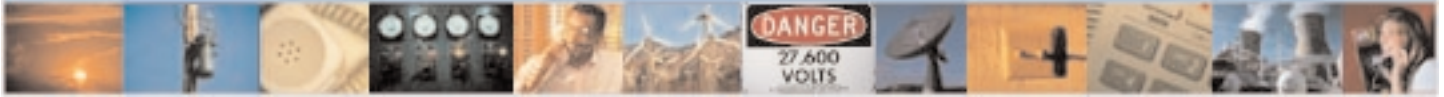




PUBLIC UTILITY CONNECTION



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Shopping for an electricity provider

Take a close look at the options available to you

There are many things to consider when shopping for a new electricity provider. If you are in a competitive area, it is important for you to do your homework and be aware of the details of your electricity contract.

You may log on to powertochoose.org or call the Texas Electric Choice toll-free Answer Center at 1-866-PWR-4-TEX to request a list of Retail Electric Providers (REPs) in your area. The website lets you compare providers that offer both fixed and variable products. It also lets you do a price comparison and see the different contract lengths available.

If your current contract has expired or is about to expire, you should compile a shopping list of potential electricity providers. If you are unaware of when your contract will expire, contact your REP. Most REPs will charge you a penalty if you switch to another provider before your contract term ends. Also, if your contract expires, and you do not renew with your current provider or

sign a new contract with a new provider, you will be put on a potentially more expensive month-to-month plan.

After compiling a list of potential providers, contact each one for its Electricity Facts Label or view them online at powertochoose.org under the heading Compare Your Choices. The Electricity Facts Label outlines each provider's offer in a standardized format, enabling you to make comparisons based on price, contract terms, sources of power generation and emissions.

Ask questions that will help you clarify your decision. Sample questions are available through powertochoose.org. Contact the provider you have chosen to switch your service. You will receive a Terms of Service (contract) and "Your Rights as a Customer" disclosure – outlining customer protections mandated by the PUC.

Please review your Terms of Service and determine if it is the correct plan that you authorized.

Three Cs of Shopping

Contact: Call the Texas Electric Choice toll-free Answer Center or visit the Texas Electric Choice website for a list of Retail Electric Providers in your area.

Compare: Residential customers can take a look at the Electricity Facts Labels from the Retail Electric Providers (available at powertochoose.org or 1-866-PWR-4-TEX) for help in comparing offers.

Choose: After comparing offers, choose the provider that best meets your electricity needs. You do not need to contact your current provider to inform them of your choice.

Commission OKs wind transmission plan

In July, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) selected a transmission scenario that will eventually transmit a total of 18,456 megawatts of wind power from West Texas and the Panhandle to metropolitan areas of the state.

The PUC selected scenario 2, which is estimated to cost \$4.93 billion, or approximately \$4.00 per month per residential customer once construction is complete and costs are reflected in rates. It is expected that the new lines will be in service within four to five years.

Earlier this year, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the organiza-

tion which oversees the state's electric grid, responded to a PUC order to provide several scenarios to the commission. The four scenarios contained a total of 12,053, 18,456, 24,859, and 24,419 MW of installed wind generation distributed among five Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZs) in West Texas and the Texas Panhandle.

Senate Bill 20, which the state legislature passed in 2005, directed the PUC to select the most productive wind zones in the state and devise a transmission plan to move power generated from these zones to more populous areas of the state.



HOW TO READ YOUR ELECTRIC METER

**8****3****4****7****5**

Have you ever wanted to read your electric meter? We can help you do that with these simple instructions.

- Look at your meter. It has five or possibly four dials.
- Some dial hands turn clockwise and some counterclockwise.
- To read your meter, read each dial starting from left and record the number that each hand has just passed and not the number it is approaching.
- On the dials above, you'll see the reading is 83475.
- If you read the meter a month later and the new reading is 84675, the difference of 1200 is the number of kilowatt-hours (kWh) you used between the two readings.

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TEXAS ELECTRIC CHOICE

1-866-PWR-4-TEX (1-866-797-4839)

www.powertochoose.org

New commissioners on board after Hudson, Parsley departure

Governor Rick Perry has appointed two new Commissioners to replace the departing Paul Hudson and Julie Parsley.

Donna Nelson, who replaced Commissioner Hudson on August 18, is an attorney and former advisor to Gov. Perry on energy, telecommunications and cable budget and policy issues. Commissioner Nelson previously served as director of the PUC's telecommunications section and as legal advisor to former PUC Chairman Rebecca Klein. She was also an Assistant Attorney General of Texas, where she specialized in antitrust matters. She is a graduate of Black Hills State College and the

Texas Tech School of Law. Her term will expire on September 1, 2009.

Ken Anderson, who replaced Commissioner Parsley on September 2, is an attorney in private practice who previously served as appointments secretary to Gov. Perry and as chief deputy appointments director for former Gov. William Clements. Mr. Anderson is a past board member of the North Central Texas Health Facilities Development Corporation and Texas Securities Board and is a past member of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. His term will expire on September 1, 2011.

Do you have a utility complaint?

To contact the PUC with
a complaint:

Call: 1-888-782-8477
In Austin 512-936-7120
Se habla español

Fax: 512-936-7003

Write: PublicUtility
Commission
Customer Protection
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326

Web: www.puc.state.tx.us/ocp

Police departments assist in campaign effort

Police departments in more than 37 cities across Texas assisted the Public Utility Commission's Texas Electric Choice Education campaign by distributing brochures and other materials during the "25th Annual National Night Out" (NNO) on Oct 7.

The materials offer Electric Choice information and direct citizens to the Power To Choose Web site at www.powertochoose.org to assist them in comparing electric rates in their area. The materials also offer a toll-free telephone number to the Texas Power To Choose call center at 1-866-PWR-4-TEX (1-866-797-4839).

National Night Out is a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW).

According to NATW, last year's National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from more than 10,000 communities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. In all, more than 34 million people participated in NNO 2004.

National Night Out is designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness;
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs;

- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and
- Send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

Along with the traditional display of outdoor lights and front porch vigils, cities, towns and neighborhoods "celebrate" NNO with a variety of events and activities such as block parties, cook-outs, visits from local police and sheriff departments, parades, exhibits, flashlight walks, contests, and youth programs.

NNO has proven to be an effective, inexpensive and enjoyable program to promote neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships in the fight for a safer nation.

Texas is the only state that changed the date of National Night Out. Normally the event is held the first Tuesday in August.

National organizations called the new Oct. 7 date a "tester" to see if a later time in the year will draw more people.

Many police departments in the state complained to organizers that it is too hot in August for the event.

Not all Texas cities elected to make the switch, Barlett, Georgetown, Granger, Taylor and the Williamson County sheriff's office tried out the new October date.

PUC staff assist customers on electric issues

Two members of the PUC staff participated on a panel addressing residential electric issues organized by Rep. Sylvester Turner (D-Houston), Speaker Pro



Tempore of the Texas House of Representatives, on August 11 in northwest Houston. Steve Hudson of Customer Protection and Gabriel Cárdenas of Governmental Affairs spoke with some of the more than 200 electric customers who attended the event on low-income assistance, disconnection issues and other electric topics.

Many of Rep. Turner's constituents are seniors on fixed incomes and others from



PUC employee Steve Hudson assists customers with educational materials in August during a legislative panel sponsored by Rep. Sylvester Turner (D-Houston), Speaker Pro Tempore of the Texas House of Representatives.

low-income families, two groups that were hard-hit by high electricity costs during one of the hottest and driest summers in memory.

Hudson and Cárdenas distributed educational literature as well as applications

for low-income assistance and disconnection protection for critical care patients. PUC staff has attended half a dozen similar events sponsored by members of the Texas Legislature during the past two years.

Use caution in properly disposing CFL bulbs

The recent popularity of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) has increased questions about proper disposal and the accidental exposure to mercury.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the amount of mercury in a CFL bulb is very small and poses little risk if handled properly. The EPA reports the amount of mercury in a CFL is about 4 milligrams. General Electric reports its CFLs average 5 milligrams of mercury per bulb. By contrast, a mercury thermometer has about 500 milligrams.

Also, National Geographic's Green Guide offers some additional information:

To avoid mercury vapors if a bulb does break, the EPA advises opening a window as soon as possible and leaving the room for at least 15 minutes before starting to clean.



Once you start:

- Never allow children, pets or pregnant women near the spill area.
- Always wear rubber gloves; you should never touch mercury with your bare hands.
- Remove all metal jewelry, which might attract mercury magnetically.
- If the bulb breaks on hard flooring, use a piece of stiff paper to scoop up the broken glass and powder. Avoid using a broom that could stir up dust.
- Damp mop hard surfaces to pick up any remaining dust.
- If the bulb breaks on carpeting, use sticky tape to pick up the powder, dust and smaller pieces of glass. Vacuuming could disturb the dust and pose an inhalation risk.
- Afterwards, use a flashlight to check the area for missed spots.
- Seal all the rags, paper and tape, as well as the light bulb remains, in a plastic bag. Double bag it and dispose at a household hazardous waste site. See www.earth911.org for one in your neighborhood.
- Wash your hands well and leave the room.
- Leave the window open and turn on a fan to air out the room for at least 24 to 48 hours.

If you have touched mercury or are concerned about your exposure, call the Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222.

GET THE FACTS!

The Public Utility Commission of Texas is committed to giving Texans accurate and complete information on a variety of telephone and electric topics. One of the ways the Commission does this is through the distribution of fact sheets by the Information and Education (I&E) section of the PUC's Customer Protection Division. These fact sheets offer a wealth of information on topics ranging from electric submetering to slamming. You may request fact sheets by calling us toll free at 1-888-782-8477 or you may find them in the PUC Publications section of the PUC Web site at www.puc.state.tx.us.



Texas No Call List

Registration

Residential phone customers: You may add your name and phone number to the Texas No Call lists by using one of three methods:

1. Online:

www.texasnocall.com.

This is a free service.

2. **By Phone:** Call toll free 1-866-TXNOCAL (1-866-896-6225). An automated payment system is available 24/7. Payments may be made with MasterCard or Visa. Costs: \$2.25 for statewide list; \$2.55 for electric list.

3. **By Mail:** Ask for a registration form by calling the toll-free number (1-866-896-6225) or by downloading and printing a form from www.texasnocall.com.

Payment may be made with MasterCard or Visa or by mailing a check or money order to TEXAS NO CALL, P.O. Box 313, East Walpole, MA 02032. Costs: \$2.25 for statewide list; \$2.55 for electric list.