



600 South Fourth Street
P.O. Box 383
Stoughton, WI 53589-0383

Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886

News Release

Stoughton Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2015

Contact: Brian Hoops, Utilities Technical Operations Supervisor

Stoughton Utilities cautions against electric service disconnections as winter moratorium ends

Stoughton Utilities is advising electric and water customers who are behind on their bills to immediately pay any delinquent balances, or make payment arrangements with the utility to avoid service disconnection.

Wisconsin's Winter Emergency Period, often referred to as the moratorium on residential service disconnection, ends April 15. After that date, utilities statewide may begin to disconnect service to customers who are past due on payment of their electric bills for any period of time, including the winter months. Stoughton Utilities plans to disconnect electric service to all severely delinquent accounts on April 16.

“The end of the winter moratorium on disconnections is fast approaching,” said Brian Hoops, Utilities Technical Operations Supervisor. “Unpaid bills drive up costs for the whole community. It is Stoughton Utilities' goal to do what we can to collect unpaid bills while also attempting to help customers avoid service disruptions for nonpayment.”

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin established the annual moratorium—from November 1 to April 15—to protect customers from service disconnection during harsh Wisconsin winters.

According to Hoops, more than 2,100 utility customers have overdue bills totaling over \$421,900. Despite these figures, over 75 percent of customers pay their bills on time each month.

Hoops encourages customers to contact the Stoughton Utilities office as soon as possible to begin discussing deferred payment arrangements that can spread payment of delinquent balances out over a period of time.

“We understand that situations can arise, making it difficult for customers to pay their bills,” said Hoops. “However, to avoid disconnection, we are urging customers to make the appropriate payment arrangements. We would like to help these customers make suitable arrangements that fit within their household budgets rather than shut off their service.”

Customers can contact Stoughton Utilities to establish a deferred payment arrangement. The utility will negotiate payment options with each customer based upon their unique financial situation, however will require a down-payment of at least one-third the past-due balance. After April 10, all deferred payment arrangements must be made in-person at the Stoughton Utilities office, so customers should not wait until the last minute.

Various low-income assistance programs are offered to Stoughton Utilities customers through our Commitment to Community program, as well as other area resources. To apply for energy assistance, customers should immediately call 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947). An appointment is necessary, and assistance payments may take up to six weeks to be received. Under the eligibility requirements, customers at or below 60 percent of the state’s median income may qualify for WHEAP assistance, including:

- A single person earning up to \$25,152 per year;
- A family of four with an annual income of up to \$48,368

Customers can review their account balances and make payments online at www.stoughtonutilities.com. To make payment arrangements or to explore payment options with the utility, customers can contact Stoughton Utilities at (608) 873-3379 during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

###