



JANUARY 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— 2008 Forecast

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom- 2008 Forecast*
- *Digital converter vouchers*
- *Fuel Adjustment charge*

Quick links:

- Harlannet.com-local links and a place to start for HMU web-sites
- Hmu-Harlan.com Information on Electric, Gas and Water. Track your utility use and previous charges on line.
- Har-tel.com Information on telephone, Cable TV and Internet services. Have a question on telecom services? Start here.

In less than a month, our favorite groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, will pop out of his den and give us a weather forecast for the next six weeks. I'm going to try and beat Phil to the punch with some forecasts of my own for 2008.

The stability of electric pricing and delivery will continue to be a major focus. One of my concerns throughout 2007 and into 2008 is what effect the establishment of a new regional electric transmission organization, called MISO, will have on the delivery and pricing of electricity to Harlan. I believe MISO will have an impact on our transmission costs but with many details still undecided, it's hard to predict just how much effect MISO will have.

WAPA, our largest supplier of our wholesale power, has already indicated rates will increase. As part owners of the Louisa Generation station, our costs for maintenance and mandated emission reduction upgrades keeps increas-

ing. When Louisa is on line and generating, we receive power at a greatly reduced rate. When Louisa is off line, our costs increase as we have to purchase power at prevailing market rates. (See related article on back regarding the Fuel Adjustment).

We will make a decision on how to proceed with the next phase of our electric system upgrade. We've seen both the operational and aesthetic benefits to the previous overhead to underground conversion projects and need to continue to modernize the distribution system.

New contracts for natural gas need to be signed. Hmu signed contracts several years ago that provided wholesale natural gas at rates below the prevailing market rates. These lower rates saved Hmu customers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars in heating costs over the life of the contracts.

Those contracts are coming to an end. The price for wholesale natu-

ral gas has nearly doubled in the last four years and I'm concerned any new contracts will be at a significantly higher rate than we've been paying. We will continue to search out contracts that have the lowest possible cost.

You've probably heard by now our plans for a major upgrade in cable TV service. Over the next 5-6 months, we will install new equipment so we can offer expanded digital and HD services. We will also sell video service to Walnut Communications so they can distribute cable TV to their customers. Toward the end of 2008, Walnut Communications will provide us with wholesale Internet and telephone switching services.

We've received a positive reaction to adding high definition signals from broadcast stations to our line up and will continue to add more HD content during 2008.

Next Board meeting- January 24th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Digital converter boxes

Earlier this month, the Federal government began advertising vouchers that can be applied toward the purchase of digital to analog converter boxes. The converter boxes are designed to make sure people who still use an antenna to capture signals from local TV stations and have an analog tuner in their TV will still have service after the conversion in February 2009.

If you receive your TV signal through a cable provider like HMU or through a satellite service you do not need to purchase a converter box. Your provider will make sure you will still receive the station.

If you receive your TV signal through an antenna AND your TV does not have a built in digital tuner, you will need a digital to analog converter box.

If you purchased a TV within the last two years, your set probably has a built in digital tuner. Check your owners manual first before applying for a voucher or purchasing a converter box.

Fuel adjustment rates

The costs to provide electric or gas service fluctuate from month to month. Most of the variable cost for electricity comes from our ownership in the Louisa generation plant. When the cost of coal or plant maintenance goes up, our share of the expenses go up too. When Louisa is on line and generating power, we sell our unused power on the open market. This generates revenue for HMU and helps us meet our obligations without raising your rate.

When the Louisa plant goes off line and we don't have access to power we own, we meet customer demand by buying electricity on the open market. Buying power on the market costs more than using the power we own through Louisa. These variable costs are reflected in the monthly Fuel Adjustment charge (listed as Fuel Adj on your bill) and are based on the amount of electricity you use.

The gas fuel adjustment can change depending on the amount and cost of

gas we need to buy on the daily market. If the winter weather is mild and costs are low, the gas fuel adjustment is low. If the demand goes up due to cold weather and the market price is high, the fuel adjustment goes up.

This month's electric fuel adjustment charge is higher due to the Louisa power plant being down for repairs and HMU having to purchase power on the open market. As the plant is brought back on line, we expect the cost of electricity, and therefore the Fuel Adjustment, to decrease.

An increase in the gas fuel adjustment is not unusual in this time of year as use and the cost for gas go up. We use a five week rolling average in order to lessen the impact of the gas fuel adjustment. This spreads out a higher price of gas in any one week over time.

If you have any questions on the Fuel Adjustment Charge, please call us at 755-5182



FEBRUARY 2008

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom*
- *Employee Recognition*
- *Gas Safety - check your connectors*
- *Winter utility tips*

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Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Neo-Luddite*

My name is Tom and I'm a neo-Luddite.

Originally, Luddites were opposed to advances in science and technology during the Industrial Revolution. In the loose use of the term today, and one that applies to me, a neo-Luddite dislikes or has difficulty adapting to or using new technology. It's not that I dislike technology per se, it's that the rate of change in technology can become overwhelming. It can be difficult to make executive decisions knowing equipment or systems purchased today will probably be outdated within 18-24 months and require replacement.

Every week, I read industry newsletters and magazines that include articles on emerging utility technology. The movement toward 'green' electric generation has spurred advances in renewable energy sources. The current offerings in wind turbines and solar panels are more advanced than before. I'm sure the next editions will be even

better.

New technology is applied to reduce green house gasses and potentially harmful emissions from coal fired plants. The construction of the bag house scrubber at the Louisa generation station is one example of how technology is applied.

SCADA monitoring allows us to source outages quicker and restore power in less time. Real time load management means we operate our diesel generators efficiently.

Technology based energy efficiency programs, such as cycling air conditioners during summer peaks from a remote location as a way to manage a system's electric load, are becoming prevalent.

Some utilities use automatic meter reading via a hard wire connection back to a main office or wireless readings to replace hearty and familiar meter readers on foot. This allows for real time energy metering and another way to manage the

system electric load.

Advances in technology are most visible in telecommunications. When the HMU telecom system was installed in the mid '90's, we projected 100 cable modem Internet users. Today, we serve over eight times that amount plus institutions such as the City, School, County Courthouse and private companies with a direct fiber connection.

New technology allows us to work with Walnut Communications and provide better and advanced cable TV, Internet and telephone service. Services that were only a dream a generation ago are possible due to thin strands of fiber optic cable. Equipment that once occupied rooms is condensed to a single computer tower.

Technology allows us to increase efficiency in providing utility service and enhanced telecom products. Sometimes, I just wish it would slow down a little and let me catch my breath.

Next Board meeting- February 28th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Employee recognition

Six Harlan Municipal Utilities employees received recognition for their years of service to HMU and its customers at the HMU Employee Recognition Banquet held Saturday, January 19th.

Receiving awards and their years of service:

- Al Ickes; 25 years
- Charlie Conrad; 20 years
- Ron Block; 15 years
- Sue Anderson and Darwin Gessert for 10 years
- Jenney Kelly for five years

Quick and Easy

Auto Pay is a free and convenient payment service available to HMU customers.

Payments are deducted from your checking or savings account meaning you don't have to write a check, you'll never miss a payment and you still receive a monthly statement to review. Sign up at HMU or online at www.HMU-Harlan.com

Gas Safety— *check your connections*

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances in your home to gas sources.

Certain older gas connectors made of uncoated brass (example pictured) 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 about 20 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 your connectors and replace them if necessary.



Winter utility tips

- Please do not pile snow on or near gas meters, electric or telecom boxes.
- Watch for boxes, gas meters and fire hydrants when using bobcats, tractors or snow plows.
- Please keep areas around meters clear for HMU meter readers.
- Keep sidewalks and paths near HMU equipment clear of ice and snow. We may need quick access to equipment.
- Please report any damaged utility boxes, meters or equipment.
- Please report any tree limbs that may come in contact with power or telecom lines.
- Allow warm air to circulate around water meters.



MARCH 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Serious Business*

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom Serious Business*
- *Underground pipe notice*
- *Budget Billing and Auto Pay*

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Devoted readers of this column notice I occasionally use a song title as a theme. This month I'll borrow a line from John Mellencamp and talk about energy policy.

In the November newsletter, I wrote about a Federal energy policy. The Iowa legislature is also taking a look at state policies. Here's a sample of some of the proposed bills:

SF 2192 addresses greenhouse gas emissions by making the goal for greenhouse gas emission reductions 90%, compared to the 2005 baseline, in 2050. The bill also directs the DNR to conduct a feasibility study of storing carbon dioxide in geological formations in the state.

SF 2226 creates a five year moratorium on new coal-fired power plants. The bill provides an exception for plants that can show a plan to sequester 90% of carbon dioxide emissions and for plants that generate less than 10 mega Watts.

HF 2336 directs the office of energy independence to conduct a study assessing the feasibility of establishing one or more low head hydropower energy production facilities.

HF 2305 amends the definition of alternative energy to include nuclear energy. This change relates only to the Office of Energy

Independence and their formulation of energy independence initiatives.

SF 2210 allows small businesses income tax credits for the installation of alternative energy systems on their property. **HF 2352** creates a property tax credit for buildings that qualify as green apartments or green rentals.

Energy policy at both the state and federal level is becoming serious business. It appears our representatives are taking a long look at how to cut greenhouse gas emissions and slow the growth of energy use while acknowledging there must be new sources of green generation to power current and future consumption.

Two of these bills are designed to lower plant emissions. Two address increasing electric generation and two offer incentives to reduce energy use. Regrettably, none of them are designed to lower the cost to heat and cool your home.

One of the fastest rising costs for us, behind the price of electricity or natural gas, is the increasing cost to meet regulatory and compliance mandates. Ultimately, this cost is passed on to consumers. While the initiatives are necessary and noble in their intent, they do in-

crease the cost of service. Electricity from alternative sources is certainly cleaner and greener than traditional sources but it does come at a higher price.

What can you, the consumer, and we, Hmu, as the provider do together on the local level to make our own energy use a matter of serious business?

- We will revise, expand and enhance our rebate programs to offer you more incentive to purchase and use energy efficient lighting, appliances and measures. The more people that participate in the programs, the greater the long term effect on all of us. (As a side note, the 2007 compact florescent bulb (CFL) promotion was a great success. The amount of energy use avoided by using CFLs was four times as much as it was in 2006)
- We will offer more energy saving tips and hints via mail, this news letter and our website.
- Participate in our rebate program.
- Implement the tips and hints.

Together we can make an energy policy for Harlan ...serious business.

Next Board meetings- March 13th and 27th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Underground Gas Pipe Maintenance Notice

If you have a natural gas line that runs underground, for example to a heater in a garage, this line is after the gas meter. Here is a safety recommendation:

We operate our gas system with an emphasis on safety. We're required to design, operate and maintain our underground natural gas pipeline system according to prescribed federal standards.

HMU does not maintain any gas piping that occurs AFTER the meter. This is the responsibility of the customer who owns the pipe. If a buried pipe is not properly maintained it may be subject to corrosion or leakage.

To ensure continued safe and reliable operation, these lines should be checked periodically. You, or the building owner if you live in rental property, are advised to contact a licensed plumber or heating contractor to assist you in locating and inspecting your buried gas lines. If any unsafe condition is discovered, repairs should be made immediately.

If we can answer any questions, please call us at 755-5182. As always, call Iowa One Call at 811 or 1-800-292-8989 before digging!



Budget Billing

Now is the time to sign up.

Avoid the wide swings in utility payments by signing up for Budget Billing. Budget Billing makes it easier to budget monthly payments and helps keep you from falling behind in your utility payments and risking shutoff. Our Budget Billing program runs from April through March of each year. If you are interested in leveling out your utility payments over 12 months to avoid seasonal heating and cooling peaks, April is the best time to enroll. Billing history of at least one year at your current residence and a current account is required.

New Budget Billing payments will be calculated in April for bills due in May. Current Budget Billing customers should review your account balance and determine if your budget payments are going to cover your actual usage for the last year.

The "Account Balance" shown on your statement is the amount you owe before payment of this bill. If it is a negative amount (CR), you have a credit balance and have paid in more than you have actually used. If it is a positive amount, this is the amount you still owe.

You may use this month to use up any excess credit or to "settle up" your remaining balance by making an additional payment. Any positive or negative balance remaining when we recalculate will be rolled over into your new payment.

Auto Pay

Auto pay makes sure your utility bills are paid *in full and on time*.

- No need to write a check! - You authorize your financial institution to automatically deduct the amount of your bill from your checking or savings accounts.
- Eliminates Late Payment Penalties-Late payment penalties are a thing of the past because Auto-Pay remembers for you. There's no worry about a payment being lost in the mail and bills are paid on time when you're on vacation.
- Monthly Statement Approval-You'll still receive a monthly statement for review and approval. This allows you adequate time to inspect all charges and report any concerns before the charges are paid. A record of the Auto-Pay payment is included as part of your monthly statement from your financial institution.
- Auto-Pay is a free service.

IMPORTANT: If you are on Auto-Pay and wish to pay more or less than your regular budget amount this month, you must notify our office before your due date.

Please call our office at 755-5182 if you would like to discuss your account balance or sign up for Budget Billing or Auto Pay.



APRIL 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Spring has sprung*

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom—Spring has Sprung*
- *Appliance Rebates*
- *Project Share*
- *Iowa One Call*

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I like Spring. Daylight comes earlier and sticks around later each day. Temperatures are rising. Trees bud and flowers poke out of the ground. Spring also brings a new and fresh look at the world and there is a lot of 'new' at HMU this Spring.

When you visit our office you'll see an open look to our reception area and new paint.

If you watched the March 27th HMU Board meeting on HMU cable TV channel 26, you saw an exceptional presentation on our current water plant and recommendations for the future. The newest section of the current plant is over 30 years old and was an upgrade to the original plant built in the 1930s. Our method of water treatment was new technology at the time the plant was built but is rarely used today. Operating costs for this treatment method are escalating and the market for treatment by-

products is diminishing.

The building is starting to degrade due to the high humidity inherent in a water treatment plant and, as we saw in '93 and were reminded of in May of '07, the water plant can be impacted by flooding along the Nishnabotna river.

The Board authorized me to take the next step in our long term strategic plan to replace the water plant. We will begin initial engineering and financial studies to determine the best site, treatment method and most efficient construction costs. Initial estimates indicate a new plant would not be in service until 2011. It is likely the new plant would be built on the piece of property we purchased along Southwest Avenue just south of Chatburn Avenue.

The Board has also made a commitment to continue the electric conversion process and upgrade system capacity

to meet new load while moving overhead distribution lines underground. The next area of the conversion is generally described as Cyclone Avenue west of 10th Street to 19th, south to Chatburn Avenue and then east toward the HMU office. We'll solicit project bids in 2008.

We're also taking steps to upgrade our Cable TV headend so we can offer numerous HD and digital channels. The new fiber line connecting HMU and Walnut Communications in Walnut is being installed. The fiber allows us to supply Walnut Communications with wholesale cable television service and Walnut the ability to provide us with telephone switching services and wholesale Internet.

Annual Municipal
Celebration is
June 18th at
Vet's Auditorium

Next Board meeting -April 24th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Rebates available

HMU offers rebates as an incentive to purchase certain energy saving appliances.

The minimum Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER) needed to qualify for a central air or ground source cooling unit rebate is 14.

Window A/C units, refrigerators and washing machines with the Energy Star label qualify for a rebate.

Always look for the Energy Star logo when shopping for a new appliance.

When it's time to submit a rebate request, pick up a form at HMU or download one from HMU-Harlan.com and look under Energy Rebates, attach your original Energy Guide and a copy of the invoice. Send the information to HMU. Checks usually arrive within 3-4 weeks.

Current Rebates:

Qualifying washers, refrigerators and window units: \$50

Central A/C or air source heat pump cooling cycle:

14 SEER: \$100/ton

15+ SEER: \$200/ton

Programmable Thermostat: 1/2 of purchase price up to \$25.

Project Share

Project Share is a way to assist needy households in paying energy bills and make home improvements to reduce future energy bills.

You can help by adding a regular Project Share contribution to your monthly utility payment or by making a direct donation to Project Share. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible, and tax-deductible. People qualifying for help will be carefully identified by an area social service agency and the entire program is overseen by a local committee.

To participate, just fill out this coupon and return it to the Harlan Municipal Utilities, 405 Chatburn Ave., Harlan, IA 51537.

Dear Harlan Municipal Utilities,
I'd like to help a neighbor in need with a contribution to Project Share.

Name _____

Address _____

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

I have enclosed a one time \$_____ donation to Project Share.

Call before you dig

Many electric, gas, water and telecommunications lines are buried. You can be severely injured or killed if you strike an underground line while tilling, digging, or installing posts.

Call Iowa One Call

1-800-292-8989 or 811

before you dig!

Iowa One Call must be notified anytime an excavation or digging is made in excess of 12 inches.

- Call Iowa One Call toll free
- They will notify all affected utilities
- A trained locator will mark all underground utility lines

Calls to Iowa One Call are monitored. An immediate response can be coordinated for emergency requests.

Non-emergencies require a minimum 48 hour prior notification.

Iowa One Call is a free service.

Plan Ahead - Be Safe!



MAY 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Earning credit*

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom— Earning Credit*
- *Energy Saving tips*
- *Water Quality report*

Quick links:

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If you watched the replay of the April 24th HMU Board meeting on HMU cable channel 26, you probably saw a presentation by Doug Hammer, HMU's Director of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations, on the rise of energy costs.

What Doug's presentation illustrated was the increase in the cost of wholesale electricity over the last couple of years and the increase in month to month variable costs. Some of the variable costs we incur include transmission (the cost to bring the power to Harlan), costs we incur as partial owners of the Louisa Generation Station (Louisa) in Muscatine, (for example the increase in the cost of coal) and the cost of buying replacement power when

Louisa is off line for repairs or construction.

Variable costs are reflected by an electric purchase adjustment on your bill. The Purchase Adjustments are usually positive meaning you pay the additional costs based on the amount of electricity used.

HMU owns 0.8% of the Louisa plant meaning we own and control about 6 megawatts of the electricity generated. In 2004, we signed an agreement with Mid-American Energy (MEC), the majority owners and administrators of Louisa, to sell our unused power. If HMU customers do not need the energy here in Harlan, MEC sells it for us on the open market at prevailing rates and HMU reaps the benefit

from the sale.

During the month of April, MEC sold some of our unused electricity that generated over \$110,000 in revenue to HMU.

At the April 24th Board meeting, I recommended, and the Board agreed, this revenue should be applied toward your electric purchase adjustment.

Therefore, please notice that you have received a credit of \$0.0056 per kilowatt hour used on your electric purchase adjustment this month.

(Talkin' with Tom
Continued on back)

Next Board meeting – June 12, 2008

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Talking with Tom—con't

We're gearing up for our annual Municipal Celebration on June 18th and I'd like to personally invite you to attend. If you are planning on joining us this year, please fill out the enclosed RSVP post card and drop it in the mail. I'm looking forward to seeing you!

In closing, I encourage you to participate in Memorial Day activities. Whether you attend a formal service like the one at the Harlan cemetery, take the time to hang a flag on your home or simply pause for a moment for thoughtful reflection on the significance of the holiday, make an effort to honor and remember our country's service people who have given their lives while serving.



Energy Saving Tips

Hot weather is on the way. Here are some energy saving tips.

- Now is the time to have a qualified service person check your central air system, including filters and ducts, to ensure efficient operation.
- During the cooling season, check and clean filters regularly. Systems with clean filters use less electricity.
- Set air conditioners at 78 degrees unless you have an elderly or young family member that needs it cooler for health reasons.
- Draw shades and blinds.
- Use fans to circulate air.
- Turn off lights and appliances not in use.
- Install a high efficiency A/C unit. HMU offers rebates for energy saving systems. See us for details.

Water Quality report available

HMU completed its annual Consumer Confidence Water report for calendar year 2007. This required report is designed to be a plain language explanation of water quality and relevant health concerns.

The complete report was published in the May 6th and 9th Harlan newspapers. Copies are also posted around town at large employers and the school. Copies are also available at the HMU office at 405 Chatburn. You can read the report on-line at HMU-Harlan.com



In honor of Memorial Day,
HMU office closed
Monday, May 26th.

Emergency calls taken at
755-5182



JUNE 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood– *Singin' in The Rain*

Special points of interest:

- *Mr. Tom's Neighborhood– Singin' in the Rain*
- *Telephone Dispute Resolution*
- *Gas Leak Survey*

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**Next
HMU
Board
meeting-
June
26th**

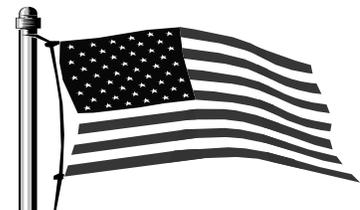
**SUMMER
FUN!**

Join us from 5-7PM at Veterans Auditorium Tuesday, June 19th for our annual Municipal Celebration.

Dispute Resolution Notice-Telephone service

If you have any dispute or complaint regarding your HMU local telephone service, please contact us for assistance. Normal office hours are 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Or you may write to us or stop at 405 Chatburn, Harlan, Iowa 51537. We can be reached by calling 755-5182.

If HMU does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines Iowa 50319-0069 (515)281-3839 or call toll free (877) 565-4450



HMU office closed
Friday July 4th.
Emergency Calls taken
at 755-5182



JULY 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Still growing*

Special points of interest:

- *Mr. Tom's Neighborhood*
- *Utility Dispute Resolution*
- *Project Share*
- *Energy Saving tips*

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Once again, thank you for the tremendous turnout at our annual Municipal Celebration held June 18th. Each year, we strive to make the Celebration better. We estimate there were over 700 HMU customers in attendance making this one the largest ever.

I like seeing some familiar faces and talking with customers I haven't had the opportunity to meet. On behalf of the Board and Employees, thank you for attending.

My special thanks go to the HMU employees for their willingness to do what is necessary to make the celebration successful. It takes a lot of planning and coordination before the event. The day of the celebration is always a little hectic but somehow the details fall

into place and they manage to pull it off before the doors open. We're already planning for the 2009 edition.

Providing an abundant supply of clean water is one of our highest priorities. The spring floods in northern and eastern Iowa showed that water plants next to rivers are vulnerable to flooding. Tens of thousands of customers were without water in various parts of Iowa after water plants had to be shut down.

For several reasons, including the potential of flooding, the age of the current plant and outdated treatment technology, I am strongly recommending HMU build a new water treatment plant out of the flood plain. We've begun the initial steps with preliminary engineering

and looking at financing options.

Please watch HGTV channel 25 for my presentation to the Board on a new water plant. A copy of the presentation will also be posted on HMU-Harlan.com sometime during July.

Our launch of digital and HD service on the HMU Cable system is proceeding. We handed out some information on the new channels and pricing at the Municipal Celebration. Watch for more information later this month.



Sign up for telephone, Cable TV and Internet from HMU

120 minutes per month in free domestic long distance

Community and local government channels

Surf the web faster with HMU Internet

HMU Board meeting- July 24th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Project Share

Project Share is a plan created by HMU to assist needy households in paying energy bills and make home improvements to reduce future energy bills.

You can help by adding a regular Project Share contribution to your monthly utility payment or by making a direct donation to Project Share. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible, and tax-deductible. People qualifying for help will be carefully identified by an area social service agency and the entire program is overseen by a local committee.

Fill out this coupon and return it to the Harlan Municipal Utilities, 405 Chatburn Ave., Harlan, IA 51537 to participate.

Dear Harlan Municipal Utilities,
I'd like to help a neighbor in need with a contribution to Project Share.

Name

Address

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

I have enclosed a one time \$_____ donation to Project Share.

Dispute Resolution Notice

The Harlan Municipal Utilities will always do its best to see that your utility service works efficiently at all times. However, if you do have questions or complaints about the service, you can contact an HMU utility representative at the following address and phone number:

**Harlan Municipal Utilities
405 Chatburn Avenue
Harlan, IA 51537
(712) 755-5182**

HMU representatives are available Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety, or renewable energy, and we do not resolve it, you may request assistance from:

**Utilities Division
Department of Commerce
Lucas State Office
Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 281-5979**

Energy Saving Tips

Here are some easy energy saving tips for hot weather

- Set air conditioners at 78 degrees unless you have an elderly or young family member that needs it cooler for health reasons.
- Draw shades and blinds.
- Check and change you're A/C system filters regularly. Systems with clean filters use less electricity.
- Have a qualified service person check your central air system, including filters and ducts, to ensure efficient operation.
- Use fans to circulate air.
- Turn off lights and appliances not in use.
- Install a high efficiency A/C unit. HMU offers rebates for energy saving systems. See us for details.



AUGUST 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *Seeing is believing*

Special points of interest:

- *Mr. Tom's Neighborhood—Seeing is Believing*
- *Digital and HD service coming in September*
- *IA Atty. General warns of scam*

Quick links:

- Harlanet.com-local links and a place to start for HMU websites
- Hmu-Harlan.com Information on Electric, Gas and Water. Track your utility use and previous charges on line.
- Har-tel.com Information on telephone, Cable TV and Internet services. Have a question on telecom services? Start here.

I was in the back yard sitting on the swing that my father-in-law had made for us so many years ago. It has survived multiple moves around the state of Illinois, to Texas, and to Harlan, Iowa. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a flash of grayish-brown. At first I thought my eyes had deceived me. After all, I am quickly approaching age 63, and things I took for granted during my youth seem to be failing me in bunches now. Perhaps it was our cat, but I looked toward the deck, and there she lay in slumber.

This has been a year where one has to "see to believe" what has taken place. For example, take the Chicago Cubs (please). Not only have they avoided their annual June Swoon, they are presently 5 games up in the National League Central.

Then there is the weather. Cooler than normal temperatures, tornados in record setting numbers, drought in the southeast, and flood-

ing of historic proportions in the Heartland.

While all this was occurring, we in Harlan have been spared the damage experienced by our fellow Iowans in cities like Waverly, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and Parkersburg. Blessed is the word that comes to mind.

As your municipal utility we are cognizant that we may one day experience a disaster. That is why we have a disaster recovery plan in place, and participate in the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities Mutual Aid Program. Also, one of the reasons we are converting our overhead electric distribution system to underground is to reduce the likelihood of significant damage from storms of all types. We also have two diesel generators in place to cushion any major interruptions. Preparation for the unthinkable also plays a part in our building a new water treatment plant and relocating it away from the West Nishnabotna River. And, why we are considering relocating our of-

fice facility farther to the west of its present location.

One only has to look at the pictures of the 8 foot water line in the Alliant Energy offices in downtown Cedar Rapids to see the damage that can occur to office structure, furniture, records, and all the computer hardware. One might think that we are protected from flooding because our facilities are behind a levee. But, this year's flooding has proven that levees are susceptible to failure, and overflow.

I encourage you to watch Hmu Channel 26 at 4 P.M. the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month to witness our efforts to prepare for the unexpected, and the future of our community. After all, "Seeing is Believing."

Oh, and that grayish-brown flash mentioned in the first paragraph. It was a marmot, no doubt feasting on the abundant supply of mulberries in our lawn. Perhaps it was preparing for a possible disaster; the coming of winter.

HMU Board meeting- August 14th and 28th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
Telephone: 755-5182
Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

New Digital and HD Service scheduled for September

Enhanced digital and HDTV are coming to the HMU cable system in September.

As we write this newsletter at the beginning of August, we're still waiting on the arrival of the new equipment necessary for additional services. The new equipment is scheduled to arrive toward the end of August. Our target date for new services to you is the week of September 8th. Watch for updates through KNOD, the Harlan newspaper, and on HMU Channel 12.

Coming soon:

- ⇒ 8 new networks on Expanded Basic cable
- ⇒ 30 new networks on the Digital Basic tier
- ⇒ 19 new HD networks
- ⇒ 5 new HD premium networks
- ⇒ 33 new premium movie channels
- ⇒ 10 new PPV channels
- ⇒ 40 new music channels

You'll notice some changes during the conversion. These changes will appear toward the end of August or the beginning of September.

- The current interactive program guide will go away only to be replaced by a new guide once the new equipment is installed.
- PPV movies will not be

available for about a week as we add ten new PPV networks.

- Some networks on Expanded Basic will change their position in the line up. No channels have been dropped but some have moved. Pick up a current channel line up at our office or perform a new channel scan so you can see all of the new networks.
- The Premium Movie channels (HBO, Cinemax, Showtime, Encore or Starz) are moving from the analog system to the digital system so we can offer Premium Channel customers a greater selection of channels and a better value. **If you have Premium channels and want to continue receiving them, you must contact us about getting a new set top box or cable card.**

Iowa Attorney General warns of utility-related scam

The Iowa Attorney General's Office is warning of a scam involving people pretending to be from a utility and demanding money from customers.

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller said the procedure in question typically involves a telephone call to a residence, where the caller falsely claims to be a representative of the customer's utility provider and demands an

immediate payment in order to avoid service being disconnected.

"It appears to be a scam to get your credit card number," Miller stated, pointing out to the public that "our utilities never operate like that," and consumers should not "be buffaloes into giving out a credit card account number, bank account number, Social Security number, or other personal information." He said the scam appears to be hitting all over Iowa. Some residents have reported making "payments" of anywhere from \$20 to \$200, only to later learn they had been scammed.

Miller said his office thinks the calls are originating from out of state, and possibly from a foreign country. He said in some cases, the caller identification on individuals' phones have displayed the name of the utility when the call came in. He said that the caller identification feature on phones can be "spoofed," or falsified, and so is not always reliable.

Miller is urging Iowans who receive such calls to immediately hang up and contact their local utility provider to question the legitimacy of the call. He emphasized that utilities do not ask for such personal information over the phone.

If you receive a call demanding payment over the phone, call us at 755-5182 or the Iowa Attorney General's Office immediately. The Attorney Gen-



SEPTEMBER 2008

Special points of interest:

- *Natural Gas Safety*
- *Project Share*
- *Cable TV conversion update*

Quick links:

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Natural Gas Safety

Operating a safe gas system is our highest priority. Enclosed with the newsletter is a brochure on natural gas safety. Please take the time to read it and share it with family members.

- ALWAYS call before you dig to make sure there are no gas lines in the way.
- Insist others performing work for you call before they dig.
- Learn how to recognize a gas leak and what to do should one occur.
- Do not cover or obstruct gas meters. Make sure you can get to a meter if necessary.
- Keep our number by your phone and call us anytime of day if you suspect a gas leak.



Project Share



Project Share assists needy households in paying energy bills and making home improvements to reduce future energy bills.

You may add a regular Project Share contribution to your monthly utility payment or by making a direct donation. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible, and tax-deductible. People qualifying for help are carefully identified by an area social service agency and the entire program overseen by a local committee. Contact HMU for more details.

Dear Harlan Municipal Utilities,
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 bill.

I have enclosed a one time \$_____ donation to Project Share.

Watch replays of HCHS football and volleyball. Now on Channel 23

HMU Board meeting- September 11th and 25th

405 Chatburn
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Harlan's Premier Provider

Digital and HD Service update

As this newsletter goes to print on September 9th, numerous changes are happening daily with HMU Cable TV. We are installing the new equipment in our offices, adding new channels to Expanded Basic and getting ready to add an entirely new optional tier of programming and a variety of new services.

First, a reminder that all the new digital and HD services are optional and in addition to any of the current HMU stand alone or package services. Customers have asked for, and we want to offer, more variety and choices in programming. This means more flexibility in what you watch, when you watch and how you watch HMU Cable TV.

If you are happy with your current Basic or Expanded Basic service and don't want to add any more services...that's great! We think that is a good choice. However, if you would like to add HD programming to go with that new HDTV, take a look at our digital and HD tier and the new premium HD tier too. If you're a movie buff, take a look at our new premium movie channel line up. HBO, Cinemax, Starz and Showtime are now available in HD too.

If you have removed the old set top box and are now plugging the cable directly into the back of your TV:

⇒ Be sure to run a new channel scan on your TV. Most TVs built since the 80's have this function. Please read the instructions in the manual that came with the TV or contact a qualified TV service person for assistance if necessary. Run-

ning a channel scan will ensure you can watch all channels in the Expanded Basic line up, including the new channels.

- ⇒ You will now use the remote that came with your TV or a universal remote. Please read and follow the instructions that came with the remote on how to program it for your TV.
- ⇒ The new scrolling program guide is on channel 2. You may still have an interactive guide, one you can search to see what is on, with Expanded Basic by renting a set top box and the Digital Gateway service. The Digital Gateway also gives you 40 music channels and access to PPV movies and events.

If you have a premium channel such as HBO, Cinemax, Encore, Starz or Showtime please contact us about the new multiplex services. We've upgraded the movie channel packages to give you a better bang for your movie watching buck.

Eight new channels on Expanded Basic:

Channel 33 – National Geographic brings adventure, exploration, culture and natural science to life, with passionate storytelling, spectacular imagery and expert eyewitness accounts. The National Geographic Channel is the best place for programs with environmental, educational and entertaining twists.

Channel 45 - MSNBC. Breaking news

coverage and a full schedule of news, talk and information from NBC News.

Channel 58—Hallmark Movie. Movies and mini-series from Hallmark Entertainment, Inc., one of the most trusted and respected providers of wholesome family entertainment.

Channel 62— The Travel Channel. Travel ideas and in-depth programming about the people, places and cultures of our world.

Channel 64—Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) offers messages of inspiration, comfort, hope and faith in every program.

Channel 66—RFD proudly serves the needs and interests of rural America, with traditional, family-oriented television programming. Now the home of Don Imus and Crook & Chase.

Channel 70—Bravo offers innovative arts and entertainment programming with a unique point of view. Features original series, feature films, theater, dance, music and documentaries.

Channel 72—CSPAN-2. Programming includes live coverage of the US Senate, BOOK TV – 48 hours of book programming each weekend including children's books, history, biography, business of books and encore Booknotes.

Call us or stop by for more information on new cable services.





OCTOBER 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— *New CATV Services*

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom—New CATV Services*
- *Energy Saving Tips*
- *CFL Rebates available*

Quick links:

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After much effort by HMU employees over the past year, our new digital and High Definition (HD) services are now available on HMU cable.

So now that the contracts are signed, the equipment installed, and services are flowing to the home, what does this mean to HMU and you the customer?

- More efficient utilization of the HMU telecom infrastructure. We had the ability to provide more services through the current HFC infrastructure and maximize the system capability.
- Greater selection in entertainment choices. How each of us use our TV as an entertainment or information device has changed. As little as 30 years ago, before widespread cable TV, all of us watched a minimal number of broadcast networks captured

by an antenna. Programs catered to a wide audience and age group. Today, there are hundreds of channels available and all targeted to a certain segment of the viewing population. The expansion of channels gives you more choices in what to watch no matter your interest or lifestyle.

- A new revenue stream by providing wholesale video service to Walnut Communications. HMU has explored the concept of selling video services to surrounding towns since the Telecommunications Utility was founded. Reselling services provides additional revenue to maintain and upgrade services instead of relying solely on consumer rates. (As an additional benefit, we lowered our costs for telephone service by using Walnut Com-

munications as our telephone switch provider.)

We're doing more with what we already have as we offer more choices and work toward keeping costs as low as possible. To me, this is the essence of what a municipal utility is all about whether we provide electricity, gas, water or telecom services.

Office closed November 11-Veteran's Day

HMU office closed Tuesday, November 11th. Join us as we honor America's Veterans. Emergency Calls taken at 755-5182

Next Board meeting – November 13th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
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HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Energy Savings

October is the time to start thinking about cutting your winter heating costs.

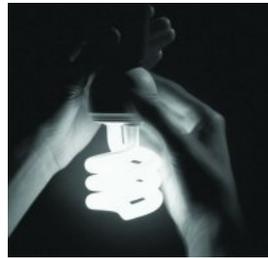
By using a few inexpensive energy-efficient measures, you can reduce your energy bills by 10% to 50%.

- Install a programmable thermostat. They also qualify for a rebate from HMU.
- Replace furnace filters now and check them throughout the winter.
- Check windows and doors for air leaks. Cover windows with film insulation if necessary.
- Schedule a furnace inspection to make sure it's operating safe and efficient.

Installing energy efficient furnaces, windows, doors and insulation costs more but saves more over the long term. A new energy efficient gas furnace or boiler may qualify for a rebate from HMU.

CFL rebate program

Purchase energy saving compact florescent lights at Do It Best Hardware, Bomgaards, Fareway or Hy-Vee while supplies last and receive an in store \$2 per bulb rebate. See the enclosed flyer for details.



Harvest Fest Medallion hunt

HMU Cable TV will again sponsor the Harvest Fest medallion hunt .

A 2 inch medallion will be hidden somewhere on public property within Harlan. Clues to its whereabouts will be aired on HMU Channel 12. A new clue will be available each day at noon beginning October 20th. The medallion will be hidden in plain view meaning seekers will not have to move anything or dig to find it. Find the medallion, return it to HMU and receive a \$100 finder fee.

Call before you dig

Many electric, gas, water and telecommunications lines are buried. You can be severely injured or killed if you strike an underground line while tilling, digging, or installing posts.

Call Iowa One Call

1-800-292-8989 or 811

before you dig!

Iowa One Call must be notified anytime an excavation or digging is made in excess of 12 inches.

- Call Iowa One Call toll free
- They will notify all affected utilities
- A trained locator will mark all underground utility lines

Calls to Iowa One Call are monitored. An immediate response can be coordinated for emergency requests.

Non-emergencies require a minimum 48 hour prior notification.

Iowa One Call is a free service.

Plan Ahead - Be Safe!



NOVEMBER 2008

Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— 2008 Audit report

Special points of interest:

- *Talkin' with Tom: 2008 Audit report.*
- *Lighting Rebates available*
- *Energy Efficient Rebates Available*

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As CEO and the person assigned by the Trustees to manage daily operations, I'm responsible for its financial stability. It is my duty to you, our owners and rate payers, to make sure you receive the greatest value possible from your Utility, to maximize assets and to position HMU for future growth and services.

Municipal Utilities, unlike investor owned companies, are not chartered to earn a profit. However, it is necessary to operate at more than a break even proposition in order to plan for the future, preserve current infrastructure, upgrade services as needed and maintain high bond ratings. I'm pleased to report our annual audit shows HMU continues to be in a strong financial position resulting in real benefits to our customers.

Across all divisions (Electric, gas, water and telecommu-

nications) our total operating revenues increased 5.43%. This is \$661,558 more than last fiscal year. A large part of this is due to the sale of power generated at the Louisa Generation station we own and sell to the market.

Sales of unused power fluctuates based on fulfilling the needs of our customers and prevailing market rates meaning revenue at this level cannot be guaranteed from year to year.

Gas revenues increased due to a longer and colder winter than the previous year coupled with higher wholesale prices. Telecom revenues increased on stronger sales of services. Water revenues were down slightly due to a wet spring and summer.

Total operating expenses increased 11.85%, or \$966,550 over 2007. This can be attributed to the increase in electric re-

placement power costs, an increase in the price of wholesale natural gas, and programming expenses in the Telecom division.

Net assets increased by \$1,892,602 or 8.42%. As in previous years, this increase is mainly attributable to capital expenditures for infrastructure upgrades in the electric, water and telecom divisions.

Through the year, we paid over \$360,000 in interest payments and lowered our debt \$446,535.

What are the benefits of a financially strong utility?

- Delayed rate increases. An electric rate increase scheduled for July 1, 2008 was delayed. This is the second time an electric rate increase has been postponed due to strong financial performance.

(Continued on other side)

Next Board meeting – December 11th

405 Chatburn
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Harlan's Premier Provider

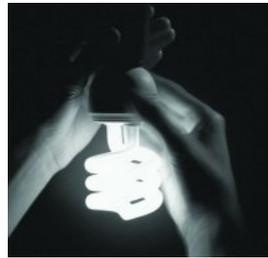
Audit Report con't

- Infrastructure improvements. Prudent fiscal policy allows us to continue with the long term electric distribution upgrade and overhead to underground conversion. This means increased reliability and lower operation and maintenance expenses in the future.
- The ability to build a modern water plant out of the flood plain ensuring an uninterrupted water supply in case of flood.
- Increased services. Strong past performance in telecom allowed us to provide new HD and digital CATV services.
- Increased bonding capability at lower rates. Maintaining a strong financial stance means less money is spent on interest payments and more on infrastructure.

We will continue to look for ways to maximize our financial and physical assets while maintaining or minimizing increasing costs. We will seek areas where we can improve and implement those changes as needed.

CFL rebate program

Purchase energy saving compact florescent lights at Do It Best Hardware, Bomgaars, Fareway or Hy-Vee through November while supplies last and receive an in store \$2 per bulb rebate.



Have a safe and Happy
Thanksgiving from all
of us at HMU

HMU offices will be
closed November 27th
and 28th. Emergency
calls taken at 755-5182

Energy Efficiency Rebates Available

Saving money on heating costs can be as simple as turning down your thermostat when you leave or installing a programmable thermostat to do the work for you. Programmable thermostats are one of the quickest, easiest and lowest cost long term energy saving devices. Plus, you'll get a rebate of up to \$25 from HMU for installing one.

Many makes and models with numerous features are available at local retailers. If necessary, talk with a licensed heating contractor to see which model fits your furnace and lifestyle.

HMU also offers rebates for replacing old gas furnaces or boilers with energy efficient units. Install a 92% efficient furnace and receive \$250. A 94% efficient unit receives \$300 and a 96% efficient unit earns a check for \$350. See your local contractor for details.



DECEMBER 2008

Special points of interest:

- *Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— End of year review*
- *Energy Rebates available*
- *Energy Saving Tips*

Quick links:

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Mr. Tom's Neighborhood— 2008 fini

The December newsletter is a good time to review what happened at HMU over the last year.

We've laid the groundwork for completing the final phase of our electric system upgrade. More work and details will develop in 2009.

A significant amount of time was spent during 2008 trying to determine how MISO, the administration of cross country electric transmission lines, will affect HMU. After two years, we're still no closer to a resolution and it appears no final implementation will happen until late 2009 or even 2010.

New gas distribution lines were installed throughout the Dye Street project as well as new lines installed for the Shelby County Cookers and the new IWCC building.

We also signed a five year gas transportation contract with Northern Natural Gas

meaning we'll continue to have capacity to Harlan.

We've begun the initial work for building a new water plant. Engineering and other details will follow in 2009. The plant will be sited on a piece of property south of Chatburn on Southwest Avenue.

The big initiative for the Telecom department during 2008 was the launch of expanded Cable TV services including HD and digital services in October. We also completed our fiber tie to Walnut Communications so we can provide them with video services and they can provide wholesale Internet and telephone switching services to us.

Our Energy Efficiency rebate program grew for the second straight year due to the number of customers installing energy efficient heating, cooling and appliances. We participated in a compact fluorescent lighting rebate program for the third year as a way to help

customers lower energy costs.

June saw another successful annual Municipal Celebration.

A review of 2008 would not be complete without mentioning Bryan Wehr, an HMU employee, who died this past year. All of us at HMU thought highly of Bryan and will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers continue for Bryan's family .

We welcomed new employees Lela Brown to the Administrative Department, Craig Moore to the Water Department and Troy Doonan to Gas/Meter Department. Todd Argotsinger replaced Mike Hansen on the HMU Board of Trustees.

As we reflect on 2008, my thoughts and wishes are for you and your family to have a great 2009. From all of us at HMU, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Next HMU Board meeting- December 11th

405 Chatburn
Harlan, IA 51537
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Website:
HarlanNet.com



Harlan's Premier Provider

Rebates available

HMU offers rebates as an incentive to purchase certain energy saving appliances.

Current Rebates:

Natural gas furnace:
92% efficient—\$250
94% efficient—\$300
96% efficient—\$350

Natural gas boilers:
90% efficient—\$200
92% efficient—\$300
94% efficient—\$450

Programmable Thermostat:
1/2 of purchase price up to \$25.

Energy Star qualified refrigerators and washers: \$50

When it's time to submit a rebate request, pick up a form at HMU or download one from HMU-Harlan.com and look under Energy Rebates, attach your original Energy Guide and a copy of the invoice. Send the information to HMU. Checks usually arrive within 3-4 weeks.

Ten ways to save in cold weather

Energy audit— start with an easy on line audit. Visit HMU-Harlan.com and click on Energy Saving Tips. You'll find an on line audit under Home Energy Saver.

Seal air leaks throughout your home or business. - Use a variety of products to seal doors, windows and electrical outlets.

Insulate— Ensure your home has adequate attic, wall and floor insulation. Insulate ducts or boiler pipes in unheated areas.

Turn it down— Install a programmable thermostat that automatically turns down the heat when you are asleep or away.

Maintain—Have heating systems serviced regu-

larly to maintain safety, peak performance and efficiency. Keep ductwork clean. Change furnace filters every month during the heating season. Lubricate motors as needed to decrease loss to friction.

Buy smart—Always buy EnergyStar qualified appliances when possible. Make a commitment to install compact florescent light bulbs when incandescent bulbs burn out.

Use smart— Set your own house or business energy policy. Remind the whole family to shut off lights, TV's, computers when they are done using them. Small acts done regularly add up to energy and cost savings.



Happy Holidays from all of us at HMU!

The HMU office will close Wednesday, December 24th and Wednesday, December 31st at 11:30. We will be closed December 25th and January 1, 2009. Emergency calls taken at 755-5182