

# ENERGYWISE



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2011

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## Holiday wishes

As 2011 draws to a close, we send our best wishes for the holidays and wish you a safe and happy new year. It's a privilege to serve you.



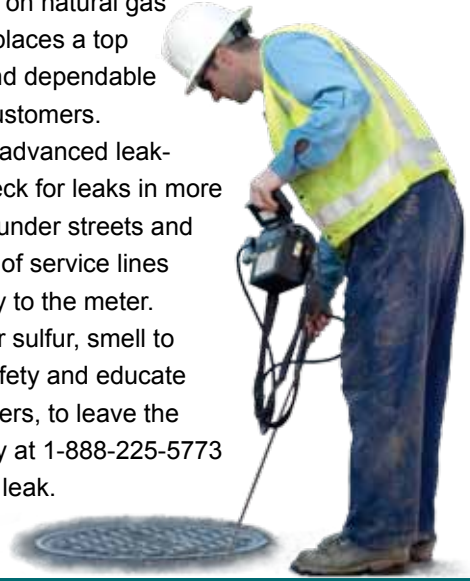
Puget Sound Energy  
1-888-225-5773  
TTY: 1-800-962-9498

PSE.com • Manage your account and pay online.

## Providing you with safe, dependable energy service and information

Knowing our customers rely on natural gas for heating and more, PSE places a top priority on delivering safe and dependable natural gas service to our customers.

On a daily basis, PSE uses advanced leak-detection instruments to check for leaks in more than 12,000 miles of mains under streets and approximately 13,100 miles of service lines beneath customers' property to the meter. We also add a rotten egg, or sulfur, smell to the odorless gas for your safety and educate and rely on you, our customers, to leave the area and call us immediately at 1-888-225-5773 or 911 if you ever suspect a leak.



## Winter weather? We're ready for it

With another La Niña weather pattern predicted, we're expecting another cooler, wetter-than-normal winter this year. Our customer service representatives and field crews are on special alert during the winter season to



*Photo submitted by customer following a storm.*

handle any customer service problems caused by harsh weather.

When storms hit, you can get the latest information on PSE.com, including a Service Alert Map with estimated power-restoration times. You can also call PSE at 1-888-225-5773. And follow PSETalk on Twitter for ongoing news and updates. Share your photos of damage or PSE crews at work at [www.flickr.com/groups/stormsandweatherevents](http://www.flickr.com/groups/stormsandweatherevents).



## PSE prepares for winter's worst to meet customer power needs

Here's how PSE is ready for winter — by the numbers:

- ◆ 50 power line crews — each crew includes at least two people — are always available to respond to any outages.
- ◆ 76 PSE service linemen are the first to assess damage to the electric system and identify needed crews.
- ◆ 40 tree crews are available to clear trees and limbs away from downed power lines.

In 2011, we:

- ◆ Cleared 2,220 miles of power lines, trees and limbs.
- ◆ Replaced 3,500 power poles.
- ◆ Installed 48 miles of new or upgraded power transmission lines.

### *Helicopter pulling transmission lines to connect Lower Snake River Wind Project to electric grid*



A helicopter helps string high-voltage electric transmission wire between new power poles at PSE's newest wind-power facility, the Lower Snake River Wind Project. The wind farm's new transmission circuit, stretching for about eight miles, links the wind facility's 149 wind turbines with the Bonneville Power Administration's regional transmission grid. The Lower Snake River Project is PSE's third and largest wind-power facility. When the first phase comes online next spring, the Southeast Washington operation will produce up to 343 megawatts of electricity — enough electricity, on average, to power 100,000 homes.

### **No-cost/low-cost tips to save energy at home**

- ◆ When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- ◆ When you're asleep or away from the house, turn your thermostat back 10-15 degrees. You'll save about 10 percent by turning back your thermostat for eight hours.
- ◆ Open curtains and blinds on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to heat your home; close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- ◆ Seal air leaks by adding caulk or weather stripping around doors and windows.
- ◆ Schedule service for your heating system as directed by the owner's manual.
- ◆ Replace or clean your furnace filter monthly or as needed.



## Share the gift of warmth

Winter can be difficult for many in our area who struggle to stay warm. You can help by donating to The Salvation Army Warm Home Fund. The fund provides short-term emergency bill-payment assistance to our neighbors facing tough times. Simply include a little extra in your next PSE bill payment. Check the donation box on your payment stub or online payment page. All donations go directly to The Salvation Army Warm Home Fund.



## Lower natural gas rates set for winter

Our natural gas rates for the winter season, to be set by Washington state's Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) following press time, are expected to decrease on Nov. 1 by an overall 4.3 percent for all customer groups who purchase gas from PSE. The decrease will reduce the average residential natural-gas bill (based on 68 therms of monthly usage for a 12-month period) by 4 percent, or \$3.39, to \$81.59. This is about what PSE customers were paying in 2006. The lower rate is due to the lower market cost of natural-gas supplies PSE purchases for our customers. Under the Purchased Gas Adjustment rate-setting mechanism, Washington utilities, including PSE, request the UTC to adjust rates up or down periodically to reflect changes in the price of natural gas charged by producers and wholesale marketers. PSE does not profit on the cost of natural gas we purchase for customers.

## Have your natural gas piping checked

PSE regularly inspects the underground natural gas pipelines in the street and to your meter to make sure they are operating properly and safely. If you have buried piping on your property to a pool, hot tub, natural gas barbecue or detached building, that piping is usually not maintained by PSE, with a few exceptions. If not maintained, buried piping may leak or corrode. It should be periodically inspected and repaired by a licensed plumbing contractor. If you plan to excavate near your buried piping, it should be located and marked by the contractor in advance and the excavation should be done by hand.

### Steps to take if you suspect a natural gas leak

**Step 1: Leave the area immediately on foot.** Do not use electric switches, telephones, including cell phones, or anything that could cause a spark.

**Step 2: Go to a safe location** and then call Puget Sound Energy at 1-888-225-5773 or 911. Do not use email or the Internet to contact PSE about a natural gas leak or odor. Don't assume someone else has reported the leak or odor.

### General Tips

- ◆ Alert your neighbors.
- ◆ Puget Sound Energy's trained technicians check suspected natural gas leaks at no cost.
- ◆ Never try to repair a natural gas leak. PSE natural gas technicians will make repairs.



## Make your holidays bright with LED lights

Did you know energy-efficient LED (light emitting diode) lights use about one-tenth the electricity as mini-lights? This holiday season, switch to LEDs and celebrate with all the joy of years past while cutting your energy use. LEDs also last much longer than traditional lights, are safe and cool to the touch and are suitable for outdoor use.

## Old fridge? We'll take it

PSE wants to round up your old energy-wasting fridge or freezer. While funding lasts, PSE electric customers can get \$50 for their old units through Dec. 31. Residential electric customers can get free pickup and recycling of the old or spare fridge or freezer taking up space in their garage. Your extra fridge could be costing you as much as \$200 each year on your electric bill. Older model refrigerators and freezers can use up to four times the energy of newer energy-efficient models. Visit [PSE.com/Fridge](http://PSE.com/Fridge) or call 1-866-551-9755 to schedule your pickup.



## Bill payment assistance available

With a cold winter coming, PSE wants you to know about available energy assistance and bill payment programs. Last year, more than 80,000 qualified low-income PSE customers received assistance grants totaling \$34.5 million, including more than \$13.6 million from our own HELP (Home Energy Lifeline Program) fund. Call toll free 1-866-223-5425 for the nearest agency to learn more about assistance from PSE and the federal government's LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) fund.



## Save time and postage — Go paperless

Sign up to pay your energy bill online. Log on to [PSE.com](http://PSE.com) and register for "My PSE Account," then "Go Paperless." You can pay your bills online — and may even save money by tracking your day-to-day energy online.

# Guarantees

## Customer service — guaranteed

PSE makes two service guarantees to you. First, we commit to keeping scheduled appointments, and second, we commit to restoring power outages as soon as we can.

- If we don't keep an appointment to install new service, reconnect existing service, or inspect natural gas equipment, you'll receive a \$50 credit on your PSE bill.
- If your electric service is out for 120 consecutive hours or longer, you may be eligible to receive a \$50 credit on your PSE bill.

These service guarantees are in addition to nine service quality measures that track PSE's performance.

Note that these are subject to certain conditions and may be suspended during unusual and exceptional circumstances. For more information, visit [PSE.com/Guarantees](http://PSE.com/Guarantees).



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Visit our local customer service offices  
Most offices are open M-F, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- Bellingham** — 1329 N. State St.
- Ellensburg** — 207 N. Pearl St.
- Freeland** — 1794 Main St.
- Oak Harbor** — 231 SE Barrington Dr. #101
- Olympia** — 2711 Pacific Ave. SE
- Port Townsend** — 181 Quincy St. #101
- Vashon Island** — 18125 Vashon Hwy. SW

For information about rates and your rights and responsibilities, please call or visit us online.

