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News Release

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Baltimore Gas and Electric Company Offers Tools to Assist Customers in Managing Winter Heating Bills

Current cold snap will likely increase energy usage for BGE customers

BALTIMORE, Dec. 9, 2010— Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE), today strongly encouraged customers to take advantage of the many tips and tools for managing energy usage available in the [Winter Ready](#) section of BGE’s website. This special section of the website was specifically designed to help customers weather the unseasonably cold temperatures that have affected Central Maryland this month. It includes an interactive [virtual home tour](#), which provides detailed information on how energy is used in the home and recommendations for improving a home’s energy efficiency. By clicking on “hot spots,” customers get helpful information about heating systems, insulation, appliances, electronics, meter reading, third party energy suppliers and more.

“While we can’t control the weather, we can control how we use energy, even during periods of extreme temperatures,” said Jeannette M. Mills, senior vice president of customer relations and account services for BGE. “BGE is providing customers with important information to help them take action to maximize the energy efficiency of their homes and minimize the impact of the cold weather. However, BGE reminds customers who heat with electric heat pumps that they are especially vulnerable to sharp increases in usage when the temperature drops to below freezing because auxiliary heating, which uses more energy, may be activated. With many units, auxiliary heating is activated even before the temperature dips to below freezing.”

The weather is the primary driver for increased energy usage during periods of extreme cold, but there are many other contributing factors which may not be as obvious. When it’s bitter cold outside, many families spend more time at home, especially on weekends, when they are also more likely to use stoves and ovens more frequently, spend more time on computers and electronic video games and watch

more television. Additionally, while holiday lights do not typically cause significant spikes in electric usage, the degree to which holiday lights affect a customer's bill largely depends on the types of lights used, quantity of lights and length of time the lights are on. BGE recommends customers use energy efficient LED (light emitting diodes) holiday lights as well as timers to limit the increase in energy usage caused by holiday lights.

The many [Winter Ready](#) recommendations for improving a home's energy efficiency include but are not limited to:

- Get a heating system tune-up and seal leaks in furnace ducts. BGE offers [rebates](#) for these and other home efficiency improvements.
- Seal gaps around windows, doors and wall outlets.
- Check/add attic insulation to reach a level of R-30, or 12 inches.
- Install a programmable thermostat and save 9 - 25 percent on heating and cooling costs year-round.
 - Central air conditioning and electric heat pump customers may be eligible to get a programmable thermostat professionally installed at no additional cost through [BGE's PeakRewards^{\(SM\)}](#) program.
- Set the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. For every degree below 73 during the winter, customers will save 2 - 4 percent on heating costs.
 - Customers who heat with natural gas should consider setting the thermostat to 68 degrees during the day and 65 degrees at night.
 - Customers who heat with electric heat pumps should only lower the temperature setting at night if the programmable thermostat is specifically designed for heat pumps.
- Change furnace filters monthly.

BGE reminds customers that it is also offering retroactive [Budget Billing](#), allowing customers to immediately enroll into Budget Billing instead of having to wait one full billing cycle. Budget Billing evens out payments so customers aren't as affected by seasonal increases caused by increased usage.

Customers also have the option of purchasing natural gas and electricity from third party suppliers who may offer rates lower than BGE's Standard Offer Service. For customers who choose a third party supplier, BGE remains the energy delivery company and will continue to respond to power outages and other emergencies. Information about [energy choice](#) and [third party suppliers](#) can be found at www.BGE.com.

Despite the many options that BGE is making available to help customers reduce energy usage and lower their energy bill, the utility recognizes that some of its customers are still challenged to pay

their bill, especially during these tough economic times. Energy assistance is available and limited income customers are strongly encouraged to apply for assistance before they are in crisis. For more information, contact the [Office of Home Energy Programs](#) (OHEP) at 800-352-1446. Residents of Baltimore City should call 410-396-5555.

BGE, www.bge.com, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.2 million electric customers and more than 640,000 natural gas customers in Central Maryland. The company's approximately 3,000 employees are committed to the safe and reliable delivery of gas and electricity, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. BGE is a wholly owned subsidiary of Constellation Energy, www.constellation.com, a FORTUNE 500 company also headquartered in Baltimore, with subsidiaries that generate, sell and provide other energy-related services to customers throughout North America.

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