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*Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886*

# **News Release**

## **Stoughton Utilities**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 29, 2012

Contact: Brian Hoops, Utilities Office & Information Systems Supervisor

### **Stoughton Utilities Cautions Against Electric Service Disconnections as Winter Moratorium ends**

Stoughton Utilities is advising electric 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 will disconnect electric service to all delinquent accounts on April 18.

“The end of the winter moratorium on disconnections is fast approaching,” said Brian Hoops, Office & Information Systems Supervisor. “Unpaid bills drive up costs for the whole community. It is Stoughton Utilities' goal to do what we can to collect unpaid bills and 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 1,500 utility customers have overdue bills representing \$280,500. Despite these figures, nearly 82 percent of customers pay their bills on time each month.

“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 to avoid shutting 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, according to Hoops. 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 \$24,319 per year;
- A family of four with an annual income of up to \$46,768

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

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