

Light reading

Seattle City Light: The first carbon-neutral utility in the nation.

Mar/Apr 2010

From the superintendent



The Seattle City Council-approved rate increase that went into effect Jan. 1 addressed our 2009 \$74 million revenue gap, a shortfall caused partly by downturns in the price we get for selling our surplus power on the energy markets.

Surplus power revenues help keep your rates low but it's a volatile resource. As a result, the mayor and council are reviewing City Light's financial policies. This is important because revenue challenges continue, now compounded by El Niño. This year, the Columbia River Basin snow-pack is among the lowest recorded in almost two decades, and that's where we get most of our power.

Last fall we projected \$120 million in surplus power revenue for 2010. By mid-February we estimated revenues would be just \$70 million — down by \$50 million. Warm weather also means less demand for power in general, down by \$5 million.

To counter fluctuations, the mayor and council are considering a rate stabilization fund for City Light, an approach used by many utilities. The target is \$100 million to offset revenue losses. If revenues are higher than estimated, the excess could pay down debt or reduce customer rates. If revenues fall short, a temporary surcharge (about 3%) would be applied to restore the fund balance.

The Seattle City Council will discuss this and other utility financial policies in the next few months. Our goal is to ensure City Light can provide you with stable, reliable, environmentally responsible power at a reasonable cost.



**Superintendent
Jorge Carrasco**



Conservation news



Think globally, Green Up locally

Historically, voluntary customer contributions to City Light's Green Up program have been invested in large-scale renewable power generated by the Stateline Wind Project near Walla Walla. This year, Green Up is branching out to support a variety of small-scale generation projects throughout the Northwest, such as landfill gas, geothermal power, and small-scale wind.

For as little as \$3 a month, you can help deliver more clean energy into our power grid. Enrolling is easy. Just complete the enclosed Green Up form and mail it with your Seattle City Light payment. For more information, visit www.seattle.gov/greenup or call **206.684.3800**.

Computer ZZZs save energy

Many customers think that if their monitor is in sleep mode, so is their computer. Not so. If you leave your computer on for more than a few hours a day, activating its sleep mode could cut its annual electricity use in half. Find sleep mode settings in the computer's control panel.

Customers save big

Last year, City Light customers who took advantage of our conservation rebate programs saved more than 116 million kilowatt-hours — enough to power 12,600 homes for a year. That represents carbon emission reductions equal to taking 15,300 cars off the road for a year. Here are ways you can save in 2010:

- Find discounts on Energy Star® CFLs as part of the **Twist & Save** program, available at most retailers.

www.seattle.gov/twistandsave



- Receive up to a \$100 rebate on energy-efficient clothes washers.

www.washwiserebate.com

- All customers, including business and apartment building owners, call **206.684.3800** to learn about cash rebates for energy efficiency upgrades.

Business owners:

www.seattle.gov/light/Conserve/business

Apartment building owners:

www.seattle.gov/light/apt

Our report card

City Light's 2009 performance information reports on how we did reaching our goals. For more information, call Customer Care, **206.684.3111**, or e-mail kelly.enright@seattle.gov.

Key Measurement	Benchmark	2009 Performance	Achieved	Steps Being Taken to Improve Performance
Percent of calls answered live within 60 seconds by the utility Call Center.	80 percent	41 percent (partially impacted by city furloughs that reduce staff availability)		Continue improvement efforts. Implement new Outage Management System, interactive voice response system in 2010.
Frequency of non-storm power outages (outage caused by trees in lines, equipment failure, etc.), per year, per customer.	One outage or less	One outage	✓	Trim trees from powerlines on a four-year cycle. Complete inventory of physical assets to move to a regular maintenance/replacement cycle.
Length of non-storm power outages per customer, per year.	50 minutes or less	75.6 minutes		Maintain, upgrade distribution system on a regular schedule. Inventory condition of all assets, scheduling maintenance work.
Number of complaints per 1,000 customers.	0.5	.001	✓	Continually monitor, solicit customer feedback.
Bill-error percentage (e.g., estimated meter reads, incorrect rates) among all customers.	1.5 percent	2.28 percent		Monitor, validate methods for estimating meter reads. Process-improvement project underway for Customer Services.
Customer satisfaction with City Light engineering/field services.	Combined residential and commercial target: 3.58 Rating scale: 1-5	Combined residential and commercial rating: 3.66 Rating scale: 1-5	✓	Streamline administrative procedures; improve engineering, operations, and scheduling processes. Monitor efforts, continue to survey customers.
Time needed to perform residential electrical connections requiring field services.	60 days	43 days	✓	Continue process improvements whenever possible.
Customer conservation savings (across all customer groups).	10.32 average megawatts	13.24 average megawatts saved (enough to power 12,600 average households for a year)	✓	Increase opportunities for residential/commercial customers to conserve energy. Encourage recommendations from customers on ways to cut energy use.

In your neighborhood: City Light @ work



Virginia Street: Install new electrical duct banks. **Queen Anne:** Reroute underground cables. **SODO:** Relocate feeder lines from 1st Ave. S. to Occidental Ave. S. **Magnolia:** Upgrade feeders, poles, wires. **Sound Transit University Station:** Relocate electrical equipment. **View Ridge, Arroyo Beach, Leschi:** Underground cable-injection. **Laurelhurst:** Upgrade underground cables. **Denny Way to N. 65th:** Streetlight relamping. Details on these projects at: www.seattle.gov/light/const_mgmt



Happy anniversary to the Earth

The 40th anniversary of Earth Day is April 22, 2010, and all of April is now designated Earth Month.

Get Earth-friendly ideas at www.seattle.gov/light.



Be counted

A reminder to please participate in the 2010 Census. For more information, visit www.2010.census.gov/2010census

Seattle City Light

City Light rates are the lowest among comparably sized cities in the nation and one of the lowest cost electric providers in the Northwest.

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Questions, comments or suggestions?
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