



News Release

Puget Sound Energy Recommends Easy Steps to Save Energy and Money During High Heating Bill Season

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 1, 2007--Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is encouraging customers to take easy steps to save energy and money to combat high winter heating bills resulting from a combination of unseasonably cold temperatures and higher wholesale prices for natural gas.

The Seattle area posted 19 days of below-average temperatures in January, according to National Weather Service data, with one weeklong stretch running 9 to 16 degrees below normal. Overall, January 2007 was almost 3 degrees below average. By comparison, Seattle-area temperatures in January 2006 averaged nearly 6 degrees above normal.

PSE's electric rates approved by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) and effective beginning last month actually decreased by about 1 percent. However, PSE natural gas rates increased 2.8 percent and are roughly 10 percent higher this winter than last, primarily because of increased gas-supply costs, which make up approximately 80 percent of the gas bill. The utility passes through these costs, without profit, to customers.

"Frigid nights have been kicking furnaces into high gear, and, that means higher heating costs," said Darren Brady, PSE's senior vice president of Customer Service and Information Technology. "We want to help our customers manage their energy use and obtain heating-bill assistance as they look for ways to keep warm. It's never too late to take easy steps to save energy and money."

PSE recommends these energy-saving tips:

- Lower the thermostat at bedtime or while gone during the day. Setting the thermostat to 58 degrees during sleep hours can decrease a natural gas bill by up to 7 percent.
- Seal air leaks around drafty windows and doors.
- Check furnace filters monthly and clean or replace them when necessary.
- Keep heating outlets and return registers clear of furniture or other objects.
- Keep fireplace dampers and glass doors closed when a fireplace is not in use.
- Have furnaces inspected and serviced to ensure they're in top working order.
- If purchasing a new furnace or other appliances, choose high-efficiency models with ENERGY STAR(R) labels.

PSE offers rebates on several home efficiency programs including clothes washers, compact florescent bulbs and fixtures, natural gas furnaces and water heaters, solar photovoltaic systems, ENERGY STAR(R) qualified natural gas or electric heated homes, and insulation. Customers can call a PSE Energy Advisor toll-free at 1-800-562-1482 for more information on the tips and rebates.

PSE customers having trouble paying their utility bill may be able to get help from PSE's Home Energy Lifeline Program, or HELP. With a \$1.2 million boost in funding approved last month by the WUTC, the program will allocate \$7.4 million over the coming year to help low-income households served by PSE pay their natural gas and electricity bills.

Depending on income and household size, a recipient can receive up to \$750 in utility-bill credits from the HELP program. Over the past year, nearly 18,000 families received the program's bill assistance. The funding boost the program received this winter will extend HELP aid to about 2,500 additional households.

Brady also encouraged customers having difficulty paying their heating bills to call PSE about the company's balanced payment plan, which evens out a customer's payments over a 12-month period. PSE customers also may be able to get help from the utility's Warm Home Fund, which extends short-term, emergency bill assistance. The fund is administered by The Salvation Army.

Customers can call PSE toll-free at 1-888-225-5773 or visit the company's Web site at www.pse.com for energy-saving tips or to get more information about bill assistance. The federal government's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, also provides energy relief to eligible low-income households. Both HELP and LIHEAP are administered by local community-service centers. PSE customers can obtain the phone number and address of their nearest center, toll-free, at 1-866-223-5425.

PSE delivers natural gas service to more than 700,000 customers in Snohomish, King, Pierce, Thurston, Lewis and Kittitas counties. The company also serves more than 1 million electric customers across the Puget Sound region and Kittitas County.

About Puget Sound Energy

Washington state's oldest and largest energy utility, with a 6,000-square-mile service area stretching across 11 counties, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) serves more than 1 million electric customers and 700,000 natural gas customers, primarily in Western Washington. PSE, a subsidiary of Puget Energy (NYSE:PSD), meets the energy needs of its growing customer base through incremental, cost-effective energy efficiency, low-cost procurement of sustainable energy resources, and far-sighted investment in the energy-delivery infrastructure.

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