



WASHINGTON SPARK!

A monthly newsletter from the city government of Washington, Georgia.

Empowering our citizens through public information. October 2015.



YOUR POWER AND YOU: A GUIDE TO WASHINGTON UTILITIES

Washington is One of 49 City Participants in The Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), created in 1975. MEAG exists for one primary reason; to generate and transmit competitive and reliable wholesale electric power. They provide power through a co-ownership of 4 nuclear (2 of which are under construction) and 2 coal-fired plants, sole ownership of a natural gas combined cycle facility, as well as ownership of over 1,300 miles of transmission lines and nearly 200 substations.

City Utility customers are billed based on their monthly usage of electricity and water. There are other items residents are billed for such as yard waste, trash pickup, yard lights (if you have one) and sales tax. Most customers now have Itron radio-meters. Electric and water usage is transmitted by a signal to a handheld device, like the one meter readers, Al Hill and Robert Grant, are holding (at right). These devices are very accurate, but if there are questions about usage, the meter readers go out and manually read the meter to ensure accuracy.

Electric rates: During the coldest half of the year (November to April), Washington charges less for power. According to Federal statistics, consumers use seven times more power to heat their homes than to cool them down during the year. However, power is less expensive to generate in the winter months, therefore the City can pass those savings along to the consumer. Using 1,500 kilowatt-hours of power is about \$34 cheaper during a

winter month than in a summer month, explained City Administrator Sherri Bailey.

For current utility rates, visit the City's web site at www.cityofwashingtonga.gov. To see price comparisons to other utility providers go to www.psc.state.ga.us.

Billing cycle: When customers receive their bill, they should look closely at the Prior reading date and the current reading date. That will show the customer what period that bill covers. It also shows the total days in the period being billed. Some months may have more billing days due to Holidays or unforeseen problems.

Due dates and cutoff policy: Utility bills are due on the 15th of each month, but you have a 10-day grace period to pay without penalty. On the 26th, customers are charged a 7 % late fee. Customers are allowed an agreement to pay not to exceed the 3rd of the following month, **cut off is on the fourth of the month**, excluding weekends and Holidays. A \$75 fee is charged to customers on the cut-off list to cover costs of personnel that have to cut-off and reconnect services due to non-payment.

Levelized billing: Customers who have lived at an address for at least a year are eligible for a billing option that prevents sudden spikes in their utility bill. With "levelized billing," customers pay a rolling average of their latest 12 months of utility usage, rather than paying the actual monthly cost, said City Clerk Debbie Danner. The bill will show both the actual cost and the amount you must pay that month. Each month the farthest month out rolls off and the billing system recalculates your monthly average. Levelized billing helps many customers with budgeting for their utility bill. "The best times to sign up for levelized billing are spring and autumn, *before* the big bills of summer or winter hit" Danner said. Now is the perfect time to consider this option. To sign up, call City Hall at (706) 678-3277, Extension 229.



Calendar: The City Council meets at 6 p.m., Monday, October 12, at the Pope Center, at 48 Lexington Ave.

PLEASE WRITE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS FOR CITY OFFICIALS ON BACK OF YOUR UTILITY PAYMENT STUB. THANKS!

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Ames Barnett, Robert S. Armour, Travis Armour, Nathaniel Cullars Sr., Kimberly J. Rainey, Mike Scarborough and Marion Tutt Jr. Please visit www.cityofwashingtonga.gov.

