

City of Willcox Newsletter June 2011

Willcox Gas System Adjustment Information

By Ruth Graham, Finance Director

On the May utility bills the City of Willcox made an adjustment to customer bills to correct an under-billing error by our natural gas supplier, BP Energy. An unintended consequence of the adjustment was that the system treated it as an unpaid past due balance. The unpaid balance then generated an erroneous shutoff notice on the bills. The past due notices as a result of the adjustment are incorrect and no customer services will be shut off or payment history affected as a result of the adjustment.

The City's out-of-pocket gas costs were allocated to customers based on usage during the winter months; usage fees may be billed ratably by a second adjustment. In addition to the supply charges from BP Energy, we have transportation charges from El Paso Natural Gas (EPNG). The combined costs are billed monthly together with a usage fee. The City provides the supplier with a monthly nomination of anticipated usage. As the month progresses adjustments are made by the supplier to align the actual usage and the nominated usage. We have worked with the same supplier for ten years and during that time the supplier has managed the City's imbalances. A new scheduler was assigned to our account by the supplier in December and the imbalances were not managed for the period from December 2010 to March, 2011. The BP Energy bills to the City were too low and did not reflect actual usage during that period. The supplier corrected the billing in April and when we inquired about the discrepancy between the usage reported by the supplier and the pipeline, the supplier indicated that it was an error. The City made no adjustment on the customers' April utility bills. On May 25th, the supplier informed us that the gas had in fact been consumed by the City's customers and that the error resulted from the unbilled imbalances for the winter months. BP Energy adjusted the City's bill to make the City whole and to reimburse us for EPNG charges related to the imbalances, and confirmed that it is now managing our imbalances on a monthly basis and that this problem will not recur.

Utility payments are due on the 20th day of the month. An account will be subject to shutoff if the past due balance is unpaid as of the 2nd Monday of the following month. For instance, customers with an April bill due May 20th will be subject to shutoff if the April balance due is not paid on or before noon on the 2nd Monday in June. A \$40.00 shutoff fee will be applied if the shutoff is scheduled, whether or not services are actually interrupted. After a shutoff, the entire balance due plus a \$40 fee must be paid before services are restored. In addition, if the customer does not have deposits on account the deposits must also be restored.

How to Protect Your Family from a Fire

Jeff Stoddard, Safety Officer

Follow 3 simple steps to a safer home:

Step 1 - Fire extinguishers can create a pathway to safety:

- Keep an extinguisher in every part of your home where fire might occur-especially in the kitchen, living room and laundry room
- Read the instructions and know how to use your extinguishers before a fire breaks out.
- The only time a fire extinguisher should be used to fight a fire is when the fire is small, self-contained, not spreading rapidly, the fire department has been notified, there is a clear exit behind the person using the extinguisher, and the extinguisher is used to create a safe pathway out of the home.
- Respect all fires, regardless of size. Fire extinguishers are one part of a fire response plan. The main objective is safe escape.
- Inspect your fire extinguisher gauge monthly and replace your extinguisher if the gauge reads empty (see illustration below); replace any fire extinguisher more than 12 years old regardless of the gauge reading.

Inspect your fire extinguisher's gauge monthly.



Gauge reads **EMPTY**. Replace or Recharge.



Gauge reads **FULL**. Unit is Fully Charged.

Fire extinguishers can easy to find online or at your local store.

Step 2 - Smoke alarms provide vital early warning of fire danger.

- Install a smoke alarm in every room including basements and finished attics, in each bedroom and hallways outside of every sleeping area, and at the top and bottom of stairways.
- Make sure everyone knows what the smoke alarm sounds like.
- Test your smoke alarms every 6 months and change the batteries as needed.
- Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.

Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.



Smoke alarms are easy to find online or at your local store. Know that your family and you are safe .

Step 3 - Prepare and practice a home escape plan.

- Practice two ways out of every room to mimic the most difficult fire situation you might encounter. Be sure to practice your escape plan during the day and at night.
- Assign an adult to wake and assist each child in the house. Also consider lending extra help to family members who are physically challenged or elderly.
- Identify a meeting place outside the home. Practice, practice, practice—at least twice every year.

From the Office of the City Clerk...

Cristina G. Whelan, CMC

City Council Meetings

NOTE DATE: Tuesday
Jul 5, 2011

&

Monday
Jul 18, 2010

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

300 West Rex Allen Drive