

October 2018



Why Harlan?

by Doug Hammer, Director of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations

October 7-13th is both Public Power Week and Public Natural Gas week. It's a time to recognize public providers of electricity and natural gas. HMU is fortunate to be included in both categories as we are one of a few providers in Iowa to offer both electric and natural gas service. When you add water and telecommunications, that makes HMU one of a handful of full service utility providers in the state. But why? Why has the town of Harlan specifically, historically and strongly embraced the core principles of municipal utility ownership and spurned other providers?

I believe one core tenant of Public Utility ownership the citizens of Harlan have embraced since the establishment of electric and water service in 1891 is the sense of local control. Public Utilities, along with schools, are perfect examples of citizens being able to act on what is in the best interest of their community. HMU is ultimately governed by a five member Board of Trustees composed of resident customers. The same Harlan residents you see at school events, churches, and stores represent you on the utility Board. Since 1920 when Board oversight was approved by voters, Board members have been business owners, bankers, attorneys, pharmacists, dentists, photographers, engineers, mechanics or from other professions. They are fellow citizens acting on your behalf to ensure your electric, gas, water and telecommunications services are run properly, safely, cost efficiently and tailor made to fit the needs of Harlan not only today but in the future. Board decisions are not made to enhance profit to line the pockets of investors. Decisions are made to benefit Harlan. HMU customers live, literally, only blocks away from the decision makers acting on their behalf. Customers can visit HMU and talk with the CEO or department Directors. They can attend open Board meetings. I believe our customers like the idea of having the opportunity to provide input on their utility. Harlan citizens have embraced local control, and therefore control of their destiny, since 1891.

Another core principle of public utilities is the investment in the community. Early records are spotty but likely from the very beginning of the utility, funds left over from the operation of the utility have gone back into the community either in the form of a payment to the City of Harlan or toward enhancing and improving the quality of life in the city. Funds from the utility have gone toward: the construction of Veterans Auditorium, Thekildson Center, the

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Quick Tips

MEDALLION HUNT

The Harvest Fest medallion hunt starts Monday, October 22nd. Watch HMU cable channel 14 for clues on where the medallion is hidden. New clues are released at noon each day. Follow the clues, find the medallion and return it to HMU to claim the \$100 reward.

REBATES AVAILABLE

Rebates for purchasing qualifying furnaces and insulation are available. Rebate program details and applications can be found at harlannet.com.

WATER MAIN FLUSHING

Water main flushing starts on Monday, October 22nd. Check water before doing dishes, laundry or bathing. If your water appears cloudy, let it run until it becomes clear.

SNOWBIRDS

If you will be leaving the area for an extended period of time this winter, check with us about leaving your services on or shutting them off. There are benefits to both.

Project Share

Project Share assists needy households in paying energy bills.

You may add a regular contribution to Project Share through your monthly utility payment or by making a one-time direct donation. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible and tax deductible.

People qualifying under the Project Share guidelines are carefully identified by an area social service agency.

Project Share Contribution

I'd like to help a neighbor in need with a contribution to Project Share.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

I will contribute \$_____ per month. I understand this amount will be added to my monthly utility bill.

My account number: _____

I have enclosed a one-time contribution of \$_____

CO Detectors

Part 1 of a series

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless, tasteless and colorless and therefore known as the 'silent killer'. It is toxic as it prevents your body from properly transporting oxygen to critical organs. Carbon Monoxide poisoning can happen quickly if CO is inhaled in high concentrations. Symptoms of exposure to CO include headaches, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, burning of the eyes and loss of consciousness. Children, seniors and people that have pre-existing respiratory or heart conditions are often more sensitive to the effects of CO. Carbon monoxide is formed by the incomplete burning of fuels. Potential sources of CO in the home include natural gas or propane furnaces or hot water heaters, gas fireplaces, wood stoves or automobile exhaust fumes seeping in from a garage.

Carbon Monoxide detectors function similar to smoke alarms. If CO levels are present in your home, the detector will emit a sharp beeping sound to alert you to the danger. Detectors require regular maintenance just like a smoke detector: make sure batteries are replaced on a regular basis, test the detector as recommended and replace the detector as recommended. Follow all instructions on where to hang the detector.



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Wellness Center, and the Iowa Western Community College building. Funds are reinvested back into the community and for the betterment of Harlan and not shareholders that don't live here. Over the years, money from the operation of a local utility has been transferred to the City general fund thereby keeping tax rates low. Investment in a community is not always about money. Part of the driving philosophy of a local utility is to act in the best interest of the community both short and long term. The decision of the then sitting Board to buy into the Louisa Generation Station decades ago has probably saved HMU customers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars in power costs over the years. Citizens voting to establish the gas utility in the 50's and rebuffing an outside entity's attempt to seize control of the gas franchise in Harlan has, likely, saved HMU customers almost as much in the cost of natural gas. These are real dollars saved and retained in Harlan simply by having a local electric and gas utility looking out for the best interest of Harlan.

Weeks like Public Power Week and Public Natural Gas week may seem simply symbolic and celebratory but there are real and tangible benefits to communities owning and operating public utilities. Public utilities like HMU offer a community benefits no other utility provider can offer.