating system!**

*Continued on the back...*



# Communitycalendar

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

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## 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—Swing-Dance Sunday Norwich Social Dance Club

Sundays from 7 to 10 p.m. \$7 per person, Swing, East & West. Lessons 6-7 p.m. \$10 per person. No partners needed. Wauregan Ballroom, 25 Broadway. Visit [www.NorwichSDC.org](http://www.NorwichSDC.org) or call 860-237-5457 for information.

## Ongoing—1st Thursday of each month Taftville Lions Pasta Supper

ALL YOU CAN EAT Pasta Supper held on the FIRST Thursday of EVERY month at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Taftville from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. \$5 per person. Take out available. All profits benefit various Lions Charities and local Taftville projects. Call 889-8300 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.

## Now Until September 28, 2008 Performance of '29'

Spirit of Broadway Theater, 24 Chestnut St. Call the box office at 886-2378 for tickets or information.

## September 6, 2008 Taste of Italy

The Italian community in Norwich shares their tasty culinary heritage, bocci games, art exhibit and fireworks. Held at Brown Park. Contact Frank DeMicco at 889-1369 or Frank Jacaruso Jr. at 889-0864 for details.

## September 18, 2008 Wine & Roses

Annual Wine Tasting Benefit for the Tommy Toy Fund at the Marina at American Wharf. Fine wine, entertainment and hors d'oeuvres. 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Call Cathy Cline at 887-9211 for more info.

## September 21, 2008 Family Day

Share your family with your community! Food, fun and games for all, including "Harry O Youth Race." Join the fun from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Mohegan Park. Call Sherry Filiatreault at 823-3782 for more info.

## September 21, 2008 Eastern CT Antique Auto Show

22nd Annual antique and classic car show at Dodd Stadium, Stott Ave. Auto auction, food vendors and hundreds of antique cars, classic cars and enthusiasts! Contact the Chamber of Commerce at 464-7373 for more information.

## September 21, 2008 2nd Annual YMCA Rose Pedal Criterium

Riders will compete in 10 different categories in separate races on a 1 kilometer closed course in downtown Norwich. Distances/Laps will range from 10 to 80 laps. Call Cheryl Hughes at 860-889-7349 for more information.

## October 4-5, 11-13, 18-19, & 25-26, 2008 Walking Weekends

35 towns of the Last Green Valley and the QSHC, Inc. sponsor dozens of guided walks of the historical, cultural and natural resources of the National Heritage Corridor. Norwich hosts several interesting walks. Contact (860) 963-7226 for more info.

## October 4, 2008 NFA Classic Band Competition

6:30 p.m. featuring several area marching bands. For more information, please call 425-5742.

## October 4

### Holy New Martyrs Annual Fall Festival

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Taste of Russia—a taste of ethnic food, music, games, silent auction, huge tag sale and more! 364 Canterbury Turnpike, Norwich.

## October 12, 2008

### Organ Spectacular with Organist Nathan Laube

3:00 p.m. The prize-winning, organ-major candidate at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute is a rising star in the world of organ performance. Call 860-889-8313 or visit [www.centralbaptistnorwich.com](http://www.centralbaptistnorwich.com) for more info.

## October 15 - November 23, 2008

### The Enchanted Cottage

Will be performed at the Spirit of Broadway Theater, 24 Chestnut St. Call the box office at 886-2378 for tickets or information.

## October 17, 18 and 19, 2008

### Friends of Otis Library Annual Book Fair

Fair held during normal library hours. Thousands of books will be available. Proceeds benefit the Otis Library. For more information, contact 889-2365.

## October 26, 2008

### Lantern Light Graveyard Walk

One-hour guided walking tour at dusk led by ghost hunter Donna Kent featuring The Old Norwichtown Burial Ground and the Norwichtown Green. An entire day of ghost hunting, including brunch at a haunted restaurant. Reservations and lantern or flashlight required. Call 886-4683 for more info.

## Winter Energy Efficiency Tips

...Continued from inside

### Water Heating

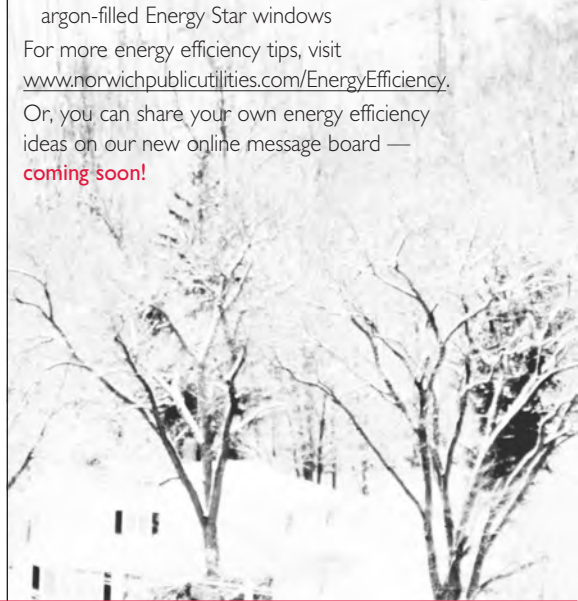
- Set water heaters to 120 degrees F
- Repair leaky faucets right away as they waste gallons of water within a short period
- Replace old water heaters with new, high efficiency "on-demand" units
- Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads
- Fill the sink half-way instead of letting the water run while shaving or washing
- Don't run water when using the sink or faucet — turn it off between tasks such as brushing teeth or shaving
- Insulate water heater pipes to at least 10 feet from the tank

### Windows

- Close curtains at night to cut down on heat loss
- Open curtains during the day to benefit from solar heating
- Install storm windows over single-pane windows or replace them with double-pane windows
- Install tight-fitting, insulating window shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing
- Install awnings on south- and west-facing windows
- Consider replacing old windows with new low-e, argon-filled Energy Star windows

For more energy efficiency tips, visit [www.norwichpublicutilities.com/EnergyEfficiency](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com/EnergyEfficiency).

Or, you can share your own energy efficiency ideas on our new online message board — **coming soon!**



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](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters)

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.  
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