



Press Release

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Berkshire Gas Forecasting Lower Natural Gas Bills

Annual Communication to Customers Also Outlines Payment Assistance Options and Energy Efficiency Offerings

Pittsfield, MA – November 16, 2009, In a letter sent to customers this week, Berkshire Gas President Karen L. Zink says that customers can expect lower natural gas bills this winter compared to last and price stability going into the heating season.

In the letter Zink states, “This year, we are happy to share some good news. Natural gas customers can expect lower bills on average this winter compared to last year. Plentiful domestic natural gas supplies and lower prices will drive bills down this winter and provide welcome relief during these difficult economic times.”

In its annual winter heating fuels forecast issued in early October, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Energy Information Administration (EIA) also projected that the total amount paid for natural gas consumed by a representative residential customer this coming winter will be lower than last winter.

In discussing how the company works to manage costs paid by its customers, Zink explains, “In the interest of keeping our customer’s heating bills as low as possible, we constantly work to buy the most reliable and lowest cost natural gas supplies available in the competitive marketplace. By doing this, we were able to lower the cost our customer’s paid for natural gas twice during the last winter heating season. “

The natural gas bill projections are based upon normal winter weather. Substantially colder-than-normal weather would result in increased consumption of natural gas and higher-than-projected bills, while substantially warmer-than-normal winter weather would reduce usage and result in lower-than-projected natural gas bills.

Payment Options Outlined

In the letter Berkshire Gas also outlined payment options that it makes available such as a budget billing program that helps customers spread winter heating costs over 12 months. “This is a great way to keep energy bills manageable and to plan a year round budget. I highly recommend this service to all of our customers and encourage them to call and enroll today,” Zink wrote.

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Other payment assistance options available to Berkshire Gas customers include: Automatic payment from a checking account, installments plans for overdue balances, local payment agents, an arrearage management program for customers with an overdue balance, a low-income discount rate and protection from disconnection for eligible customers. Further information and eligibility guidelines for each of these offerings is available on the company's Web site (www.berkshiregas.com) or by calling the company's Customer Information Center at 1-800-292-5012.

Payment assistance programs for utility customers are also offered by local human services providers. A list of these programs is available on the Berkshire Gas Web site or by calling the company's Customer Information Center.

Energy Efficiency Rebates

To assist customers in controlling their heating costs, Berkshire Gas also offers energy efficiency rebates. Heating customers are eligible for 75% (up to \$2,000) of the installed cost of energy-saving measures including attic, duct, floor, pipe, crawl space and wall insulation as well as clock thermostats and instrumented air sealing. For further information about these rebate programs, Berkshire Gas heating customers should call 1-800-944-3212.

Commenting on the variety of payment assistance and energy efficiency offerings, Zink said, "We are committed to helping our customers manage and meet their energy bills. We are pleased to be able to offer so many options to assist our customers and we welcome the opportunity to work with customers in need during these challenging times."