

financial assistance available

Financial hardships can happen to anyone. Fortunately, there are many resources to help those in need pay their heating bills during the winter. Here are some of the programs available in Westfield.

Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) from the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) provides low income customers with financial assistance based on household income and family size. Contact VOC at (413) 552-1554 or visit their website at www.valleyopp.com.

The Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Program provides energy assistance to residents in temporary crisis who are struggling to pay their energy bills and do not qualify for federal or state energy funds. Contact the Westfield Chapter of the Salvation Army at (413) 231-7917 for guidelines.

Westfield Warm Fund is offered by the Westfield Gas and Electric for customers who qualify for LIHEAP or the Good Neighbor Energy Fund. Contact WG+E Customer Service at (413) 572-0100 for more information.

The Citizens Energy/Distrigas Heat Assistance Program was created for those who are struggling to pay their natural gas heating bills in Massachusetts. The program is open to low income families who have exhausted their federal fuel assistance benefit or to individuals ineligible to receive federal fuel assistance and who cannot afford to pay their heating bills. For more information on this \$150 utility credit, contact Citizens Energy at (866) 427-9918.

Finally, WG+E offers budget and payment plans to help our customers manage their utility bills.

Please call Customer Service Department at (413) 572-0100 for more information about or help with any of these financial assistance options.

utility rate comparisons

Total Residential Electric & Gas Bill Comparison January-December 2016



Data based on average residential consumption of 785 CCF and 9000 kWh for the year.

Winter Utility Cost Comparison October 2015-March 2016



*Data based on average residential consumption & actual/projected WG+E pricing for the period

**Oil price projection source U.S. EIA 11/2016



Customer Service: (413) 572-0100
Emergency Response: (413) 572-0000

www.wgeld.org

winter 2017



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WESTFIELD GAS + ELECTRIC



saying goodbye to 2016

The arrival of 2017 gives us a moment to reflect on what we've been up to during a busy and exciting year at Westfield Gas + Electric. Whip City Fiber was launched as a pilot in the fall of 2015 after providing high speed internet service to municipal and commercial customers for 20 years. Customers with the service have provided excellent feedback and it has been a very successful project to date. You can find further information on WCF in an accompanying piece in this publication.

While Whip City Fiber has taken a lot of effort, we have no intention of losing sight of our core business of providing reliable electric and natural gas service to Westfield. This year, we rolled out many improvements to critical systems including an upgrade to the customer information and financial system that takes advantage of the latest technologies for tracking installations and repairs, project management, and billing. We implemented an updated method of accepting secure credit card payments to safeguard customer information in compliance with changing industry requirements. The automated meter reading (AMR) program is essentially complete with all electric meters now being read remotely and gas meters to be completed in the first quarter of 2017. The benefits of the AMR upgrade include future cost-saving measures and improved customer service and response time for outages.

The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) announced a grant opportunity for towns across Massachusetts to convert municipally owned streetlights to LED technology. Westfield Gas + Electric applied for and received a grant of \$184,000 which will go a long way towards our continuing effort of brightening every street with these energy-efficient lighting fixtures.

As you may recall from last year, a national firm reviewed our rate structures to ensure that they accurately reflect

the operational costs of WG+E. The recommendation was to gradually shift the fees for individual line items and we've been making those minor adjustments since that time and will further expand it in May of 2017. As was the case last year, generally, customers will not see any changes to their overall total bill. As always, conserving energy when possible will help you keep your energy costs down.

And finally, the ongoing natural gas transmission pipeline plan in the Northeast is still a concern with potential long term impacts to utility rates in our region. The New England region has experienced tremendous volatility in the past few years. Even with this level of unpredictability, WG+E has been able to maintain steady rates. We continue to monitor the situation closely. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we expect rate stability to continue throughout 2017.

And with that, all the employees of WG+E and I wish you each a very happy new year.

Very sincerely yours,

Dan Howard
General Manager



WE CONNECT WESTFIELD

Since the Whip City Fiber launch in October 2015, we've been connecting Westfield to friends and family, work and the world, with the fastest internet around. Our customers are using our Gigabit internet service to get their email, entertainment, and even sports channels including NESN and ESPN! ***And now we're planning to bring service to even more of Westfield.*** The Municipal Light Board has submitted a proposal to the City Council for a \$15M bond that will allow us to bring Whip City Fiber to another 10,000 homes. While that proposal is in the works, we're very excited to announce that we'll be accepting applications for another four fiberhoods starting at the end of January. Visit the Whip City Fiber website at www.whipcityfiber.com for more information!



we ♥ westfield photo contest winners

The first place photo (pictured) is a beautiful shot of sunlit water under the Great River Bridges by Kristian Villaruel. Congratulations also to Danny Nason (2nd), Samantha Putnam (3rd), and Julie Desharnais (3rd). Thanks to all the photographers who participated this year.