

Energynews

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DID YOU KNOW?

Q: Why is the workman leaving my neighborhood when my lights are still out?

A: The troubleman or serviceman who responds first to assess and inspect is not necessarily able to repair all types of problems. Damage that requires more extensive repairs is referred to a specialized crew, who returns with the equipment needed to restore service. Troublemens or servicemen sometimes also “patrol” the lines to assess the extent of damage and the specific source of problems. Such information helps us determine how to restore service to the largest number of customers as quickly and safely as possible.

If you have a question that you would like to see appear in this column, please send it to:

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Know How Electricity Is Supplied, Delivered to You

Most of us begin our lives the same way, every day – with electricity. The alarm clock goes off, the light goes on and our day begins. But did you ever wonder what it takes to get that electricity to your door?

Simply put, it takes “supply” and “delivery.”

Supply refers to the generation of electricity. Delmarva Power doesn’t generate electricity. We buy electricity supply from the wholesale market. Coal, natural gas and oil are the principal fuels used to generate electricity. As you know, the cost of all these fuels has risen dramatically in recent years. In fact, between 1995 and 2005, the prices of these fossil fuels rose anywhere from 100 percent to an estimated 400 percent.

With the advent of deregulation, some Delmarva Power customers have chosen to purchase electricity from a supplier other than Delmarva Power. If you look to Delmarva Power to purchase your electricity supply, we do so at market prices. This cost is passed directly to our customers.

The other piece of getting electricity to your door is “delivery,” which is Delmarva Power’s core business. For the typical residential customer, the cost of getting electricity delivered to you has been less than a third of your total bill in recent years.

Electric delivery costs pay for just about everything it takes to get the electricity from the regional trans-

mission grid to you, the customer. This includes the cost of substations, power poles and lines, transformers and equipment, system maintenance and employees, from linemen to meter readers to customer service representatives.

Across Delmarva Power’s service territory, delivery rates have remained flat or, in some cases decreased, during the past decade. This hasn’t been easy to do since labor and electrical equipment costs have increased.

For example, the price of a transformer mounted on poles in most neighborhoods, has increased 60 to 70 percent since the beginning of this year alone. While Delmarva Power remains committed to controlling its operation and maintenance costs, we also know that our customers do not want us to sacrifice reliability in the name of keeping delivery rates flat. If delivery rates need to increase slightly, it’s because we are committed to maintaining and improving our electric delivery system, to ensure the continued, reliable flow of electricity to our customers.

As always, we will continue to give customers the Energy Know-How they need to get the most for their electricity dollar. You can find energy- and money-saving tips on our Web site at www.delmarva.com or call Customer Care at 1-800-375-7117.



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Know How Heat Pumps Work

During these energy-conscious times, many homeowners are wondering if their heating and cooling systems need a tune-up or, perhaps, replacement.

One safe, clean and energy-efficient way to heat your home this winter is with a heat pump.

Heat pumps use electricity to move heat from a cool space into a warm space. Because they move heat, rather than generate it, heat pumps can provide up to four times the amount of energy they consume.

During the summer, the heat pump serves as an air conditioner by absorbing heat from the indoor air and pumping it outdoors. During the winter, the heat pump absorbs heat from the outdoor air and pumps it inside – even cold winter air contains some heat.

The heat pump does require a backup heater that goes on automatically to provide additional heat when the outside air temperature is

extremely low. Geothermal heat pumps seldom need a backup heater since they draw heat from the ground or a nearby water source, which are more constant year round.

If you have a heat pump or are thinking about purchasing one, here are some energy efficiency tips to consider this winter:

■ Leave your thermostat at the lowest comfortable degree – setting it back while you're away and increasing it when you return is not an efficient way to run the unit. When you attempt to reheat the house by increasing the thermostat by more than 2 degrees, the heat pump will overreact and the backup heater will come on, which is more expensive to run.

■ Don't close or block cold air returns or heat registers. It is important to leave supply and return registers open, even if the room is not in use.

CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE:

Delmarva Power is installing a new customer service phone system aimed at better serving its customers.

The new phone system, called Natural Language, enables customers to complete a variety of services 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week. Some of the services customers will be able to do include paying their bill, calling in a meter reading and reporting a power outage – all without having to talk to a Customer Care representative.

The customer's voice response or touchtone input will be all the phone system needs to make sure the customer's request is fulfilled. We're hopeful customers will find the phone menu easy to navigate, enabling them to perform multiple tasks with just one call.

The new self-service phone system, however, will not replace the friendly, live assistance of a Customer Care representative, meaning customers will always have the option to speak with a representative. Keep in mind, though, Customer Care representatives are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, while the automated phone system serves customers anytime on any day. And, most importantly, our Customer Care number has not changed. It remains: 1-800-375-7117.

Correction: In the state of Delaware, on highways of four lanes or more, traffic following a school bus that is stopping to pick up passengers must also stop. Traffic coming in the opposite direction of the school bus does not need to stop. An article in the September Energy News misreported the Delaware traffic law.



Delaware (Area code 302)

Dec 1-3: *Delaware Hospice Festival of Trees* (Sussex); Del Tech & Comm. College, Georgetown; 800-838-9800

Dec 3: 13th Annual *Arden Christmas Antiques & Collectibles Show*; Gild Hall 2126 The Highway, Wilmington

Dec 9: *Nur Shriners Pet Show*; 198 Dupont Hwy; www.nurshrine.org/pet_show.htm

Dec 15-17: *Annual Family Holiday Play*, Reedy Point Players, DE City Community Center; DE City; 838-9228

Dec 22: *Holiday Brown Bag Concert Series*; Grace Episcopal Church, Talleyville; 478-9533

Maryland (Area code 410)

Dec 1: *Centreville Christmas Parade*; Commerce St., Centreville; 410-758-1180

Dec 2: *Victorian Christmas Celebration*; Julia A. Purnell Museum, Snow Hill; 410-632-0515, www.purnellmuseum.com

Dec 2: *Christmas Open House*; Steppingstone Museum, Quaker Bottom Rd., Havre de Grace; 410-939-2299, 888-419-1762, steppingstonemuseum@msn.com

Dec 9: *Grand Illumination*; Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely; 410-634-2847, www.adkinsarboretum.org

Dec 9: *Ocean Bay Chapter Sweet Adelines*; 3rd Annual Christmas Festival of Harmony; Wicomico High School, Salisbury; www.oceanbay.com, 410-749-1194

New Jersey (Area code 609, 856)

Dec 1-10: *What's Cookin'? Two Centuries of American Foodways*; Harrison Township Historical Society's Old Town hall Museum, Mullica Hill; 856-478-6673, 856-478-4787, www.mullicahill.com

Dec 2: *Yuletide Tour of Historic Salem*; Salem; 856-935-3635, salemnyuletidetour@yahoo.com

Dec 2: *A Cress Holmes Christmas Candlelight Tour*; 504 Rt. 9, Cape May County Museum; 609-465-3535

Dec 16: *Santa in the Tropics*; Cape May County Museum and Zoo; 609-465-3535

Virginia (Area code 757)

Dec 2: *Chincoteague Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade*; Chincoteague; 757-336-6161, chincochamber@verizon.net, www.chincoteaguechamber.com

For more events: Click on "In Your Community" at our Web site. Atlantic City Electric Region, visit www.atlanticcityelectric.com; Delmarva Power Region, visit: www.delmarva.com. To include a future event either in ENYCU or online, fax to: 302-283-6095, or send an e-mail to Energy.News@pepcoholdings.com.

