

# energy

## CONNECTIONS

February 2010

**NorthWestern**  
**Energy**  
*Delivering a Bright Future*

# in this issue...

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NORTHWESTERN PROVIDES  
MONTANA RATE FILING NOTIFICATION

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YOUR OPINION COUNTS

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DID YOU KNOW?

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### NorthWestern Continues Community Support

*NorthWestern Energy has a long-standing tradition of supporting the communities it serves. In 2009 alone, the company paid almost \$128,000 in sponsorships in its three-state service area. For 2010, we have increased this budget amount to almost \$150,000. Look for our name and logo in programs or on display at community events. When you see us there, you know that we have supported the activity through a financial donation.*

*In 2009, we also gave almost \$622,000 to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations throughout Montana, Nebraska and South Dakota. We have budgeted for a similar amount for this year. You may find a summary of our donation efforts on our Web site at [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com) and follow the link under Our Commitment>Community.*

*We also encourage and appreciate our employees who continually give generously and tirelessly to making their communities a better place to live. Such commitment has been – and continues to be – a hallmark of NorthWestern Energy. ■*



## Here's a Chance to Win A New Flat-Screen TV

**B**etween February 1 and March 31, 2010, NorthWestern Energy invites you, our customers, to participate in a special promotion. When you sign up for one or more of our bill or payment programs – Budget Billing, EZ Pay or E-bill – we will enter your name into a free drawing for an ENERGY STAR® rated, 42-inch, flat-screen television.

Please review these bill and payment programs designed to make it easier for you to budget for and pay your energy bill.

- ◆ Budget Billing allows you to pay the same amount each month based on your energy usage for the past 12 months and the rates currently in affect.
- ◆ EZ Pay allows you to pay your utility bill through an automatic withdrawal from your bank account each month. You can even choose the withdrawal date.
- ◆ E-bill is a paperless option through which we send you an e-mail reminder when your bill is due. E-bill allows you to view, pay and archive your statements online.

You may sign up for one, two or all three of these program options. The choice is yours. Learn more about qualifications that apply to these programs by visiting us online at [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com) and following the link under Our Customers>Home or by calling us. Montana customers may call (888) 467-2669 and South Dakota and Nebraska customers may call (800) 245-6977.

When you sign up for one of the programs listed above, we will add your name to a drawing for one of three ENERGY STAR rated, 42-inch, flat-screen televisions. If you sign up for a combination of two or three programs, we will add your name once for each program you select.

We will draw names for the three televisions on April 5, 2010. This promotion is open to our customers but excludes employees and their immediate families.

See [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com) or call us for details about our new promotion and about the bill payment program that may suit your needs best. But hurry – this promotion ends on March 31, 2010! ■

## NorthWestern Provides Montana Rate Filing Notification

On October 16, 2009, NorthWestern submitted its rate filing to the Montana Public Service Commission (MPSC). The filing included natural gas and electric utility revenue requirements, allocated costs of service and rate design proposals. On January 15, 2010, we supplemented the filing material with additional allocated costs of service and rate design material.

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# NorthWestern Provides Montana Rate Filing Notification continued...

The filing requests that Montana customer rates be adjusted to reflect increases in the cost of delivering electricity and natural gas and addresses the allocation of costs between the respective customer classes and the rate used to recover such costs.

The MPSC has assigned Docket Number D2009.9.129 to this case and has issued a procedural schedule that includes a hearing before the Commission beginning on July 14, 2010, at its offices in Helena, Mont. The MPSC telephone number is (406) 444-6199. The Montana Consumer Counsel is a state agency established by the Montana Constitution to represent Montana public utility and transportation consumers before the MPSC, state and federal courts and administrative agencies in matters concerning public utility regulation. The Counsel's telephone number is (406) 444-2771.

The following charts illustrate the average impact to nonsupply rates depending on the type of service. In addition to these rates, customer bills include charges for energy supply costs. This filing also includes energy supply cost allocation proposals including inclining block rate designs for natural gas and electric supply residential customers. The actual impact to individual customers will vary depending on service, energy supply costs and the amount of energy used.

## Electric Utility Proposed Rate Changes


Rate Classes	Revenues @ Current Rates	Revenues @ Proposed Rates	Dollar Difference	Percent Difference
Residential	\$ 95,584,092.52	\$ 104,186,660.85	\$ 8,602,568.33	9.00%
General Service - 1 Secondary	\$ 93,070,174.10	\$ 98,196,178.62	\$ 5,126,004.51	5.51%
General Service - 1 Primary	\$ 9,241,883.31	\$ 9,656,552.03	\$ 414,668.72	4.49%
General Service - 2 Substation	\$ 7,408,302.16	\$ 7,704,501.33	\$ 296,199.18	4.00%
General Service - 2 Transmission	\$ 2,227,075.85	\$ 2,290,580.03	\$ 63,504.19	2.85%
Irrigation	\$ 3,726,232.70	\$ 4,061,593.64	\$ 335,360.94	9.00%
Lighting	\$ 11,012,687.06	\$ 11,690,722.80	\$ 678,035.74	6.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$222,270,447.69</b>	<b>\$237,786,789.30</b>	<b>\$15,516,341.61</b>	<b>6.98%</b>

## Natural Gas Utility Proposed Rate Change

Customer Rate Class	Revenues @ Current Rates	Revenues @ Proposed Rates	Dollar Difference	Percent Difference
Residential Natural Gas Service	\$ 55,731,428.57	\$ 57,403,371.42	\$1,671,942.86	3.00%
General Natural Gas Service	\$ 29,089,864.35	\$ 29,089,864.35	-	0.00%
Firm Utility Gas Contract Service	\$ 271,451.03	\$ 277,569.28	\$ 6,118.25	2.25%
Distribution Firm Transportation Natural Gas Service	\$ 2,111,689.74	\$ 2,195,599.71	\$ 83,909.97	3.97%
Transportation Firm Transportation Natural Gas Service	\$ 10,875,288.76	\$ 11,072,824.86	\$ 197,536.10	1.82%
Firm Storage Natural Gas Service	\$ 5,469,348.59	\$ 5,469,348.59	-	0.00%
Distribution Interruptible Transportation	\$ 15,091.97	\$ 15,389.17	\$ 297.20	1.97%
Transportation Interruptible Transportation	\$ 388,402.33	\$ 396,052.46	\$ 7,650.13	1.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$103,952,565.34</b>	<b>\$105,920,019.84</b>	<b>\$1,967,454.50</b>	<b>1.89%</b>

The MPSC has until February 2, 2010, to determine whether the supplemental filing meets its minimum filing requirements. If the supplemental filing is found to meet minimal filing requirements, NorthWestern agreed to extend the timeframe by which the MPSC must issue a final order concerning the general rate filing by 90 days to October 11, 2010.

In its rate case filing, NorthWestern proposed a revenue requirement increase of approximately \$1.96 million for its natural gas utility and approximately \$15.5 million for its electric utility.

 Note: You may download the general rate case filing documents by visiting our Web site at [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com) and following the link on the home page under About NorthWestern Energy.

## did you know?

To the right are definitions of a few phrases commonly used in our rate filings.

**Revenue Requirement** - the electric and natural gas utility costs of providing delivery service

**Allocated Cost of Service** - the allocation of the revenue requirement to the various utility customer classes (e.g., residential and general service) based on their use of the electric and natural gas delivery systems

**Rate Design** - establishment of individual rates that are used ultimately to bill customers

## contact...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F (888) 467-2669  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Electric (888) 467-2353  
Natural Gas (888) 467-2427  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center  
6 a.m. - 10 p.m. M-F (800) 245-6977  
Emergency 24/7 Service (800) 245-6977  
Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center  
6 a.m. - 10 p.m. M-F (800) 245-6977  
Emergency 24/7 Service (800) 245-6977  
Call Before You Dig

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone  
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959  
(via checking, savings, or money market account)  
SpeedPay Automated  
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927  
(via credit card account)

## Your Opinion Counts

Every month, we receive calls or notes from many customers suggesting ways we can improve this bill insert. We appreciate the effort it takes for you to contact us and to offer us your good ideas.

Within the next several months, we plan to evaluate our Web site, [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com), and identify ways we can make it more customer friendly, but we can't do it without your help. We plan to use some online tools to get feedback that will help us improve the organization of our site, optimize our navigation structure and test any changes we make before we go live with them on our site.

If you have a home PC with an internet connection and would like to help us in this effort, please send an e-mail to [web@northwestern.com](mailto:web@northwestern.com). We will follow up with you and provide more details.

You are the expert when it comes to communication tools like this newsletter and our Web site - and we appreciate your feedback. Thanks for reading Energy Connections and for considering how you might help us improve our Web site. ■