

# Utility rates decrease, offer relief to FPU customers

With the recent decreases in oil and gas prices and the lower costs associated with producing electricity, Fayetteville Public Utilities customers have received welcomed news as natural gas and electric rates have decreased since the beginning of the year.

Once costing \$146 a barrel last summer, oil has dropped as low as \$36 per barrel in early 2009. As we saw oil and natural gas prices begin to decrease in January, FPU was able to lower local natural gas rates to \$1.74 per ccf (hundred cubic foot). In February, we again lowered the rate to \$1.60 per ccf based on the current trends in the natural gas market and on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Based on these rates, customers using 100 ccf per month saw their bills decrease from \$184.57 in January to \$170.92 in February. This was a savings of \$13.65 per month based on the possible use of 100 ccf.

Likewise for the electricity we use, in January, the pass-through fuel cost adjustment (FCA) from the Tennessee Valley Authority decreased by 6 percent. Beginning April 1, the FCA charge decreases by another 7 percent.

Customers using the average of 1,330 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month will see their bills decrease from \$141.08 in March to approximately \$133.68 in April. This is a savings of \$7.40 per month based on 1,330 kilowatt-hours used.

Is this a trend we can continue to expect? I don't know.

I do know that we're not "out of the woods" as far as the overall economic concerns of our utility system. In fact, since rates began increasing dramatically last year, FPU furthered our efforts to cut internal costs so that we could spare our customers a rate increase. All employees were asked to look at all areas of expense. They were challenged to consider ways we could cut expenses

without affecting the quality of service we provide to our customers. Many employees served on committees assigned the tasks of reviewing internal areas ranging from insurance to trans-



**Britt Dye**  
CEO/General  
Manager,  
Fayetteville Public  
Utilities

portation. Each committee reviewed the way we currently do business and also compared FPU operations to those of other utilities similar to us across the state.

Already, FPU pays 76 percent of its electric revenue directly to TVA for purchased power for Fayetteville and Lincoln County. The remaining 24 percent is used to operate Fayetteville Public Utilities and provide the level of service we do for our customers.

If there is any possible way that FPU can further reduce its costs of operation without negatively affecting your quality of service, we hope to put those plans in place before our next fiscal year begins in July.

Our annual budget review is currently taking place, and it's no secret that when we went through this process in 2008, I asked all departments to reduce their operational budgets. They did. Then, in mid-year, I asked them to look even deeper to again cut spending in order to help offset rising costs of materials and operations. They did, and we succeeded as a whole to control our costs and maintain our utility rates.

Now, as we prepare to enter another budget year, we face new challenges and the lingering impacts of economic hard times. We also expect that our costs of operation and materials will increase in 2009 and 2010 as they do on an annual basis.

Will rising costs of operation continue as a trend for the new fiscal year? It's almost certain. But at FPU, our employees and board of directors have your best interests at heart. We will do what's necessary to control costs while providing reliable service.



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P.O. Box 120  
Fayetteville, TN 37334

931-433-1522  
Toll-free: 1-800-379-2534  
Web site: [www.fpu-tn.com](http://www.fpu-tn.com)

**Office Hours:**  
**Monday - Friday**  
**7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Dispatch Hours:**  
Seven days a week  
7:30 a.m.-10 p.m.

## 24-hour emergency response

To make doing business with FPU more convenient, we offer the following services:

*energy right*® Programs

Medic Alert

Bank Draft

Level Billing

Project Help

Delayed Payment

Surge Protectors

Security Lights

Electric and Natural Gas Grills

Natural Gas Space Heaters, Logs and

Mantel Kits

Dial-Up Internet Service

Cable TV and High-Speed Internet

Access

**Call the FPU Customer Service**  
**Department for details**  
**at 931-433-1522.**

**TREE TRIMMING***the best power outage prevention plan*

Fayetteville Public Utilities maintains an aggressive right-of-way clearance program by keeping our tree-trimming crews on top of potential trouble spots and annual vegetative growth. In fact, our tree-trimming program receives much of the credit for FPU's low outage reports when storms sweep through our area.

The fact is that maintaining the electric right of way (15 feet from the center line of the road) is FPU's responsibility — as your services provider — to ensure safe and reliable electric service 24 hours a day.

We certainly don't like having to remove those beautiful, lush, green trees along the roadside or in your yard, but as your service provider, it's our duty to keep you safe and keep your lights on.

The FPU tree-trimmers are willing to work with every customer to reach the best solution on trimming and removing trees that interfere with your service and pose a threat to our system. We generally avoid removal of the tree when side-pruning and crown reduction will satisfy both of us, but in extreme conditions, tree removal may be the only feasible answer.



**The Kershaw machine quickly clears the electric right of way to remove trees and brush from underneath the power lines.**

Since enlisting the assistance of McKenzie Tree Service in 2004, FPU and the McKenzie contractors have cleared some 1,745 miles of electric line across Lincoln County and have removed many trees that posed potential safety hazards as being within the FPU right of way.

"Our customers have been very cooperative with us and with the McKenzie group," comments Lewis Steelman, operations supervisor for FPU's electric department. "They have realized the importance of FPU clearing the electric lines of these trees. By staying on top of new tree growth each year and closely watching for trouble areas, we have been able to maintain one of the lowest outage times in the nation."

FPU's most recent average annual power outage per customer lasts only 1.656 hours. The national average is five hours per customer annually. Much of the credit for FPU's short outage time is due to our tree-trimming program.

"No doubt, our tree-trimming program has proven to be very successful over the years as one of the best system maintenance programs for keeping your lights on," Steelman says.

## *Electric Cooperatives: Energizing Our Community*

### High school juniors write about electricity and community

The annual Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest is under way for Tennessee's high school juniors. Fayetteville Public Utilities sponsors the writing contest locally each year as a way of selecting its participants in the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

The writing contest encourages junior English students to write about "Electric Cooperatives: Energizing Our Community." Through the writing contest, students creatively present their views on how FPU and other rural electric companies "energize" their communities by taking active roles in improving lives across their service areas.

"The writing contest provides a way for students, who are also our future customers, to learn about FPU and what changes have been brought about thanks to the electric industry," says Gina Warren, FPU's public information specialist. "Students learn that FPU is more than just a place where people come to get utilities and pay their bills — they learn that we are a part of their community and that we offer so much more than just utility service. They learn about the many services FPU offers to make being our customer convenient and affordable. They are reminded that FPU offers youth and safety programs, easy payment plans, energy services, assistance programs and more — all of which add value to being an FPU customer."

The writing contest gives students an opportunity to win an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., savings bonds and even possible scholarships, all of which are part of the electric cooperative program.

The Washington Youth Tour is sponsored annually by the Tennessee electric cooperatives and includes a week-long tour of our nation's capital. Popular sites planned for this year's tour include Monticello, Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, Washington National Cathedral, Union Station and the Holocaust Museum. The tour also includes visits to the Jefferson, Lincoln, Vietnam War, Korean War and World War II memorials. The trip is further highlighted with stops at Hard Rock Cafe, the Smithsonian Museums and the U.S. Capitol to meet with our senators and representatives.

Locally, six overall winners will be selected from those entering the writing contest this year. The top four will be awarded the June 12-18 trip to Washington. Watch for FPU's local announcement of contest winners later this month in the Elk Valley Times and online at [www.fpu-tn.com](http://www.fpu-tn.com).



## Do you qualify for Medic Alert?

If you or a loved one require uninterrupted electric service due to the nature of life support or medical equipment needed, Fayetteville Public Utilities needs to know about your situation.

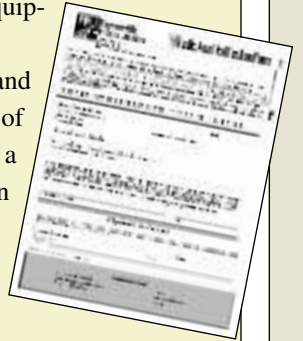
Medic Alert is a program offered by FPU to alert our employees of qualifying medical conditions and types of life-support equipment that require continuous electricity in our customers' homes. Our list of Medic Alert customers is monitored by FPU dispatchers and meter personnel so that in the event of a planned service interruption, an employee will attempt to make prior contact with someone at the location with details about the scheduled power outage and any other event that may cause loss of power.

In the event of storm damage that causes widespread power outages, FPU will do all within our control to restore your power in a timely manner. However, it is always recommended that you have a back-up plan in case of an extended outage due to severe weather.

All FPU customers will receive information in their April bill statements about the Medic Alert Program. We ask that if you qualify for our Medic Alert Program, please return the completed form with proper physician's certification so that FPU may keep a record of your life-support equipment. Return the form to FPU at your earliest convenience.

Please remember that although you qualify for the Medic Alert Program, it does not necessarily guarantee that your power will be continuous and uninterrupted. It simply makes FPU aware of your condition in cases where preferential attention can be given.

If you have questions about the Medic Alert Program or about completing the form, please call Stacy Rozell at FPU, 931-433-1522, Ext. 131.



## Nothing says summer like a Broilmaster gas grill

The Broilmaster gas grill from Fayetteville Public Utilities not only offers traditional outdoor grilling to all who own one ... the Broilmaster also offers cooking options that are only limited by your imagination!

You see, you can also bake, sear and smoke your favorite foods on a Broilmaster grill. You can even use the rotisserie option to cook those hams, chickens, roasts and more to tender perfection.

The name Broilmaster means quality, too. Our Broilmaster grills come with a lifetime warranty on the aluminum grill housing, cast stainless steel cooking grids, mountings, bowtie burners, side burners and warming racks. Other parts have one- to five-year warranty coverage.

Broilmaster offers many selections for grill accessories and options to help you customize your grill, too. Choose from flavor screens, side burners, smoker boxes, fla-



vored wood chips, grill covers and more. Come by FPU today at 408 W. College St. and see for yourself how you can turn your new Broilmaster grill into the one cooking tool you need for summer — and all year long!



# FPU electric crews help restore power following Kentucky's ice storm

Following the Jan. 26 ice storm that hit most of Kentucky, leaving as many as 36,600 customers without power, Fayetteville Public Utilities sent a crew of six electric department employees to assist in power restoration efforts.

The FPU crew worked in the Hickman, Ky., areas, assisting employees of Hickman-Fulton Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation for two weeks, setting new electric poles and installing new distribution lines for the badly damaged electric system.

Hickman-Fulton RECC is a small electric cooperative serving 3,770 customers. On Feb. 1, the system reported that 3,016 of its customers remained without power and that 1,500 poles were downed by the ice storm.

FPU crew members who worked in Kentucky were Lewis Steelman, Greg Wicks, Stephen Reese, Troy Doud, Tim Shelton and Bengé Dunivan.

A total of 1,000 extra co-op and municipal employees from Alabama Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Virginia as well as Tennessee assisted in the storm repairs. An equal number of contract workers also came to assist.

“Sending our employees to help other utilities with power restoration is of benefit to more than the utilities facing the current emergency,” says Britt Dye, FPU’s CEO and general manager. “It’s a benefit to FPU as well. We’ve seen times past — in 1994 and 1998 — when we needed outside help from surrounding power systems to recover from ice storms and severe weather. Giving assistance to our neighboring power systems in situations like this is part of the ‘cooperative way’ of doing business; it builds teamwork and good relations with others. The next time FPU is in need, we know we can count on others to be here for us, our utility and our customers.”



Assisting in the Kentucky ice storm power restoration were, from left, Bengé Dunivan, Greg Wicks, Tim Shelton, Stephen Reese, Troy Doud and Lewis Steelman.



At the time of this publication, the Kentucky ice storm was estimated to have cost some \$104 million in repairs.

## When you turn on a household tap for a glass of drinking water, do you stop to wonder if it is safe to drink and not contaminated?



Most of us never give it much thought ... but we should.

Keeping your water safe from accidental contamination is easy. Please take the following precautions to protect your drinking water:

- Never submerge water hoses in buckets, pools, tubs or sinks.
- Always keep the end of the hose clear of possible contaminants.
- Do not use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device. The chemicals used on your lawn are toxic and can be fatal if ingested.
- Purchase and install inexpensive backflow prevention for all threaded faucets around the home. These are available at hardware stores and home-improvement centers.

For more information about backflow and cross-connection protection, please call FPU at 433-1522.

## Imagination Library *The love of reading and learning*

What better way to help a child's mind grow and develop than to teach that child at a young age to love books and how to read? Not only does it help develop a child's knowledge and imagination, but it does so even before he or she begins school.

That's what Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has done for thousands here in Lincoln County and across our state.

The Imagination Library (IL) began in 1996 when the Tennessee-born country music singer started the program to give back to her community by helping the children of her hometown in Sevierville. She personally paid for each newborn child to receive a new book, "The Little Engine that Could," written by Watty Piper.

Now, through the program, newborn children enrolled in the Imagination Library receive a new book each month until their fifth birthday. Upon turning 5, each child then receives a book titled "Look Out, Kindergarten, Here I Come," a diploma and personal letter from Parton for completing the program.

Lincoln County's IL program began in April 2005. It currently has 1,200 children under the age of 5 enrolled to receive the books — approximately 62 percent of our community's eligible children. To date, 700 children have graduated from the official Books from Birth program as supported by Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen through the ongoing efforts of the Imagination Library. More than 46,030 books have been mailed to children in Lincoln County since the program began.

The Imagination Library of Lincoln County is a division of the Lincoln County Literacy Council (LCLC), a non-profit organization dedicated to the lifelong learning of all ages. The LCLC motto is "Teach the parent, reach the child." To that end, the IL was a natural fit to become its newest division and provide a venue for the LCLC to reach our youngest citizens and promote literacy.

The hardcover books that the children receive through the program are carefully selected to help develop a child's literacy and vocabulary skills through age-appropriate, developmental reading materials.

In 2007, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library mailed out almost 4.2 million books. On average, approximately 420,000 Tennessee children receive a book each and every month thanks to the support of people like you who have sponsored children or have made donations to the Imagination Library.

The state of Tennessee funds half the cost of each participating county's books, but the remainder is funded locally. Here in Lincoln County, it currently takes \$1,400 per month to keep the program alive. With fundraising events and sponsorship drives like "One of One Hundred," the local program is self-supporting. However, like many nonprofit organizations, to continue providing the free books to the children of our community and to reach more children with this program, additional funds are needed to maintain the program's effectiveness.

### **Who can enroll in the Imagination Library?**

Any child under the age of 5 can be enrolled in the Imagination Library pro-

gram to receive the books from birth. The Lincoln Medical Center assists parents in registering their newborns. All registered newborns leave the hospital with their first book, "The Little Engine that Could." To register all other children, simply visit the Fayetteville-Lincoln County Public Library, the Lincoln County Health Department at 1000 W. Washington St. or LCLC at 1600 Wilson Parkway. You may also call LCLC at 438-0555 or sign up online at [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com).

### **My child is 3 years old and has not been enrolled to receive the books. Is it too late to enroll?**

It is not too late to enroll; however, your child will only receive the books beginning with those appropriate for age 3 once enrolled.

### **If we move, will my child continue receiving the books?**

Yes, if you'll notify the Lincoln County Literacy Council at 931-438-0555 to change your mailing address.

### **How can I be a sponsor?**

IM is always happy to accept new sponsors of the program. To be a Sponsor of the Month or a participant in "One of One Hundred," or if you'd like to make a one-time donation, please send a check or money order to IM at P.O. Box 914, Fayetteville, TN 37334. You may also call the Elk Valley Times for details at 931-433-6151.

The reason is clear; the resources are available ... the rewards are boundless.

*This story has been published as a public service and advertising donation on behalf of Fayetteville Public Utilities in support of the Imagination Library.*

