



Winter in Iowa

by Ken Weber, CEO

With the colder temperatures and winter's dreary days, the groundhog sometimes succeeds in providing a little comic relief to our longing for spring's arrival.

Now that the Super Bowl has been played, we look forward next to the State Wrestling Tournament, then State Basketball Tournaments (Girls and Boys), with March Madness not far behind. And suddenly, the next thing we realize we are into April with spring blossoming around us.

This time of year, we reflect on what we have completed and contemplate what remains to be done. We have finished preparation of our fiscal year 2019-2020 budget. All things considered, we don't anticipate any real change in utility revenues but always have to deal with increasing expenses, projected to be 2.3% adjusted for inflation. We are preparing for the completion of our fiber optics buildout in the downtown area, continuing the conversion of our valued customers to HMU's new fiber network, continuing work on our electric underground conversion project and finalizing plans for the pretreatment units at the water plant. We have accomplished much but there remains much more to do.

Over these last several years, we have diligently worked to upgrade the various infrastructures of your HMU utilities. This effort will continue as we plan for the future of our gas and water distribution systems. Nothing lasts forever and ongoing planned maintenance is key to prolonging the life and residual value of these significant investments. Nothing comes cheap, but we make every effort to insure we have reliable systems to meet our customers' energy, water and communications demands both now and long into the future.

Stay warm, stay safe and remember we are here whenever you may need our services.



This winter reinforces that a personal long term strategy is needed to help keep down heating bills. Some things to consider:

- Have your furnace, including furnace filters, serviced on a regular basis. This helps keep them efficient and safe.
- Install the most efficient gas furnace you can. Highly efficient furnaces maximize the heating potential of gas. Rebates are available for 95% and 96% efficient furnaces.
- Take the time in the Fall to winterize. Check doors and windows for leaks. Simply adjusting or replacing weather stripping around doors and windows takes little time or money but pays dividends in January. Seal cracks that allow cold air in.
- Set your own personal home energy policy. Who controls the thermostat? At what temperature will it be set? Will you allow space heaters or encourage money saving sweaters instead?
- Install and use a programmable thermostat. Set the temperatures to fit your lifestyle.
- Insulate attics and walls as much as possible to keep warm air in. Rebates are available for installing insulation.

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! Gas Connector Safety

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances to gas sources. Older gas connectors made of uncoated brass are susceptible to cracking, breaking and deterioration due to moving, bending, corrosion or the way they were made. The connectors have a flaw in how the tubing was joined to the end pieces. Over time, the end pieces can separate and cause a gas leak, which could lead to property damage or injury if not replaced immediately.

To our knowledge, these brass connectors have not been manufactured for over 25 years, but many are still in use. Not all uncoated brass connectors have this flaw, but all should be inspected by a professional and replaced with stainless steel connectors. Gas appliances in your home that should be checked include: range, oven or cook top, clothes dryer, hot water heater or auxiliary area heaters.

Do NOT attempt to move the appliance yourself to check the connector. Contact a licensed plumber or qualified professional appliance repair service to inspect and replace connectors if necessary.

If an HMU employee finds a brass flex connector on an appliance in your home, the appliance will be red tagged and shut off at the appliance, if possible, or gas to the home will be shut off until the line is replaced. This is for your safety.

HMU Employees Recognized for Service

On Saturday, January 19, five employees were recognized for their years of employment at HMU during the annual employee dinner. This is an annual recognition to commemorate the work achievements of our dedicated employees.

Those recognized this year were:

25 years

Kenny Holloway - Telecom

10 years

Lela Brown - Customer Service

10 years

Troy Doonan - Gas/Meter

5 years

Patti Burroughs - Customer Service

5 years

Jim Gedwillo - Telecom



L to R: Patti Burroughs, Lela Brown, Kenny Holloway, Troy Doonan, Jim Gedwillo

Important Payment Reminder

When dropping off a payment in person, at our drop box, at Midstates Bank or Shelby County State Bank, always, always, always, enclose your payment stub to ensure your payment is properly credited to your account. If you have multiple accounts, including your stub helps us know to which account we should post the payment. Utility and Telecom service is not billed through the same system so if we have the stub, we'll know where you want us to post your payment.