

We offer rebates for efficient Energy Star LED light bulbs

Switching to energy-efficient light bulbs may be the easiest step we can take to save money on our electric bill, but anyone who has shopped for light bulbs lately knows the dilemma of choosing the right bulb. PPUC offers rebates on Energy Star LED light bulbs. For details visit princetonutilities.com or saveenergyinprinceton.com.

Q: Why should I pay more for Energy Star certified LED or CFL bulbs?

A: Bulbs that have earned the Energy Star label have been certified and tested to ensure they use less energy, save money and help protect the environment. They use at least 75 percent less energy to provide the same amount or more light than traditional incandescent bulbs. By replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star certified models, you can save up to \$70 each year. The Energy Star bulbs last 10 to 25 times longer than traditional bulbs.



Q: Which type of bulb will help me save the most money?

A: LEDs, the latest innovation in home lighting technology, use 75-80 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. The average consumer will spend about \$1 to operate

an Energy Star certified LED bulb for one year, compared to \$4.80 to operate one incandescent light bulb. They are made of durable material, making them harder to break than other bulbs.

Q. How do CFLs compare to LEDs in cost and energy savings?

A. CFLs use about the same amount of energy as LEDs. They last about 10 times longer than traditional bulbs but not nearly as long as LEDs. Their annual operating cost is about \$1.20 per bulb. Energy Star CFLs can be purchased for about \$2.50 per bulb compared to about \$12 for an equivalent LED. But again, PPUC offers rebates on Energy Star CFLs or LEDs.

Q. How do I choose the right bulb for my fixtures?

A. To match the brightness of your old incandescent bulbs, look for lumens, not watts. Lumens indicate light output. Watts indicate energy consumed. For example, an Energy Star CFL or LED bulb with 800 lumens will be as bright as a 60-watt incandescent. The "lighting facts" label on the bulb packaging provides additional information to help you make your selection.

Visit us online for more info

For more about your utility's energy efficiency and rebate programs, visit us online at www.princetonutilities.com. We also take pride in being a local business. You can contact us with a phone call to 389-2252 or stop by our office at 907 1st Street.

The Connector

Princeton Public Utilities

Despite upward cost pressures, no 2015 electric rate increase

Princeton PUC (PPUC) had a utility rate study done this past year to determine if we are adequately recovering costs with our existing rates in both the electric and water departments.

We are pleased to announce that there will be no increase in the electric rates for 2015. We are able to maintain these rates that have been in place since 2010 despite the fact the electric industry is facing some real challenges.

The uncertain impact of new regulations and additional costs associated with renewable energy standards are just a couple of reasons that the cost of electricity is rising. Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA), PPUC's wholesale power supplier, is projecting a four percent increase in the cost of power for the year 2016 and possible increases in 2017 and 2018. Despite these upward cost pressures, we are able to maintain current electric rates in 2015.

The utility and its customers divide water line responsibilities

In January and February 2014 some home and business owners experienced problems with frozen water services due to the extreme cold temperatures. Let's hope we never experience another winter like last year, but if we do here is some basic information for your use:

When there are extreme frost conditions and the risk of freezing water lines occurs, a general notification will be placed in the Princeton *Union Eagle*, the local radio station and on the PPUC website: www.princetonutilities.com

General notification will consist of:

- Residents will be asked to monitor the temperature of their water. If the water temperature reaches 40 degrees F. or lower, we recommend you start running a continuous pencil size stream of cold water from one faucet. **Monitoring water temperature is the first line of defense.**

- Residents should notify Princeton Public Utilities they are letting their water run.



RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1. Princeton Public Utilities is responsible for frozen water mains.**
- 2. Property owners are responsible for the water line from the house/building to the water main.**

- Running a constant pencil-sized stream of water is less expensive than repairing a frozen water service.
- Residents that provide water to another resident whose lines have frozen will have their utility bill adjusted to their average use.
- If you notice an unusual burst of rust from a faucet, it could mean you're going to have some problems with freezing lines, so flush out the line until the rust is gone and then let your water run from the faucet at a small steady trickle.
- Warmer weather after a long period of cold temperature is not necessarily a good thing—sometimes that will only drive the frost down farther, causing pipes to freeze.
- The utility can help you locate your curb stop. We will also try and help you contact a plumbing service.
- You may also experience frozen sewer lines, so we encourage the use of water flow more often; for example do several small loads of laundry.

Property owner test

Take a sample of water from your basement or as close to the water meter as you can. Check the temperature of this water and if it changes from one day to the next, or is below 40 degrees, you will need to run a small steady trickle of water to help prevent a line freeze.

If you have a frozen water line, a reputable plumbing service can possibly thaw a frozen water line out by running a smaller hose with warm water pumped through it inside your water line. The property owner shall be responsible for any thawing, digging, street repairs, and other costs accrued while thawing their service line.

Water rate increase of 8% set to take place January 1

While our recent rate study showed no need to increase electric rates in 2015, the findings were different for the water utility.

For water, we will need to increase rates by 8 percent effective January 1. This will result in an average residential customer using 5,000 gallons of water per month to see their monthly bill go from \$35.00 to \$37.90, an increase of \$2.90. This increase is necessary for some significant capital improvements needed in the water system, such as maintenance to the north and south water towers.