

Holiday Closings

Our Customer Care office at the City Municipal Building, and Project Management at our Operations Center, will be closed for the following upcoming holidays:

Friday, December 24
Christmas

Friday, December 31
New Year's

Monday, January 17, 2005
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, February 21, 2005
Presidents' Day

Our operations crews for both water and electric are available on an emergency basis during holidays. If you experience an electrical outage or a water main break, call us at 446-4000, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Normal business activity for all three Groton Utilities' Divisions, including electric, water and cable television is conducted Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Also, Customer Service is open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. The office is closed on Sundays and holidays.

Groton Utilities hopes you and your family have enjoyable holidays. But, please drive safely. **And, yes, don't forget to buckle up!**



GROTON UTILITIES

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Water rates change

New water rates went into effect for Groton Utilities Water Division customers on November 1. The change increases the monthly average residential water bill by approximately \$1.80 or 7.5 percent. Rates for the largest commercial and industrial customers increased approximately 7 to 9%.



Before the change, the average residential customer paid about \$23 per month based on yearly usage, including summer and winter rates.

The new rates are necessary due to:

- increased costs for water treatment,
- regulatory compliance measures requiring increased sampling and higher quality standards,
- rising medical insurance costs,
- increases in workers' compensation expenses, and

- higher costs for required security improvements.

Even after the change, GU's costs rank 23rd out of 30 with respect to annual billing among the state's water utilities, and is 28 percent below the average annual cost of water in Connecticut.

Compared to the adjacent private water company, rates here are 51 percent below Aquarion's (Mystic) proposed rate.

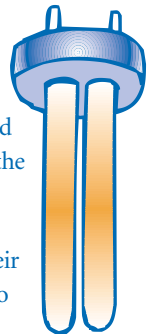
Under the new rate schedule, our residential customer will pay \$25 per month on a yearly average, compared to an Aquarion Mystic residential customer who will pay \$37.64 per month for the same amount of water based on their recently requested rate increase.

For questions about the new rates, or for a copy of our new rate schedule, please contact our office at 446-4000.

Lighten up your bill

If you replace 25% of your lights in high-use areas with fluorescents, you can cut your lighting energy bill in half. Fluorescent lamps are more expensive than incandescents, but they more than pay for themselves because they save energy and last six to 10 times longer.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) now come in shapes and sizes to fit almost any light fixture. They can be used in portable table and floor lamps, and even in torchiere fixtures—just consider carefully the size and fit of CFLs when you select them.



Exterior lighting is one of the best places to use CFLs because of their long life. If your lamp will be exposed to the cold weather, be sure to buy a lamp with a cold-weather ballast. Use four-foot fixtures with reflective backing and electronic ballasts for your garage and laundry areas, and consider four-watt mini-fluorescent or electro-luminescent night lights.

For more information on how to save energy at home, visit http://www.eren.doe.gov/energy_savers/.



connections



The men and women at Groton Utilities wish our valued customers Happy Holidays & a Healthy New Year.

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City of Groton cable TV coverage is now complete

Thames Valley Communications (TVC), the new Cable Division of Groton Utilities, has finished installing its network cabling throughout the entire city. In 2005, TVC will continue to expand and move across the Town of Groton.

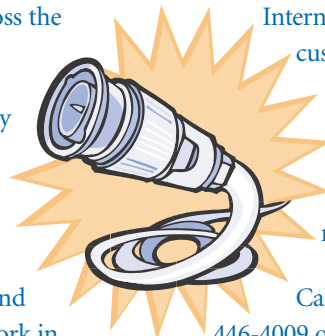
The completion of the city network in 2004 highlights the close of our 100th anniversary year, which saw construction begin on our own cable and high-speed Internet network in January, followed by our grand opening on May 25, 2004.

If you are a city resident and have not yet signed up for our cable and high speed Internet services, you can obtain service immediately. As a sign of our commitment to you, our loyal local customers, TVC guarantees to maintain the \$36.95 price for our expanded cable television package, which offers 74 channels, until December 31, 2006.

Our guarantee includes **FREE** installation, a **FREE** month of digital basic ser-

vice, a **FREE** month of any premium service, and Internet service as low as **\$15 per month**. TVC is offering three levels of Internet service to meet a variety of customer needs. The entry-level

Internet package offers dial-up customers a great alternative to experience the always-on feature of Internet access. Try it for one year for only \$15 per month!



Call for more information at 446-4009 or stop by TVC's Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building at 295 Meridian St. in the City of Groton. Normal business hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except for Thursdays when office hours are extended until 7 p.m. and Saturdays when our hours are 8 a.m. to noon. Business is not conducted on holidays.

You can also check out TVC on the Web at www.tvconnect.net. Thames Valley Communications is your quality hometown cable and Internet company, bringing you "Local Service, by Local People from a Local Company."

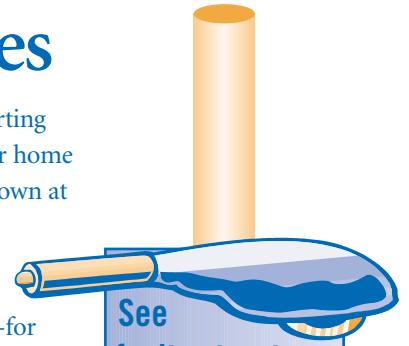
Gift ideas from Groton Utilities

Are you looking for a different idea for a holiday gift? You couldn't make a smarter or more thoughtful selection than a gift certificate for one of our products, either electricity or water. Or maybe you'd prefer to give a gift certificate for our Surge Sentry Home Protection Program.

While anyone would appreciate a gift of utility services, it is especially nice for the seniors on your gift list. It gives some of our older customers a sense of security and well being, knowing that they have a credit towards a month or two or more to cover their electric

and water needs. Similarly, it is comforting for seniors to have surge protection for home appliances, which could easily break down at the least convenient time.

A GU gift certificate means you can stop worrying about that hard-to-buy-for person on your gift list—and you won't even have to fight the crowds at the mall. Just drop by our Customer Care office at the Municipal Building or give us a call at 446-4000 to discover the many comfort-giving gift ideas you can find at your local utility.



See faulty street lights?

If you see a faulty street light, please call us at 446-4000 so that we can repair it. This includes lights that are completely out and lights that flicker on and off. We will need the pole number and the street name.

Please be advised this request is for Groton Utilities electric service area only. We do not service poles in CL&P's area. Thank you for helping us make our service area safer!

Help others this season

Groton Utilities' customers have donated several thousand dollars to the Energy Assistance Fund since it began. Thank you for caring! You have helped many less fortunate families pay their utility bills.

We are entering that time of year when some of your neighbors will be finding themselves in a money squeeze in the cold months ahead as their energy use increases and their cash decreases.



If you're in a position to give again or perhaps you're thinking about giving for the first time, we urge you to donate to the fund. This is the season for giving, that time of year when people seem more likely to help others.

Send your check, payable to GU/EAF, to: GAP, c/o Groton Social Services, 2 Fort Hill Road, Groton, CT 06340-4723. Please do not send cash.

Deck the halls safely

Deck the halls safely this season with these tips:

- ❖ Buy lights tested for safety by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. Only use lights rated for outdoor use on the outside of the house.
- ❖ Be sure to inspect all lights for cracked or loose sockets, exposed wires and frayed, broken or scorched insulation. When in doubt, throw it out.
- ❖ Don't overload extension cords. To check, make sure that the total number of watts connected to the cord is no more than the cord rating listing on its packaging. Read the labels on your lights and decorations for wattage information. Use special heavy duty extension cords with high-wattage items.

From the Director of Utilities

Thanks for celebrating our first 100 years

To our customers:

We at Groton Utilities extend a sincere and heartfelt thank you for your business and for helping us celebrate our 100th anniversary. It was a great year in many ways. We were able to reflect on our first 100 years and we have been able to give back to the community in a very special way.



Glenn M. Wilson

Dating back to 1904, Groton Utilities has prided itself on its excellent service. We have stressed quality and customer satisfaction. The men and women of Groton Utilities pledge to maintain that high level of performance and expectation into the next century. We know local people, providing local service, from a local company, is an unbeatable combination!

Reflecting on our history during the past year, we realized how dedicated our predecessors were. They not only laid the foundation of this municipally owned and operated utility, but also were responsible for its growth and maturity as one of the most outstanding utilities in the country.

While reviewing the past has been exciting, we are living and working in an exciting today and anticipate an even more promising tomorrow. Our newest business—cable television and high speed Internet services—has sparked an excitement and pride in our employees and our customers. Our Cable Division, Thames Valley Communications (TVC), has successfully completed the installation of the infrastructure to deliver these services to our City of Groton customers. As we greet the New Year, we will be servicing more and more of the Town of Groton outside of the city limits.

Our Water Division will soon be selling water to area towns through a new water pipe under the Thames River, helping our adjacent municipalities with their water supply needs. Our Electric Division continues to upgrade its facilities in order to maintain our high reputation for reliability.

All of these accomplishments would not be possible without you, our customers. Thank you for your business. Thank you for your continued support. We wish you and your family the best of holidays and a New Year filled with good health, prosperity, and happiness.

Keep fire hydrants clear this winter

This winter, we need your help to keep fire hydrants near your property free of snow and ice. When the snow begins to fly, we cannot always clear the more than 700 area fire hydrants as quickly as we would like. And in case of fire, it is vital that firefighters have access to nearby hydrants.

Local fire chiefs request that you park well away from hydrants so firefighters

can reach them quickly. Also, don't pile snow on top of or around them.

If you contract for snow removal for your property, please remind contractors to keep snow away from the fire hydrants.

If you were one of our many thoughtful customers who helped keep the fire hydrants free of snow and

ice in the past few years, we appreciate your cooperation.

If you are a firefighter from the City of Groton, Poquonnock Bridge, Center Groton or Mystic Fire Departments who helped out in the past, we add our applause for your generous support. We hope you're on our snow removal team again this winter season.

