

October 2010

The Hartselle



Serving Hartselle's People, Building for Hartselle's Future

New Programs, Incentives Available for Area Businesses

Earlier this year, a retail business in Huntsville replaced 134 metal halide light fixtures with 140 6-lamp T8 fluorescent fixtures. The company reduced energy demand by 34.73 kW per month, plus it received a one-time incentive payment for \$6,599 from TVA. An educational institution, also in Huntsville, replaced an old HVAC 200-ton chiller unit with a more efficient 200-ton unit, saving 20.23 kW per month, and received a one-time incentive payment of \$4,047.

Both companies are participants in the new Commercial Efficiency Advice and Incentives Program (CEAI), offered to area businesses by Hartselle Utilities and TVA.

CEAI is available to customers who use at least 50 kW of electricity per month, and offers energy assessments to help with energy-saving investment decisions. TVA provides incentive payments for projects identified during the assessment that help reduce power usage during TVA's peak periods.

Typical program participants include large facilities such as schools, hospitals, office buildings, warehouses and similarly sized buildings. An energy assessment helps determine how well a facility is currently using energy. If the assessment indicates that the facility could save at least five kW per month, the company is eligible for incentives to make improvements.

"Lighting and HVAC systems are typically the areas where customers can make improvements that have the biggest impact on their

electric bill," says Hartselle Utilities Customer Service Manager Terri Harris. "These are the areas targeted by the incentives from TVA."

A similar program is available for smaller companies and industries that have no demand charge. TVA's Fast Cash for Small Business and Industry offers incentives for eligible energy efficiency improvements. The list includes replacing lighting fixtures, exit signs, and HVAC systems. At this time there are no incentives for changing from incandescent to CFL light bulbs. A complete list of eligible improvements is available from Hartselle Utilities.

A third program offers payments to commercial, institutional and industrial customers willing to reduce energy use, when asked, during times of abnormally high electricity demand. Participants in the TVA-EnerNOC Demand Response Program receive monthly payments based on the amount they agree to curtail. Requests for curtailment are limited to 40 hours per year. Companies receive at least 30 minutes notice, and can decline if necessary for any reason.

Knox County Schools in Knoxville, TN, for example, has participated in the program's pilot for two years. Their participation calls for reducing power at four schools by 615 kilowatts. According to Knox County Schools Energy Manager Zane Foraker, the school system receives several thousand dollars per year, and events have generally happened during times when children are not in the schools.

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Natural Gas Expanding to Danville Middle and Danville High Schools

Hartselle Utilities has expanded natural gas service to the campus for Danville Middle and Danville High schools. The natural gas system replaces one of Morgan County School System's last coal-burning fire boilers, along with ten large propane tanks previously used to heat the schools, says Tony Vest, HU Gas System Operator.

During the construction, HU crews installed 5,300 feet of six-inch polyethylene pipe, 1,000 feet of 4-inch pipe, 500 feet of 2-inch pipe, and 1,000 feet of one and a half-inch pipe, to extend service one mile from Danville Elementary to the middle and high school campus.

HU ran natural gas pipeline to the elementary school last year; this latest expansion brings the system within four miles of the end of the "loop" on the western side of the county.

"This is part of our long-range Master Plan," says Vest. "It benefits



Crews install natural gas pipeline near Danville Middle and Danville High schools.

the school system, and brings Hartselle Utilities closer to our long-range goal of a complete loop around our service area."

A completed loop, which would allow natural gas to be supplied from either direction, will allow HU to offer natural gas to more customers throughout the system, he explains.

The Morgan County School System contributed to the project costs for the installation, and they anticipate significant annual savings.

While HU crews installed the pipeline outside, school system maintenance crews handled interior modifications.

The project was expected to be completed in late September, long before North Alabama's first cold snap. After all the pipeline is installed and interior work completed, Vest explains, crews will pressurize the system to check for leaks. After a thorough safety and system check is completed, HU crews will turn on the natural gas and energize the system, Vest explains.

Electric Department Replacing Transformer

Last summer, a 50-year-old transformer blew up at the District Substation, near the Hwy. 31/Hwy. 36 intersection, causing a system-wide power outage early one Sunday morning. To prevent a similar situation from happening again, HU crews will replace another transformer, also built in 1959, at the substation.

The bid opening was held in August, and the bid for the 10 MVA 46 kV Single Phase Transformer was awarded to Virginia Transformer. The cost is \$156,175, less than the one purchased in 2009 for \$172,247.

Building upon expertise and procedures developed during last year's emergency transformer replacement, HU electric crews will replace the transformer in January.

"When the transformer blew up last year, we spent two weeks on engineering and load transfer calculations," says Jonathan Hampton, HU Electric Department Superintendent. "This time, using the procedures we developed, it should take us about half a day to transfer loads from the substation to prepare for the installation."

The actual installation of the transformer will take about a week, he says. Hampton does not expect power to be interrupted during that time.

Billy Warden Retiring At End of Year



Warden

After 25 years of service, Billy Warden, HU Water, Sewer & Gas Superintendent for Construction, will retire at the end of 2010.

Warden jokingly anticipated his last day of work, posting daily countdowns throughout the utility. But, he said, in some ways it was going to be difficult. "You spend more time with your co-workers than you do with your family at home; they become like your family," he said.

Hartselle Utilities has changed a great deal in the past 25 years, Warden recalls. The system itself has grown: he estimates that there have been 15 new subdivisions that he's had a part of installing service to, and the utility's

workforce, physical plant and equipment have grown as well.

"I started 25 years ago as a mechanic," he explains. "I had a corner to work in, and I worked on equipment outside, or in half of the warehouse when absolutely necessary. Now, we have three equipment sheds, a foreman's office with a break room, and the mechanic's shop. It's come a long way."

Warden was promoted from mechanic through every department at HU except the wastewater treatment plant: construction foreman, water foreman, and field superintendent before being named to his current position 15 years ago.

Throughout the years, Warden says, the HU board has been great to work with. "They've been willing to listen to our requests; they've looked at the long-term perspective."

"With all the positions he's held over the years, Billy is probably one of the most knowledgeable of our employees," says HU General Manager Ferrell Vest. "He's like a walking databank. Billy never has been a 'sit back and watch it happen' kind of guy; he's never asked his crews to do anything he wouldn't do himself. It is hard to replace someone who works as hard, as consistently as he does and who knows so much about this system. He will be deeply missed."

After he retires, Warden and his wife, Freida – who retired as HU's Customer Service Manager three years ago – plan to travel and spend time with their grandchildren. "We hope to enjoy life as much as we can," he says.

Incentives ... continued from front

"This is really a risk-free program," says Robby Jones, TVA Distributor Delivery Regional Manager, Alabama District. "Companies receive payments year-round for agreeing to help TVA reduce demand during peak periods."

A valuable benefit to EnerNOC participants, says Jones, is the DemandSMART™ program, which provides real-time energy usage data. Jones says many participants have saved more money pinpointing energy savings from the usage data than they have received from the program payments.

For more information on any of these incentive programs, call Terri Harris at (256) 773-3340 or email tharris@hartselleutilities.org.

Water Rates Increasing Slightly, Natural Gas Decrease Expected

HU water rates will increase October 1, says HU Accounting and Finance Manager Bob Sittason. The increase will be 2.7 percent, which for the average HU water customer will be about 43 cents a month, he says.

Last summer, Sittason explains, Decatur Utilities – from which HU purchases all of its water – approved a three-year annual rate increase. This is the second of the three increases.

"This is a straight pass-through increase," he explains. "We are not adding anything to it."

"The actual increase is 9.28 cents per thousand gallons," he says. "Our average residential customer uses 4,667 gallons a month."

At the same time water rates are increasing, Sittason reports that he expects natural gas rates this winter to decrease.

"We've locked in 81 percent of our expected usage at a cost that is 19.5 percent lower than our natural gas costs were last year," he explains. HU typically 'locks in,' or agree to buy, at least 80 percent of projected winter natural gas demand, based on a five-year historical average of actual demand between October and March.

"Depending on the winter weather and lifestyle habits, customers should see a decrease in their natural gas bill this winter," Sittason says.

Caring Day: November 5

Friday, Nov. 5, the City of Hartselle and Hartselle Beautification Association will sponsor the eleventh annual Caring Day. Residents are asked to place canned goods five feet away from curbside recycling bins. All canned goods will be picked up and taken to the Caring Place and distributed among the Caring Place and food pantries from area churches. This drive will help the food pantries get ready to help families and individuals for Thanksgiving.

Canned goods may also be dropped off Oct. 25 - Nov. 5 at City Hall, Hartselle Utilities, Joe Wheeler EMC, The William Bradford Huie Public Library, the Chamber of Commerce, Home-town Grocery, the Hartselle Enquirer, Sparkman Civic Center, both Fire Stations, and all banks in Hartselle. The schools will also be participating again this year.



Hartselle Utilities

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1010 Sparkman St NW
Hartselle, AL 35640
256-773-3340
www.HartselleUtilities.org