ENERGY UPDATE

An update to the state of energy in the State of Oregon

August 2002

General Updates

- Electric Supply – the electric supply remains stable in the Pacific NW.
- Rates – PGE has confirmed about a 10% rate decrease for large commercial customers on Jan 1, 2003; and NW Natural expects the same on Oct 1, 2002. http://www.portlandgeneral.com/about_pge/corporate_info/news/price_decrease_2003.asp
- El Nino – the weather phenomenon known as El Nino has returned, bringing with it an expected wet and warm Winter 2002. There should be little affect from El Nino this summer. http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/s938.htm
- Drought – most of Western Oregon is now labeled as "drought watch" areas, meaning the current drought is over, but could return. Parts of Eastern and Southern Oregon remain labeled as drought areas by the US Drought Monitor, and portions have been declared as drought areas by state and federal governments. http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html

TIP OF THE MONTH:

Turn off the lights in conference rooms when you're walking out after meetings. It's easy to get de-briefing and chatting about the meeting and just leave the room with the light on, but it should be turned off too. Most conference rooms have about 8 fluorescent tubes, each consuming 32 watts. That means they use about 2 kWh/8-hr workday. Multiply that by 150 conference rooms on the Mall and they use 300 kWh and cost about $22/day – just for conference rooms (that's $4,400 a year!). While it might not make the biggest difference in the budget shortfall this year, any bit of time we can keep the lights off can save money for the State.

ELECTRICITY 101

This section of the next several updates will be a brief description of different elements of electricity that impact our buildings and our bills.

#2: Facilities Charge

The Facilities Charge is based on the demand use for the building (for a refresher on demand, please refer to the July 2002 Energy Update). The utility company looks at the two highest demand peaks in the last 12 months, and assigns a charge to that. It rotates based on the most current month. So, if the current month was the highest of the year, it would use that amount, plus the next highest over the previous 11 months, and assign the charge. It divides the two highest months and then multiplies them by the charge to come up with the charge that appears on the bill.

Here's an example using actual peak demand (in kW) from the Human Services Building, based on the June 2002 billing:

July 2001 = 1,184 kW	August 2001 = **1,371** kW
Sept 2001 = **1,212** kW	Oct 2001 = 1,109 kW
Nov 2001 = 947 kW	Dec 2001 = 936 kW
Jan 2002 = 943 kW	Feb 2002 = 923 kW
Mar 2002 = 937 kW	April 2002 = 958 kW
May 2002 = 1,143 kW	June 2002 = 1,170 kW

Calculation: (1,212+1,371)/2 = 1,291*$1.65/kW = $2,130.15

This is a new charge as of March 1, 2002, when the investor-owned utilities deregulated in Oregon. It helps the utility cover the costs of shared primary and secondary wire, as well as distribution transformer costs. Plus, it also allows for future planning of what the building may require for demand. In essence, it's a charge for the electrical capacity of the facility.

Vending Misers

About a year ago, DAS worked with the Blind Comm. to have "VendingMisers" (see right) installed on most cold beverage machines in state-owned buildings in Salem and Portland. They were provided free of charge through a program from PGE and have the potential to save up to $100/year per machine. These devices have an occupancy sensor that shuts the machine off when it doesn't sense movement for 15 minutes (primarily at night). It also allows the machine to run for about 5 minutes every two hours to keep the beverages cold.

However, DAS has noticed that some of the devices are falling down and are not working anymore. That's a problem because we're not saving the money, and because we guaranteed PGE they'd be operating in the buildings for 10 years to justify their expense when we started the program. Therefore, we need your help. If you happen to be walking by a soda machine, please take a look up and see if the VendingMiser is still operating. Is the little white sensor up on the wall above the machine? Does it flash green when you walk near it? If not, please don't move the machine or touch anything that has fallen. Please just contact DAS at 503-378-3664 to make them aware of the location. Thanks for your help!

Prepared by Elin Shepard, Statewide Resource Coordinator, Dept of Admin Services. 1225 Ferry St, SE U100, Salem, OR 97301-4281. Phone: 503-378-2865 x241. Elin.D.Shepard @state.or.us.