At the end of each year, we take the opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments and how they benefit our community. Fayetteville Public Utilities’ 2015 system improvements in particular have helped our community grow as we enhanced and upgraded utility and customer services while working toward building a better tomorrow.

Over the past year, FPU continued our commitment to you of providing safe, reliable and affordable utility services while meeting the growing needs of our customers.

FPU’s Electric Department enhanced service by increasing capacity and reliability inside portions of Fayetteville’s city limits, Howell Hill Road and the Coldwater Creek area. Each of these electric upgrades was significant; however, completion of the city’s 1.66 miles of electric three-phase infrastructure is considered a milestone for the department.

Capacity on the city’s electric circuit increased from 6 megawatts to 20 megawatts, which ensures the stability of voltage, improves the quality of service and increases the available power in the city to accommodate future growth. These upgrades also enhanced the alternate electric feed FPU built years ago to power the city in the event of a failure at the Brogan Avenue Substation. The alternate electric feed can quickly supply a secondary source of power to the city from the Industrial Park Substation through our SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system and switching procedures.

FPU also relocated the three-phase line at Frito Lay to accommodate future plant expansions.

FPU experienced minimal problems during last winter’s ice storm and thus was able to send a five-man electric crew to the Duck River Electric Membership Corporation service area to assist its power restoration efforts.

From January through October, our right-of-way maintenance crews have cleared trees and vegetation from more than 250 miles of electric line, further sustaining our system reliability.

FPU’s Natural Gas Department focused on system expansion and reliability in 2015. Earlier this year, we extended a three-mile stretch of gas main in the Flintville area to provide natural gas service to about 100 customers.

Our Wastewater Department completed upgrades in the Laten Bottom and Tanyard Branch areas as tens of thousands of feet of sewer pipe were replaced to enhance
service and flow to the treatment plant. This summer, we began our next phase of sewer rehab, which includes 15,000 feet of line in scattered areas of the city and in the vicinity of Winchester Highway.

We advanced with plans for biosolids removal at FPU’s Wastewater Treatment Plant and began preparation for plant upgrades planned to begin in 2016.

FPU’s Water Treatment Plant construction progressed steadily over the past year, as you can see in the photos. The new plant will have the base capacity of producing 4.5 million gallons of water per day, which accommodates for future community growth.

In 2015, our Telecom Department was successful in negotiating new contracts with the off-air channels to continue broadcasting Nashville and Huntsville channels through FPU’s cable service. We installed the Broadband Service Router to offer faster service to our customers. FPU telecom crews continued expanding fiber-to-the-home, EPON (Ethernet Passive Optical Network) and direct fiber services to many local business and industry locations.

In June, FPU finished its eighth consecutive fiscal year with a positive net income and kept operational cost increases below the rate of inflation.

Over the past year, FPU has been recognized in the utility industry as a leader in the areas of safety and performance. FPU achieved top scores in the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association’s annual safety audit, in a recent Sanitary Survey conducted by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and in the annual Tennessee Regulatory Authority inspection and received a five-year safety award from the American Public Gas Association.

FPU and our employees have also been supportive of the community. We participate annually in the Relay For Life and Lincoln County Heart Walk events by raising and donating money to each cause, and we sponsor community-wide donation drives in which food and coats are collected to benefit those in need.

Across the board, FPU has had a successful year. In our efforts to build a better tomorrow, we’ve worked as a team, moving forward and positioning FPU to deliver unbeatable services, sustain our rates and enhance local utility infrastructure and technology for our customers today and for future generations.
EPON, direct fiber boost business communications

Every customer is unique, and so are your service needs. That’s why Fayetteville Public Utilities offers local businesses two telecommunications options to keep daily operations on track. With FPU’s direct fiber and EPON (Ethernet Passive Optical Network) service connections, Internet connectivity is enhanced for today’s growing demands.

DIRECT FIBER

Direct fiber is a point-to-point fiber with one dedicated customer connection that gives your business the advantage of increased reliability and speed for data transfers. This type of Internet connection is especially useful for commercial and industrial customers needing increased Internet speeds for uploads and downloads.

EPON SERVICE

EPON is a shared fiber link with up to 32 possible customer connections. Like direct fiber, EPON also increases reliability and speed, but with an EPON connection, the customer can share the line with a maximum of 32 others in the area.

Several local businesses and industries are taking advantage of FPU’s direct fiber and EPON Internet connections. These enhanced Internet services are structured so that they meet the growing needs of entities such as emergency and health care providers, schools, government offices, industries and small businesses.

Pricing for a direct fiber connection begins at $400 per month while EPON service begins at $200 monthly. If your business or industry is interested in either service offered by FPU, please call us at 931-433-1522 for details and pricing that best suit your business applications.

Do you smell a leak?

Natural gas leaks are rare. In fact, natural gas has an impeccable safety record locally and nationwide. But because natural gas is available in many areas of Lincoln County, everyone should know how to recognize a gas leak inside and outside the home and know what to do in case you suspect a leak.

Because natural gas in its original state is colorless, tasteless and odorless, Fayetteville Public Utilities adds a distinctive chemical odorant called methyl mercaptan to help you recognize the smell of natural gas and detect a possible leak. It’s best described as the smell of rotten eggs.

Across FPU’s service area, gas mains are buried and protected underground. Knowing this, gas lines sometimes fall into the “out of sight — out of mind” category. Calling Tennessee One Call to request a professional locate of buried pipelines (electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, cable and telephone) before you dig or excavate helps ensure your safety and prevents possible damage to underground utility lines. The Tennessee One Call number, 811, is a free call. You can also submit your request online at www.tennessee811.com.

Calling before you dig is important. Something as simple as a shovel can gouge, scrape or dent the casing that surrounds a buried utility line. While this type of damage usually doesn’t cause immediate harm, it can lead to future breaks or leaks as the protective coating degrades. Should this type of damage occur, do not cover the line with dirt. Stop digging, and call FPU to report the incident.

If more serious damage occurs to an underground natural gas line, you will hear a loud hissing sound. The escaping gas will possibly blow loose dirt from around the pipe, and you will smell the gas leaking from the damaged pipe. Leave the area immediately and call 911 and FPU to report the incident.

With the heating season upon us, many of us use natural gas to warm our homes and power our water heaters as well as appliances in the kitchen and laundry room. We recommend that you have a properly installed carbon monoxide detector in your home to help keep your family safe year-round.

If you smell natural gas inside your home or business and hear a hissing sound, please do not operate electrical switches or use your telephone, extinguish any open flame and evacuate the home or building. Call FPU from a neighbor’s home or the building next door to report the suspected gas leak.

Again, natural gas leaks are rare, but FPU wants you to know what to do if you smell natural gas and suspect a leak. If you have questions about natural gas service, please call FPU at 931-433-1522.
Maintaining the wastewater plant, planning upgrades

Continuing the focus on improving Fayetteville Public Utilities’ wastewater treatment process, operators at the facility complete a checklist of plant maintenance to ensure its highest level of operation and to begin early preparation for future plant upgrades.

“This fall, wastewater crews began with cleaning one of our aeration basins,” says FPU CEO and General Manager Britt Dye. “This basin holds approximately 1.4 million gallons of wastewater and creates a healthy environment for microorganisms to treat the incoming wastewater before it is returned to the river.”

FPU emptied and cleaned the aeration basin, removing approximately 200 tons of wet sludge. Sixty tons of the wet sludge have been pressed, and the Class B biosolids product has been hauled to an approved landfill. The remainder of the sand and grit was dried at the plant facility.

After the aeration basin was cleaned, plant operators filled the basin with effluent water, which is normally deposited into the Elk River after being treated.

“Filling the basin with the plant’s effluent water provides a cost savings to FPU as it eliminates the need to use treated water from FPU’s Water Treatment Plant,” says Dye.

Once the basin was filled, it was reseeded with microorganisms from an adjacent basin to return the tank to its activation stage while operators work to balance oxygen levels in the water for the treatment process to restart.

“As a result of ongoing sewer line and plant improvements, FPU has observed significant decreases in the amount of water infiltration and has subsequently lessened the overall flow into the wastewater treatment plant.” Dye says. “This is a significant achievement, but we have more work to do.”

FPU is in the early planning stages for future wastewater treatment plant upgrades that will enhance its biological nutrient removal process in order to continue meeting stricter regulations passed down industrywide by the Tennessee Department of Energy and Conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency.

 Proposed plant upgrades will improve three major areas: First, continued aeration improvements include installing a new mixer system and fine-particle screen and installing new variable frequency motor drives at the plant to better control dissolved oxygen levels in the basins while saving energy.

Second, FPU plans to improve the digestion process at the plant by upgrading the existing digester with new decanters and more efficient air blowers.

Third, plans also include construction of FPU’s on-site dewatering facility to dispose of the sludge, which is the wastewater solids that remain once the water is treated and returned to the Elk River, meeting all environmental and safety regulations. Currently, the sludge is removed from the plant by a contracted dewatering service and delivered to a disposal site outside of Lincoln County. Once FPU has its own dewatering process and meets all Class A qualifications, the biosolids product can be applied as a natural fertilizer and possibly made available to local farmers.

“Our overall goal is to maximize our biological nutrient removal to limit — and even avoid — using any added chemical removal process at the plant and improve overall plant operations to better serve the community,” says Dye. “In addition, pursuing the upgrades to make our treatment facility a Class A biosolids operation will produce long-term cost savings for the utility and our customers.”

Based on annual averages, FPU’s Wastewater Treatment Plant treats 1.4 million gallons of wastewater per day but is rated to treat up to 3.35 million gallons daily.

FPU’s Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades are tentatively scheduled to begin in the late spring of 2016 with a tentative target completion date of December 2017.
Fayetteville Public Utilities is proud to introduce the seven members of our 2015-2016 Student Utility Board. These bright students represent our three local high schools: Erin Bergman, Kagen Buntley and Brileigh Gentry from Lincoln County High School; Jokia Raybon, Amari Bryson and Aidan Pace from Fayetteville High School; and Leah Hampton from Riverside Christian Academy.

The youth board meets once a month at FPU during the school year to learn how the utility serves the community and how the various departments work together. Students will tour off-site locations such as FPU’s Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment plants, a natural gas gate station and an electric substation. The youth board will tour inside FPU’s headend building that houses equipment for the utility’s cable, Internet and phone services. They will watch and learn as utility employees explain the responsibilities of their jobs, and they will gain hands-on experience in customer service as they spend time in both the Administrative and Engineering departments.

“Students will not only learn about our daily operations but also about some of the current issues the utility faces, including renewable energy resources, cost of providing service and changing technology,” says FPU CEO and General Manager Britt Dye.

“These students are our future community leaders and utility customers,” says Dye. “We want them to see from the inside what FPU is and what we do for the community each day. We further hope that through their learning about FPU, we will gain knowledge from them as to how FPU can better serve our future customers.”

This month’s Student Utility Board meeting will focus on community service and how FPU and its employees participate in various community outreach programs.

Learning about FPU from the inside
Student Utility Board gets hands-on experience

Clockwise from top left: FPU’s youth board tours the office for the first time. Kagen Buntley returns a customer’s receipt at the payment window. Students learn about power outages from FPU’s Crissy McAnally. Aidan Pace and Brileigh Gentry assist with the annual natural gas safety survey at the Lincoln County Fair. FPU’s Don Counts prepares the youth board to record TV and radio commercials. Jokia Raybon operates FPU’s switchboard as she learns about customer service.
My reasons for walking

The 2015 Lincoln County Heart Walk gathered participants from all across the community to honor those who have experienced various degrees of heart disease. Joining them was a team of 60-plus representing Fayetteville Public Utilities.

“We all know of someone who has been affected by heart disease,” says FPU CEO and General Manager Britt Dye. “This year’s theme, ‘My Reasons,’ helped form a personal commitment with this year’s Lincoln County Heart Walk. It reminds us that we all have reasons for walking and raising awareness of heart health — whether it’s for our family, our fellow employees or our community.”

This year’s Lincoln County Heart Walk was held in honor of Peggy Bevels, past Lincoln County mayor, and in memory of Ted Kimbrough and Lyn Johnson.

FPU was one of the top five fundraising teams for 2015, donating $1,000 to the American Heart Association.

A gift that fits everyone

Avoid the indecision of what to give others this holiday season. A gift certificate for utility service at Fayetteville Public Utilities is the gift that fits everyone and every need. FPU gift certificates can be purchased in any amount and applied to any utility service FPU offers.

Gift certificates from FPU make easy gifts or stocking-stuffers for anyone on your shopping list this season.

Come by FPU to purchase your utility gift certificates today!

Give a coat, warm a heart

As cooler temperatures arrive, we recognize that some members of our community may not be able to afford warm winter coats or jackets to wear.

Please join Fayetteville Public Utilities in helping provide these winter items by donating your new and gently used coats and jackets during our 2015 Coat Drive. Through Friday, Dec. 18, donations of adults’ and children’s coats of all sizes will be accepted at FPU’s office located at 408 W. College St. during regular office hours.

Two local charity organizations, Hands of Mercy Outreach Center and Clothe our Kids, will distribute these donated items to those in need. Think of the comfort and warmth your donated coat or jacket will provide to someone less fortunate in our community this winter.

Contact FPU at 931-433-1522 if you have questions about the FPU Coat Drive.
Giving Christmas trees a second life

Employees of Fayetteville Public Utilities will once again be recycling your natural Christmas trees by turning them into useable mulch in the annual Grind a Pine event. Dates to grind your natural pine and cedar Christmas trees are from Dec. 28 until Jan. 8.

Simply bring your cedar and pine Christmas trees to the designated location at the Lincoln County Museum. There, FPU tree-trimming crews will grind the trees into mulch, which they’ll leave at this location. You can come back to the museum site with your shovel to collect the mulch by the bagful or truckload. This is a first-come, first-served basis, so check the site regularly if you want to take home some mulch.

Before bringing your Christmas tree to be recycled, please remove all decorations, tree stands and tinsel. This will help reduce pollution of the mulch and prevent damage to FPU equipment.

This free community service and recycling project is co-sponsored by FPU and Keep Fayetteville/Lincoln County Beautiful Inc. If you have questions, please contact FPU’s Gina Warren at 931-433-1522 or Gail Randalp of Keep Fayetteville/Lincoln County Beautiful Inc. at 931-433-8208.

Please help control our landfill capacity by participating in the Grind a Pine event and give your Christmas tree a “second life” by turning it into useable mulch for your gardening projects.

Donations to Harvest of Hope Food Drive accepted through Dec. 31

The annual Harvest of Hope Food Drive sponsored by Fayetteville Public Utilities benefits the Good Samaritan Association of Lincoln County by stock- ing its food bank for the winter months. This annual food drive increases the supplies available at Good Samaritan during a time when more people are out of work due to weather conditions that slow outdoor construction and when household expenses tend to be higher due to the heating season. In either case, many in our community find it necessary to apply for food assistance.

FPU invites you to join us by donating canned and non-perishable food items to help feed our neighbors who need assistance throughout the year.

FPU will be accepting donations through Thursday, Dec. 31. You can bring your food donations to the FPU office at 408 W. College St. during regular office hours: Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Please join us in giving, and let’s help feed our neighbors in need!