A look back and a look ahead

by Ken Weber, CEO

In our efforts to make HMU a Sustainable Municipal Utility long into the future, the primary focus thus far has been on the condition and integrity of our infrastructure.

In preparation for 2018, we generally begin by reviewing what has been accomplished during 2017:

• Completed Utility Services Base Rate Cost of Service Studies
• Adjusted Rates for Electric and Water Services based on Cost of Service Studies
• Completed a Comprehensive Upgrade to HMU’s Integrated Resource Plan
• Completed Phase 1 of the Fiber Optics Project
• Initiated Phase 2 of the Fiber Optics Project
• Evaluated Financing Options for Customer Connections to New Fiber Plant
• Completed Phase I of the Electric Underground Conversion Project
• Completed Electric Substation Switchgear Project
• Initiated Phase II of the Electric Underground Conversion Project
• Installed New Digital Telephone Switch
• Developed and Approved Plan for Water Plant Remediation with the objective of lowering O&M Expenses and Improve Plant Efficiency

continued on back...
A look back and a look ahead

What’s next:
• Complete Phase II of the Fiber Optics Project
• Complete Customer Connections to New Fiber Optics System
• Complete Phase II of the Electric Underground Conversion Project
• Complete Engineering Design for remainder of Electric Underground Conversion
• Assessment of Water Distribution System
• Assessment of Natural Gas Distribution System
• Develop and Implement Plans for Demolition of Old Water Plant
• Review Long-Term Options for Equipment Storage
• Review Options for Repurposing or Demolishing Old Office Building
• Review Options for Standby Power Generation
• Perform Hydrological Assessment of Available Water Resources
• Finalize Staffing Succession Plan
• Complete Water Plant Remediation Project
• Evaluate Customer interest in a Community Solar Project
• Consider Feasibility of a BioGas Digester (Objectives - Renewable Natural Gas for Electric Generation or Resale)
• Evaluate current Customer Service and Financial Services Software for upgrade or replacement

We have come a long way in the last several years but still have more to do. All of our interest and investments are directed toward ensuring you, our valued Customers, have the most reliable services at the lowest possible costs.

As always, should you ever have questions or suggestions please feel free to call or stop by the office.

Wishing you and yours the very best in this New Year!

Important Payment Reminder

When dropping off a payment in person, at our drop box, at Midstates Bank or Shelby County State Bank, always, always, always, enclose your payment stub to ensure your payment is properly credited to your account. If you have multiple accounts, including your stub helps us know to which account we should post the payment. Utility and Telecom service is not billed through the same system so if we have the stub, we’ll know where you want us to post your payment.

2017 Appliance and lighting rebate applications due

Submit rebate applications for qualified lighting, appliances or insulation installed during calendar year 2017 by January 31, 2018. Qualifying appliances must be Energy Star approved and carry the Energy Star logo on the yellow Energy Guide. Furnaces and A/C units do have to meet certain efficiency targets. Check the rebate application or brochure for guidelines. Insulation rebates require a pre and post inspection in order to receive a rebate. Customers whose projected single or combined lighting rebate request(s) will exceed $1,500 during 2018 should contact HMU before installation to ensure funds are available. Rebate guidelines and forms are available in our office or at Harlannet.com. If you have any questions on our energy rebate program, call Doug Hammer direct at 733-8065 or the HMU office at 755-5182.
Gas use up almost 20%

Spurred on by bone chilling temperatures as the calendar rolled from 2017 to 2018 and a mid-month deep freeze, HMU customers used almost 20% more natural gas in January as they did a year ago. Wind chills of 30 below on January first sent the demand for gas close to the 3,000 cubic feet mark only to be surpassed three days later on January 4th when demand broke through the 3,000 cubic feet barrier. Temperatures plunged again from the 11th through the 17th. Customer use on January 11th exceeded demand from the bitterly cold January first. Temperatures moderated toward the end of the month but seasonal to below average temperatures kept up demand.

The contracted price of gas was down compared to 2017 but when use goes up, heating bills go up too. Electric bills can go up also due to the amount of time furnace blowers run and the use of supplemental heat sources such as space heaters. If you think you are going to have trouble keeping up with your utility bill, please contact us as soon as possible to set up payment arrangements.

This winter reinforces a personal long term strategy is needed to help keep down heating bills. Some things to consider:

- Have your furnace, including furnace filters, serviced on a regular basis. This helps keep them efficient and safe.
- Install the most efficient gas furnace you can. Highly efficient furnaces maximize the heating potential of gas. Rebates are available for 95% and 96% efficient furnaces.
- Take the time in the Fall to winterize. Check doors and windows for leaks. Simply adjusting or replacing weather stripping around doors and windows takes little time or money but pays dividends in January. Seal cracks that allow cold air in.
- Set your own personal home energy policy. Who controls the thermostat? At what temperature will it be set? Will you allow space heaters or encourage money saving sweaters instead?
- Install and use a programmable thermostat. Set the temperatures to fit your lifestyle.
- Insulate attics and walls as much as possible to keep warm air in. Rebates are available for installing insulation.
Gas Connector Safety

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances to gas sources. Older gas connectors made of uncoated brass are susceptible to cracking, breaking and deterioration due to moving, bending, corrosion or the way they were made. The connectors have a flaw in how the tubing was joined to the end pieces. Over time, the end pieces can separate and cause a gas leak, which could lead to property damage or injury if not replaced immediately.

To our knowledge, these brass connectors have not been manufactured for over 25 years, but many are still in use. Not all uncoated brass connectors have this flaw, but all should be inspected by a professional and replaced with stainless steel connectors. Gas appliances in your home that should be checked include: range, oven or cook top, clothes dryer, hot water heater or auxiliary area heaters.

**Do NOT attempt to move the appliance yourself to check the connector.** Contact a licensed plumber or qualified professional appliance repair service to inspect and replace connectors if necessary.

If an HMU employee finds a brass flex connector on an appliance in your home, the appliance will be red tagged and shut off at the appliance, if possible, or gas to the home will be shut off until the line is replaced. This is for your safety.

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HMU Employees Recognized for Service

Three employees were recognized for their years of service at the January 20th HMU recognition banquet.

**20 Years of Service:**
Dar Gessert, Director of Electric, Gas and Water

**5 Years of Service:**
Jacob Jochims, Journeyman Lineman
Brian Lasher, Water Systems Operation Tech
Saying Goodbye to Winter

by Ken Weber, CEO

We are nearing the end of an unusually cold winter, but that is only when compared to the recent past. This past winter has actually been closer to normal in temperature but our area has also been lower in precipitation than other parts of the state. What this means to our HMU Customers is that you will likely see higher heating bills than what you have experienced over the past several years.

Thus, we beg your patience as we continue our efforts to ensure the highest quality, most reliable and least cost utility services to you our valued HMU Customers. Be cautious in construction areas to keep everyone safe.

As always, feel free to contact the office with any issues or concerns.

Something else to keep in mind as we near the end of winter, it means we are also nearing the start of construction season. This year will be busier than the last several due to the multitude of projects we will have underway. Along with our Fiber-To-The-Premise (FTTP) Project, we will be starting the customer connections (converting customers from coax to fiber) portion of the project and the next phase of our electric underground conversion project. We will be moving underground utilities from the berm south of the Settle Inn motel and placing them further underground to allow for construction of a new Bomgaars and Buck Snort restaurant.

Combine these with our annual maintenance programs and there will be plenty of construction activity around the community this year.

Quick Tips

The winter moratorium ends April 1. If you are having a problem paying your utility bill and could be facing a shut off, contact us NOW to set up a payment plan. It is much easier to make payment arrangements before services are shut off.

Spring yard work and construction starts soon! Stay safe. Call 811 before you dig and have underground utilities located.

Employee Recognition

Employees recognized for their years of service to HMU and its customers at the annual employee recognition banquet in January include Journeyman Jacob Jochims for five years of service and Director of Electric, Gas and Water Dar Gessert for 20 years.
Budget Billing

Budget Billing is a way to level out utility payments over 12 months. Using Budget Billing, you’ll know how much you owe for electric, gas and water service every month.

Your Budget Billing amount is based on the amount of electricity, gas and water you used over the past 12 months. The estimated future usage assumes you will consume about the same amount of energy and water over the next 12 months.

After your average usage is determined, we can estimate what the monthly bill will be for the next 12 months. This estimate is what you will pay every month for the next year. At the end of 12 months, you have the option to true up your bill if you used more than estimated and, therefore, owe more than originally estimated, or you can roll over the amount owed to the next 12 months. If you used less than estimated, your credit will apply toward next year.

Budget billing avoids the wide swings of monthly utility bills. Now is the time to enroll.
Spring project update

by Ken Weber, CEO

HMU has invested considerable treasure over these last 18 months in upgrading our utility infrastructure.

Our fiber to the home (FTTH) project is a joint effort between our Electric and Telecommunications departments to increase service reliability and data capacity for both HMU operations and customer usage. Completion of this project will allow HMU to access utility systems real-time to monitor operations and will facilitate future implementation of effective load control and/or peak load shaving. These particular features relate to effective monitoring and efficient controlling of overall energy usage, particularly on those days where we are dealing with peak demand on our system. In addition, it provides the infrastructure whereby customers may one day be able to remotely monitor and control their individual energy use.

Fiber will provide HMU Telecommunication customers a dedicated individual direct connection back to our headend. This will mean significantly increased data capacity, reliability, security and speed for your internet, video and telephone connections. This project should also provide reduced telecommunications systems operations and maintenance expenses long into the future.

Our electric underground conversion project will complete an undertaking started many years ago. This initiative will result in the entire community operating at a single distribution voltage, whereas now different parts of Harlan are served by different voltages over separate distribution systems. Likewise, this should increase reliability and security while reducing electric systems operations and maintenance expenses.

After years of excessive chemical usage and filter replacements in our water treatment plant, the remediation project currently underway should resolve operational issues dating back to the plant start up. Although we have not yet completed this project we are already realizing reduced chemical usage, less frequent filter replacements and lower operating pressures through the reverse osmosis units. The latter operational impacts should also reduce overall energy usage at the water plant.

So, as an HMU Customer, these significant investments represent continuing efforts toward providing the lowest cost most reliable services you expect from your Harlan Municipal Utilities.

As always, should you have any questions or concerns about what we do or why we do it, feel free to contact us at your HMU Office.
**Project Share**

Project Share assists needy households in paying energy bills.

You may add a regular contribution to Project Share through your monthly utility payment or by making a one-time direct donation. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible and tax deductible.

People qualifying under the Project Share guidelines are carefully identified by an area social service agency.

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**Project Share Contribution**

I’d like to help a neighbor in need with a contribution to Project Share.

Name_______________________________

Address_____________________________________________________________

Phone_______________________________________________________________

I will contribute $____________ per month. I understand this amount will be added to my monthly utility bill.

My account number:___________________________________________________

I have enclosed a one-time contribution of $______________________________

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**Water Main Flushing**

HMU will be flushing water mains the week of April 23rd.

During this time, you may notice cloudy water before bathing, doing dishes or laundry. Be sure to let the water run for a minute or two to help remove the cloudiness.

Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.
Locally Owned and Locally Operated

by Ken Weber, CEO

Municipally owned utility services represent the epitome of the phrase “Locally Owned and Locally Operated”.

- Municipal utility ownership and control keeps salaries and investments within the community, rather than sending wages and profits to out-of-town corporations.
- Municipal employee wages create local economic activity with dollars spent with local retail and service businesses.
- Municipal employee wages and benefits contribute to the overall long-term vitality of the community.
- Municipal rates contribute to improved reliability and systems operations, at the lowest possible costs.
- Municipal ownership keeps capital investment, coupled with operations and maintenance expenditures, focused on our own infrastructure.

Any net revenue, in excess of depreciation, is put back into the local systems operations and upgrades.

Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (P.I.L.O.T. Fees) made to the City of Harlan contribute to an overall reduction of local taxes required for city operations.

These are only a few of the many benefits afforded by local Municipal Utility ownership.

Our HMU Board meetings are open to the public. You can in fact, be heard by your fellow citizen/consumers.

For more information regarding your Municipal Utility, or for answers to other related issues or concerns, feel free to contact your HMU office anytime. We are “just down the street”, not somewhere else in another part of the state or country. You can receive a face-to-face answer, rather than be frustrated with an automated response.

Yours now and long into the future.
This month is a good time to look around your home and eliminate potentially deadly electric hazards.

**Start with your wiring.** Homes over 40 years old may not be wired to handle a modern electric load. A complete electrical inspection may be in order to ensure your wiring and fuse box can handle today’s electric demand.

**Check outlets.** Older homes may still have two prong outlets. Adapters or ‘cheater’ plugs that convert three prong cords to two prong outlets are a temporary fix. Replace outlets with modern three prong receptacles and keep things safe. Cover unused outlets accessible to children.

**Check power cords.** Make sure all power cords are in good condition not frayed, cracked, cut or chewed by pets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong). Change the outlet to accommodate the plug.

**Extension cords.** Another temporary fix. If power is needed in an area that doesn’t have an outlet, install a new receptacle instead of permanently using an extension cord.

**Outdoor Safety.** When painting, cleaning gutters or doing work requiring a ladder, always look up for overhead power lines.

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**2018 Water Quality Report**

Ensuring a safe and plentiful water supply is one of our oldest and most sacred duties.

The 2018 Water Quality Report is now available. The report is designed to be an easy to read and understand update to customers on our annual water testing. It lists certain contaminants, their levels of concentration in the water and whether or not those levels are in violation of standards. As in past years, no violations of recommended levels of contaminants were found.

The report can be found in the May 11th and May 15th editions of the Harlan newspaper or online at Harlannet.com.
Final Grades

Thanks to everyone that replied to our latest Report Card survey. Your feedback is important to us. We read the comments and take them into account when making changes.

About 90% of respondents gave us an A or B for an overall grade. That tells us you think we’re doing pretty well keeping the lights on, the gas prices low, the water quality high and you connected to the world but there’s room for improvement.

Your comments are encouraging and helpful. “You do a great job.” “Warm, friendly, knowledgeable staff.” “Efficient, professional and friendly.” “We appreciate our local service.” “Always very helpful.” “Like the new drop box.” Responses to the question What are we doing right? include: “Consistently trying to improve services.” “Great service when you call in.” “Quick response to outages.”.

Responses to the question How can we improve?: By far the most common response concerns “rates”. As we provide six separate billed services (electric, gas, water, cable TV, Internet and phone) it’s difficult to always know which service is being mentioned but we presume electric, gas and water are the rates that affect most of our customers. The topic of rate structures and how each service is priced is a bit detailed, (and frankly, sometimes boring) and can’t be addressed in the space we have this month. Look for dedicated columns on this topic in future newsletters and on our website. Please know that HMU understands the impact of rates and monthly bills on customers.

The second most mentioned topic under improvement is regarding telecom service. One of the reasons for converting from the old coaxial based system to a fiber delivery system is to improve how we get the signal from us to you. A fiber based system is less susceptible to failure due to extreme temperatures like heat and cold. There are few, to no, connections out in the field that can fail. Most of the fibers run directly from your home or business to our office without passing through any other device that can affect the signal. In the HMU system, your video, Internet and voice service will, likely, not share any part of any line with any other user meaning what other people do will not affect your service. We expect the quality of service and reliability to dramatically increase with the new fiber system.

Quick Tips

4th of JULY CLOSING
The HMU office will be closed on Wednesday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day. Emergency calls taken at 755-5182.

HCTV CHANNEL 15
New this summer on HCTV Channel 15: Watch HCHS baseball and softball games plus coverage of the swim team. Visit Harlannet.com for replay days and times.

ENERGY REBATES
We offer rebates for replacing old central air conditioners with new high efficiency models. Rebates are available for energy efficient window units also. Visit Harlannet.com for details.

WIRELESS ROUTERS
We lease or sell wireless routers. Three coverage ranges are available for small, medium or large areas. All are designed for multiple users. Leasing starts at $4.99/mo. See us for details.
Number three is construction. Yep. We get it. It seems like we’ve been doing a lot of construction for a long time and things are just not as they should be. Moving electric lines from overhead to underground has proven to decrease outages from animals, falling limbs and storms. An underground electric system is safer as there are no lines in the air to catch things like kites or to hit with a ladder when you clean the gutters. It makes Harlan look better without all the poles and lines in the air. The change in the distribution system voltage during the conversion has allowed us to modernize the electric system. Construction is allowing us to build the fiber to the home system. So, we understand construction can be an inconvenience and an eyesore in the short term. Long term, Harlan will have a very reliable electric system and the advantages of fiber to the home. Please bear with us a little longer. We’ll all be better off when we are done.

We must mention that not all construction being done in town is by HMU or our contractors. As other providers move their lines from our poles, they bring in their own contractors. We try very hard to hold our crews and contractors to a high standard of construction and restoration. However, we do not have any say as to how other providers conduct their construction or oversee their contractors. We can only hope they are as respectful to your property, family, time and peace of mind as our crews and contractors.

Thanks again for returning your report card and giving us a grade. Over time it looks like you think we’re doing better and that’s what counts. We want to improve and we want to be Harlan’s premier provider of electric, gas, water and telecommunications today and in the future.

Harlan Municipal Utilities

2412 Southwest Avenue
PO Box 71
Harlan, IA 51537

Phone: 712-755-5182
Fax: 712-755-2320
E-mail: HMU@harlannet.com

www.harlannet.com

Follow us!

Summer Energy Saving Tips

There are many low cost and free ways to cut your cooling bill this summer:

- Use shades and blinds on south and west windows to block afternoon solar heat.
- Keep the air moving. Don’t block vents with furniture or curtains. When possible, turn off the A/C and open doors and windows.
- Sometimes, opening windows on cool nights can increase air flow. But if it’s humid, your cooling system may work harder the next day to remove all the moisture you let in the night before.

Other ways to trim your bill this summer and in the future:

- Keep shrubs and ground cover away from your outside central air equipment.
- Have a professional A/C tune up every year or two to ensure your system works at peak efficiency.
- Replace filters regularly. Remember, keep the air moving. Blocked filters add to your cooling cost.
- Install ceiling fans or use box fans to circulate air.
- Check duct work for air leakage.
- Plant the right shade tree for your property and home on the south or west side to help block the summer sun.

Vacations and Auto Pay

If you are headed to your dream destination this summer or just taking some time off for a family excursion, don’t forget about your utilities.

Even if you are only gone for the weekend, think about shutting off your water service at an inside valve if you can. An unattended small drip or leak over several days can increase your water bill unnecessarily.

If you plan to be gone for a month or more, consider contacting us about shutting off telecom services. If you’ll be gone for a significant time, say four to five months during the winter, ask about shutting off all utilities.

The last thing you want to worry about when you are on vacation is your utility bill. Setting up your account for Auto Pay ensures your bill is paid on time every month.
Independence Day

Was HMU established on July 4, 1776? In a way, yes. Americans by birth, history and heritage are a fiercely independent lot. There has always been a sense that we as a people have the ability and confidence to control our own destiny as individuals and a country. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Fifty-six men threw off the shackles of tyranny imposed by a foreign monarch on behalf of 13 fledgling states when they pledged “…our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor” to establish “…free and independent states”. Independent from day one.

Yet, the founding fathers knew that individual liberty and self-determination required cooperation and a group effort. A quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin goes something like “We must all hang together or most assuredly, we will all hang separately.” meaning the group must collaborate and act in a common mission and in the best interests of all. If selfish interests became greater than the good of the group, each individual would likely, and literally, be put to death.

What does a history lesson on the founding of our country have to do with establishing a utility? Plenty. It’s against this historical and cultural background of independence that what would, eventually, become HMU was established. It’s a belief of independence that sets a municipal utility apart from an investor owned utility. The core essence of a municipal utility is communal independence through dependence on each other. The Declaration of Independence was signed barely 114 years before discussions began in Harlan on establishing an electric and water utility. Confidence in determining individual and community fate was likely high. The belief of “We can do this. We know what is best for us. We will control our future. We will not be beholden to outsiders.” may have been common by visionaries. Free and independent.

Citizens expressed the belief in independence in 1891 when the electric and water utility were established, in 1952 when they voted to establish a gas utility and again in 1995 when they established a telecommunications utility. There is a consistent historical thread of independence running through Harlan’s history. Time and time again; Free and independent.

Quick Tips

SUMMER EFFICIENCY
July is typically the hottest month of the year in Iowa. Air conditioners try and keep up with keeping us cool and removing summer humidity.

Practice summer energy efficiency. HMU offers rebates for installing new high efficiency central and window air conditioners.

AUTO PAY
AutoPay is quick, easy and free. Set up your utility bill to be automatically paid through your checking, savings or credit card account. No more late payments. No more writing out and mailing or dropping off a check. More peace of mind knowing it’s one less thing to worry about each month. See us for details on setting up AutoPay.

DRAWING WINNERS
Congratulations to Ruthe Pattison and Janet Fink; our drawing winners at the Municipal Celebration.
Gas Survey
coming in August

As part of our natural gas awareness plan, we conduct a telephone survey of our customers every three years. During the month of August, you may receive a phone call from a company identifying themselves as CFR stating they are calling on our behalf.

THIS IS A LEGITIMATE SURVEY and we ask that, if called, you take about 5-7 minutes to answer questions on our natural gas safety outreach. This federally mandated survey is important to us to maintain compliance with all regulations.

In order to perform an adequate survey of all our customers, CFR will need to reach a large number of men and women from all age groups as a broad representation of our customer base. So, if you are called, we do ask that you please take the time to answer the survey questions.

Dispute Resolution

The Iowa Utilities Board requires that all utilities in the state publish an annual notice advising customers of their right of appeal on certain complaints and where a qualified utility representative can be reached. The following is a required notice to HMU customers:

Customers of Harlan Municipal Utilities who desire assistance in the resolution of a complaint may ask for the customer service representative at:

Harlan Municipal Utilities
2412 Southwest Avenue
Harlan, Iowa 51537
or call HMU at (712) 755-5182
Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If your complaint is related to electric or natural gas service disconnection, safety or renewable energy, and Harlan Municipal Utilities does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board.

By Mail:
Iowa Utilities Board
Customer Service
1375 E. Court Ave., RM 69
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

By telephone or FAX:
Toll free: 1-877-565-4450
Fax: 1-515-725-7399

By eMail: customer@iub.iowa.gov

Online: https://iub.iowa.gov/how-to-file-complaint

Indepence Day ...continued from front page

A municipal utility is independent from all others in its operations and philosophy. Through its Board, management, and employees, HMU operations are totally focused on Harlan. Not most days, not some days, EVERY day. All financial and labor resources are dedicated to you and nowhere else. We act and perform independently from any other utility or provider.

A municipal utility is independent in its governance. Through the years, HMU has relied on fellow citizens serving as Board members to guide its progress. It’s been the local business owner, laborer, mechanic, electrician, pharmacist, machinist, engineer, banker, insurance agent, dentist, funeral director, attorney, photographer, and others at the strategic helm. All Board members are Harlan citizens working together for communal interest and not personal gain. Hanging together.

As the United States of America celebrates 242 years of Independence, the principles and concepts of freedom, liberty, self-determination, and working together for the common good still survive not only in our country but in simple everyday things like HMU.
Electricity is electricity, natural gas is natural gas, cable TV is cable TV and Internet is Internet. Right?

Is there really a difference in the service? No...and yes; there’s a huge difference.

We sell the same electricity generated at the same plant that MidAmerican Energy sells. The natural gas we provide comes from the same wells in Oklahoma that Black Hills Energy sells to its customers. The networks on HMU Cable TV are pretty much the same as Mediacom. The Internet access we sell, likely, comes from the same Tier One national broadband providers that Mediacom uses.

So if the product is the same, what is the difference and does it really matter? The difference is in the “why”.

HMU is a not for profit municipal utility established by the citizens of Harlan through a community vote. MidAmerican Energy, Black Hills Energy and Mediacom are for profit entities established by stockholders trying to make money from an investment. A for profit provider expects to make a profit by you using the service. HMU does not. Yes, we have to make enough money over and above the cost of the underlying service to pay our bills, meet our bonding obligations to ensure fiscal responsibility to you and set aside some money for future upgrades and projects. But HMU has no motive to make a profit in the traditional sense.

Typically, this lack of profit margin is what makes Municipal Utility rates lower when compared to a for profit provider. For profit Boards of Directors have to establish rates that include a dividend payment to stockholders. It would make sense that Board Members are also stockholders. So when a for profit Board establishes rates, they do so with the motivation that they, in turn, will personally profit. In establishing our rates, HMU Board Members do not have to take into account paying a dividend to stockholders. This helps keep rates lower. There is no consideration of making a profit in setting rates. An HMU Board member does not have any personal financial incentive when setting rates. HMU Board members do not look to you to help them personally earn a profit from your use.

For profit providers ‘invest’ to make a profit. Municipal providers ‘invest’ in their communities and the long term benefit to its citizens by keeping rates lower. The products are the same. The how and why they are priced is the difference.

Quick Tips

LABOR DAY CLOSING
The HMU office will be closed Monday, September 3rd in observance of Labor Day. Emergency calls will be taken at 755-5182.

CYCLONE FALL SPORTS ON CHANNEL 15
Cyclone football and volleyball start soon. Watch replays of games on HLTV channel 15.

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?
Get your fall football fix with HMU cable. Find college and pro games all Fall long on ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, ESPN, and NFL networks and more. A whole home DVR from HMU records up to six games at once. Pause in one room, pick up where you left off in another room. A jump back button allows you to have your own instant replay. Skip or fast forward through commercials when you watch replays of recorded programs. See us for details.
It’s that moment when you realize what you forgot to do sets in. It’s that “Oh! Shoot” heart stopping moment. Panic sets in. Schedules change. Priorities change. Nothing else matters. Life changes.

Signing up for Auto Pay means your electric, gas, water and telecom bills will always be paid and paid on time. No rushing to HMU to drop off a payment before disconnection. No scrambling to pay online. No more late fees. No more re-connect fees. No more stamps. No more envelopes. No more worry. No more panic. Auto Pay can be set up for payment from your checking or savings account or charged to a credit card. See one of our CSRs to sign up or access the enrollment form on the web at harlannet.com/AutoPay.htm
Make sure your home is energy efficient BEFORE winter gets here!

It seems odd to think about a cold January in balmy September, but now is the time to increase the energy efficiency of your home with these easy tips.

- Schedule a professional furnace tune up and change the filter. Having a tune up pays for itself in increased efficiency plus an inspection may uncover potential safety hazards. Replacing the filter helps increase airflow so your furnace doesn’t have to run longer than necessary.

- Purchase and install a programmable thermostat. Set the thermostat to match your daily schedule and lifestyle. According to energystar.gov, setting your thermostat 4° to 7° higher while you are asleep or away can save $180 a year. HMU offers rebates for installing programmable thermostats.

- Check windows and doors for air leaks. Stop letting warm air out and cold air in.

- Check insulation in attics and walls. Adding insulation helps keep warm air where it belongs; inside. HMU offers rebates for insulation. See us for details.

- If you have to replace your furnace, you may be eligible for a rebate. Before buying a new furnace, check the rebate schedule and factor that into upgrading your furnace to a higher efficiency.

- Find important rebate information under the Customer Service tab at: Harlannet.com

Quick Tips

AUTO PAY
AutoPay is quick, easy and free. Set up your utility bill to be automatically paid through your checking, savings or credit card account. No more late payments. No more writing out and mailing or dropping off a check. More peace of mind knowing it’s one less thing to worry about each month. See us for details on setting up AutoPay.

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?
Get your fall football fix with HMU cable. Find college and pro games all Fall long on ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, ESPN, and NFL networks and more. A whole home DVR from HMU records up to six games at once. Pause in one room, pick up where you left off in another room. A jump back button allows you to have your own instant replay. Skip or fast forward through commercials when you watch replays of recorded programs. See us for details.
LIHEAP Enrollment Begins October 1st

Applications will be taken starting November 1, 2018 for the 2018-2019 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Households with an elderly (60 years and older) and/or disabled member may apply starting October 1st. This program is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services through the Iowa Department of Human Rights/DCAA.

West Central Community Action, 1017 7th St., Harlan, IA 51537, (712) 755-5602 will be taking applications by appointment only through April 30, 2019. Please call 712-755-5602 to schedule an appointment.

Applicants must verify the identity of every member of the household with a Social Security Cards or I-94 Cards with the documented country. Applicants must supply a copy of their most recent heating and electric bill and proof of all household members’ gross income for the past 30-days or provide their 2017 Federal Income Taxes.

This program is not designed to pay a household’s total energy costs, but will provide supplemental assistance based on several factors including total household income, household size, dwelling type, and type of heating fuel.

### Income Maximums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>LIHEAP 1-Month Gross Income</th>
<th>LIHEAP Annual Gross Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,770</td>
<td>$21,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$28,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$3,030</td>
<td>$36,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$3,660</td>
<td>$43,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$4,290</td>
<td>$51,485</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$4,920</td>
<td>$59,045</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$5,550</td>
<td>$66,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$6,180</td>
<td>$74,165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For households with more than 8 members, add $630 / $7,560 for each additional member.

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Natural Gas Safety Notice

Operating a safe gas system is one of our highest priorities. Enclosed with the newsletter is our brochure on natural gas. Please take the time to read it and discuss it with family members.

- ALWAYS call 811 before you dig to make sure there are no gas lines in the area of digging. HMU will locate gas lines owned and operated by HMU up to the meter for free when you call 811.
- Customer owned piping including gas lines running to grills, yard lights, out buildings or garages will not be marked by HMU as these lines are after the meter and owned by the customer. Contact a plumbing or heating dealer or qualified private contractor to locate gas piping owned by you.
- Insist others performing work for you call before they dig.
- Learn how to recognize a gas leak and what to do if one happens. See the brochure for signs of a gas leak.
- Do not cover or obstruct gas meters. Make sure we can get to a meter if necessary.
- Keep our number by your phone and call us any time of day if you suspect a gas leak. Call 755-5182 24 hours a day.
Why Harlan?
by Doug Hammer, Director of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations

October 7-13th is both Public Power Week and Public Natural Gas week. It’s a time to recognize public providers of electricity and natural gas. HMU is fortunate to be included in both categories as we are one of a few providers in Iowa to offer both electric and natural gas service. When you add water and telecommunications, that makes HMU one of a handful of full service utility providers in the state. But why? Why has the town of Harlan specifically, historically and strongly embraced the core principles of municipal utility ownership and spurned other providers?

I believe one core tenant of Public Utility ownership the citizens of Harlan have embraced since the establishment of electric and water service in 1891 is the sense of local control. Public Utilities, along with schools, are perfect examples of citizens being able to act on what is in the best interest of their community. HMU is ultimately governed by a five member Board of Trustees composed of resident customers. The same Harlan residents you see at school events, churches, and stores represent you on the utility Board. Since 1920 when Board oversite was approved by voters, Board members have been business owners, bankers, attorneys, pharmacists, dentists, photographers, engineers, mechanics or from other professions. They are fellow citizens acting on your behalf to ensure your electric, gas, water and telecommunications services are run properly, safely, cost efficiently and tailor made to fit the needs of Harlan not only today but in the future. Board decisions are not made to enhance profit to line the pockets of investors. Decisions are made to benefit Harlan. HMU customers live, literally, only blocks away from the decision makers acting on their behalf. Customers can visit HMU and talk with the CEO or department Directors. They can attend open Board meetings. I believe our customers like the idea of having the opportunity to provide input on their utility. Harlan citizens have embraced local control, and therefore control of their destiny, since 1891.

Another core principle of public utilities is the investment in the community. Early records are spotty but likely from the very beginning of the utility, funds left over from the operation of the utility have gone back into the community either in the form of a payment to the City of Harlan or toward enhancing and improving the quality of life in the city. Funds from the utility have gone toward: the construction of Veterans Auditorium, Therkildson Center, the

continued on back
Project Share

Project Share assists needy households in paying energy bills.

You may add a regular contribution to Project Share through your monthly utility payment or by making a one-time direct donation. Your contribution is voluntary, flexible and tax deductible.

People qualifying under the Project Share guidelines are carefully identified by an area social service agency.

Project Share Contribution

I'd like to help a neighbor in need with a contribution to Project Share.

Name______________________________________________
Address______________________________________________
Phone______________________________________________
I will contribute $___________ per month. I understand this amount will be added to my monthly utility bill.
My account number:____________________________________
I have enclosed a one-time contribution of $___________________

CO Detectors

Part 1 of a series

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless, tasteless and colorless and therefore known as the ‘silent killer’. It is toxic as it prevents your body from properly transporting oxygen to critical organs. Carbon Monoxide poisoning can happen quickly if CO is inhaled in high concentrations. Symptoms of exposure to CO include headaches, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, burning of the eyes and loss of consciousness. Children, seniors and people that have pre-existing respiratory or heart conditions are often more sensitive to the effects of CO. Carbon monoxide is formed by the incomplete burning of fuels. Potential sources of CO in the home include natural gas or propane furnaces or hot water heaters, gas fireplaces, wood stoves or automobile exhaust fumes seeping in from a garage.

Carbon Monoxide detectors function similar to smoke alarms. If CO levels are present in your home, the detector will emit a sharp beeping sound to alert you to the danger. Detectors require regular maintenance just like a smoke detector: make sure batteries are replaced on a regular basis, test the detector as recommended and replace the detector as recommended. Follow all instructions on where to hang the detector.

Why Harlan?

Wellness Center, and the Iowa Western Community College building. Funds are reinvested back into the community and for the betterment of Harlan and not shareholders that don’t live here. Over the years, money from the operation of a local utility has been transferred to the City general fund thereby keeping tax rates low. Investment in a community is not always about money. Part of the driving philosophy of a local utility is to act in the best interest of the community both short and long term. The decision of the then sitting Board to buy into the Louisa Generation Station decades ago has probably saved HMU customers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars in power costs over the years. Citizens voting to establish the gas utility in the 50’s and rebuffing an outside entity’s attempt to seize control of the gas franchise in Harlan has, likely, saved HMU customers almost as much in the cost of natural gas. These are real dollars saved and retained in Harlan simply by having a local electric and gas utility looking out for the best interest of Harlan.

Weeks like Public Power Week and Public Natural Gas week may seem simply symbolic and celebratory but there are real and tangible benefits to communities owning and operating public utilities. Public utilities like HMU offer a community benefits no other utility provider can offer.
The holiday season is coming soon and with it, HMU and City crews will decorate the town. Here are some past pictures of Christmas decorations in Harlan.

Downtown Harlan in the later 1970s.

2002: Dave Goede stringing lights downtown.

THE BEST LIGHTED CITY IN IOWA

Courthouse circa 1939

2004: Frosty & Santa at 12th and Chatburn

2018: Dan Render hanging decorations

Quick Tips

HOLIDAY HOURS
Please note that the HMU office will be closed Thursday, November 22nd and Friday, November 23rd for Thanksgiving. All emergency calls will be taken at 755-5182.

GREAT GIFT IDEA
Certificates toward electric, gas, water or telecom make great gifts for the ‘hard to buy for’ person or anonymous gifts for a giving tree. See one of our CSRs to purchase a certificate.

LOCAL EVENTS
Watch HCSD winter sports and holiday concerts on HLTV Channel 15.

BINGE WATCHERS
A whole home DVR is great for winter binge watching. Record away and watch later from any room in the home.
Add a name to your account

It’s common to only have one name on an account. Sometimes the account is in the name of only one spouse. Sometimes, only one person lives in the dwelling and receives service. Yet, there are numerous reasons to have more than one name on an account:

1. If someone would ever need to make inquiries on your account. If, for some reason, you would need to have another person come to HMU and ask how much is left on your bill, we would not be able to tell them as they are not listed on your account. This scenario is typical of an adult child acting on the behalf of a parent who may be temporarily incapacitated.

2. If you would ever need someone to make decisions on the account. If you become infirm or are out of the area someone could act on your behalf to change, suspend or cancel services. This is not uncommon with customers that leave Harlan during the winter.

3. In case of death. We need to have the name of a living person listed on the account to help prevent fraud or theft. We highly recommend couples have both names listed on the account as protection against the passing of one or the other. Having an adult child or estate executor listed on the account helps finalize any bills and close an account.

4. For emergency contact. If we have a utility emergency and cannot reach you, it could be helpful to have a second name on the account to prevent or mitigate any property damage.

5. To limit your liability. In a roommate or temporary shared living quarters situation, it may be best to have more than one name on the account to limit your personal responsibility for payment.

Adding a name to an account does not necessarily make someone liable for payment. We have accounts where a second person has INQUIRY only ability meaning they can check on an outstanding balance but cannot make changes to the account or assume financial responsibility for the account. There are many different scenarios and reasons to add a second name to your electric, gas, water or telecom account. Not all can be covered in this column. Check with us for details on what works for you but it’s always in your best interest to add a second name to your account.

Death from Carbon Monoxide (CO) is preventable

Carbon Monoxide detectors operate in one of three ways: with a biomimetic sensor, metal oxide semiconductor, or electrochemical sensor.

Biomimetic detectors use gels that change color after absorbing a certain amount of carbon monoxide - and then a sensor sounds an alarm. Metal oxide semiconductors have silica chips that detect CO and send electrical signals to trigger an alarm. Electrochemical sensors are considered to be the best in the industry. They use electrodes in chemical solutions that sense changes in electrical currents when carbon monoxide is present, and they sound an alarm.

Placement of a CO detector is different than a smoke detector. Follow all manufacturer recommendations when installing a CO detector.
End of year wrap up

by Ken Weber, CEO

As we near the end of another year here at HMU, we need to take a moment to express appreciation for the dedication and diligence of all of our valued employees.

What we have accomplished this year has been an unprecedented effort toward preparing HMU for ever increasing demands for quality utility services by you, our valued customers.

Over the course of these last several years, the HMU Board of Trustees has committed to significant investments in our various utility infrastructures in the interest of meeting the long-term needs of our customers. Thereby providing the basis for continued delivery of the most reliable and highest quality services available for our homes, businesses and industries. These investments have been, and will continue to be, for the provision of not only your basic services (electric, natural gas and water) but also for all of your current and future needs for communication services (internet, video and telephone).

With these interests in mind, we ALL here at HMU wish you and yours the very best in the upcoming New Year.

Happy Holidays!

Quick Tips

AUTO PAY
Using Auto Pay means your bills are paid and paid on time. No worry about shut offs or late fees, no panic, no rushing to our office to pay your bill. It really is easy to sign up and Auto Pay just makes life easier. Ask one of our CSRs for enrollment information.

HOLIDAY CONCERTS
Watch holiday concerts from Shelby County Catholic School, Harlan Community School District and local churches on HCTV channel 15. We’ll broadcast four days of concerts beginning December 22nd through the 25th. See the on screen and online guide for program dates and times.

Our end of year Best of 2018 programming begins December 26th and runs through January 1st. Watch replays of the Shelby County Fair, HCSD sports, fine arts and community events we’ve produced throughout the year. See the online or onscreen guide for programming days and times.

WINTER BINGE WATCHING
Winter is a great time to binge watch programming on a whole home DVR. Start watching a show in one room, pick up where you left off in another. The skip back function is like having your own instant replay for bowl and playoff games. Zip through commercials and save time watching recorded shows. See us for a demonstration or details.
Eight Ways to Save in Cold Weather

Seal air leaks throughout your home or business: A variety of products are available to seal doors, windows, and electrical outlets to prevent cold air from seeping in.

Insulate: Ensure your home has adequate attic, wall and floor insulation. Insulate ducts or boiler pipes in unheated areas.

Turn it down: Install a programmable thermostat that automatically turns down the heat when you are asleep or away.

Maintain: Have heating systems serviced regularly to maintain safety, peak performance and efficiency. Keep ductwork clean. Change furnace filters every month during the heating season. Lubricate motors as needed to decrease loss to friction.

Buy smart: Always buy EnergyStar qualified appliances when possible and apply for a rebate from HMU when you purchase qualifying Energy Star products. Make a commitment to install LED bulbs when incandescent bulbs burn out.

Use smart: Set your own house or business energy policy. Remind the whole family to shut off lights, TV’s, and computers when they are done using them. Small acts done regularly add up to energy and cost savings.

Read smart: Stop by our office and pick up a free Energy Matters book filled with tips and hints on how to save on your electric bill.

Winter Safety Reminder

Please do not blow or shovel snow on top of electric boxes, gas meters or telecom pedestals. Blocking a box or meter could slow down an outage restoration or cause a safety problem.

Watch for boxes when plowing snow in alleys. Inadvertently hitting a pedestal or box could cause an outage.