

Light reading

Seattle City Light: first carbon-neutral utility in the U.S.

Jul/Aug 2009

Surviving 2009: A progress report



While the economy still pulls on all of us, City Light continues to innovate and improve, working hard to bring you reliable, clean, affordable energy. In this newsletter are many stories about the progress we've made even as we navigate challenging conditions.

I'm pleased to announce that the Mayor and Seattle City Council have agreed to release funds that will allow us to step up our streetlight repair and replacement work. Earlier budget cuts resulted in a significant reduction in overtime, as well as some maintenance work, but with these additional funds we can catch up on needed streetlight repairs.

Because of cost-cutting strategies, as well as many years of careful financial management, we were able to avoid a rate increase this year. While we will continue our prudent financial controls, we are also keenly aware of some critical infrastructure needs and technology improvements that we face.

I know I can count on all of our customers to understand this delicate balance because you have to make similar decisions in your own life. Know that we're doing everything possible – within responsible limits – to minimize problems as we maximize results.



- Superintendent
Jorge Carrasco



Conservation news

Summer energy savings

Usually summers are mild here, so most of us don't need air conditioning. But for hot spells, use ceiling or portable fans to move hot air out, and close drapes and shades to block solar heat. Other energy-eaters are water heaters, dryers, and refrigerators. Consider reducing shower times; using cold water when you wash clothes; using a solar clothes dryer (clothes line); and deciding what you want before opening the refrigerator/freezer door.

CFLs: Myth and fact

Myth: Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) contain high amounts of mercury.

Fact: CFLs have a small amount of mercury that only poses a health hazard when thrown in the garbage or broken. Accumulated mercury from many CFLs can leach into ground water from landfills and become concentrated in fish. Keep CFLs out of landfills by recycling burned-out bulbs. More than 30 CFL recycling locations are in City Light's service area. For a list, visit www.seattle.gov/twistandsave. Find out more about mercury at www.epa.gov/mercury.

Myth: I should wait until my regular incandescent bulbs burn out before I replace them with CFLs.

Fact: Replacing incandescent bulbs before they burn out will save you money and reduce your carbon footprint now.

Myth: CFLs don't work well in recessed-can fixtures and don't dim well.

Fact: It's true that regularly shaped "twisty" type CFLs don't work well in recessed cans. Instead, choose reflector CFLs. Two types are available: dimmable and non-dimmable. If you haven't used dimmable reflector CFLs recently, they are much improved, providing smoother dimming without hum or flicker. Though reflector CFLs don't dim quite as low as incandescent reflectors, most customers are satisfied with the dimming range. And like all CFLs, reflector CFLs last ten times longer than incandescent reflectors.



"Twisty"
type CFL



Reflector
(or R)
type CFL



Recycle that 2nd fridge

Receive \$30 when you get rid of your older, working extra refrigerator or freezer. We'll pick it up and recycle it for free. One less refrigerator in your household can save up to \$120 annually in electricity costs. We'll make sure all toxins are handled responsibly, recycling more than 95 percent of the materials. Call (206) 233-COLD or visit www.seattle.gov/fridge



In your neighborhood

Improved weather gives City Light the chance to get outside and make repairs. We know that can mean some hassles with traffic and noise but it's all an effort to keep your electric service reliable. Here are some of the projects:

Through August

- **Light-emitting diode (LED) pilot project:** testing new LED streetlights at sites on Capitol Hill and South Park. Comment online www.seattle.gov/light
- **Warren Avenue crossing:** replacing old wooden poles with steel ones; repairing the 200-foot steel towers on the Fremont and Queen Anne sides of the Ship Canal; upgrading the cables that span the canal.
- **Bell Street:** installing six underground vaults on the south side of Bell Street, between 2nd and 5th Avenues. No planned outages, but traffic and parking disruptions are expected, as well as noise and vibrations from the work. A transportation construction map is posted online: www.seattle.gov/transportation/constructionmap

Staycations: North Cascades Environmental Learning Center



The North Cascades Institute operates the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center in partnership with the City of Seattle and the National Park Service. Opened in 2005, the center is located on Diablo Lake, just off of State Route 20 in the North Cascades National Park. See an online tour at www.ncascades.org/learning_center

Explore your own backyard this summer at the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center and choose from more than 60 learning adventures for the whole family. Newcomers may be eligible for a \$30 first-timer discount. (Some restrictions apply; details on the Web or by phone.) Also try free day-trips featuring canoe rides on Diablo Lake as well as family hikes July 19, August 2 and September 27. Learn more at www.ncascades.org/get_outside or 360.856.5700 ext. 209.



Info and events

Trees, power and pruning

With leaves in full bloom, City Light's tree-pruning is more obvious. The next time you see crews at work on a tree, remember the effort is to deliver reliable power to you. Trees and branches hitting power lines are major causes of power outages but the utility approaches the challenge responsibly. City Light contractors use a technique called directional pruning, which encourages growth away from the lines and is recommended by the International Society of Arboriculture, the American National Standards Institute as well as the National Arbor Day Foundation. For details about the utility's tree-pruning programs and safety tips, see this Web site: www.seattle.gov/light/neighborhoods/nh4_trtr.htm

2008 Annual Report now online

City Light's 2008 annual report, "Conservation – Our New Power Plant," explores how the utility is creating a sustainable energy future. Instead of building new power plants to meet energy load, City Light is expanding conservation's potential as an energy source. See the report online at www.seattle.gov/light/aboutus/AnnualReport

Your energy future

Last year, City Light negotiated two power-exchange contracts with other utilities to increase our portfolio of

renewable energy. With existing wind resources, we'll soon have a total of 55.5 average megawatts of renewables, all of which will help to meet state-mandated goals by 2020. This year, City light hopes to acquire an additional 50 megawatts of new, renewable energy resources and it's expected that such a purchase will more than double the cost of the utility's conservation investments. Read more about the utility's efforts to "green up" its energy portfolio at this Web site www.seattle.gov/light/news/issues/irp

Solar in Seattle

Coming up, two events for anyone interested in solar power:

- **July 17 & 18: Shoreline Solar Fest** Look for the City Light booth and get details at www.shorelinesolar.org.
- **Sept. 12: Solar Hot Water 101** at the Rainier Community Center, 4600 38th Ave. S., Seattle. Free but registration required. Learn more at www.seattle.gov/light/solar or call City Light's Conservation Help Line: 206.684.3800.



700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3200
PO Box 34023
Seattle, WA 98124-4023
www.seattle.gov/light
Customer Service 206.684.3000

City Light provides customers with the lowest rates in the U.S. among comparably sized cities and the lowest rates among neighboring Northwest utilities.

This newsletter is available in alternate formats upon request. For translated versions in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Tagalog and Korean, call 206.684.3000.

Editor: Connie McDougall 206.684.3005
connie.mcdougall@seattle.gov

Seattle Climate Action

