

Energy *Lines*



February 2004

VALUABLE CUSTOMER INFORMATION



Dear Customer,

The extreme cold weather we've had this winter along with natural gas prices that are dramatically higher than in the past mean higher energy bills for all of us.

It's important for you to know that *NYSEG has no control over the market price of the natural gas we buy for you, and we make no profit on this portion of the service we provide.* At the same time, we certainly understand how frustrating higher energy bills can be.

Here are a few things to keep in mind – things that might ease your frustration – as the winter season progresses:

- ▶ **Check out nyseg.com** and read our bill inserts (see inside) for important information on using energy wisely. Some simple steps can go a long way.
- ▶ **Sign up for our Balanced Billing program** (see below).
- ▶ And, **if you're having trouble paying your NYSEG bills**, contact us at 1.800.572.1111. The sooner you do, the sooner we can work on a solution together.

James Laurito – President, NYSEG

Even out your energy bills with **Balanced Billing**



Our Balanced Billing Plan lets you spread your electricity and/or natural gas costs evenly over 12 months. We'll review your account every three months and adjust your budget amount as needed so you don't have a big credit or a large amount due at the end of 12 months. Sign up online at nyseg.com or call us at **1.800.572.1111**.

HEAP can help *with heating bills*

Many households receive financial assistance from HEAP – the federal Home Energy Assistance Program. Grants can be used to pay heating bills or for other energy-related emergencies. Income-eligible customers should apply soon, since funds are limited. For more information or to apply, contact your county's Department of Social Services or Office for Aging.



Innovation at NYSEG: Putting technology to work for you

For a year now, NYSEG's energy technology group has been testing the electric powered Segway Human Transporter™ (HT) on some of our meter reading routes. This past August, we began the second phase of our research project by using the Segway in combination with another state-of-the-art technology to conduct natural gas leak surveys.

A specially equipped Segway has been outfitted with two devices that detect natural gas. The more conventional one uses small cones mounted near the ground to “sniff” for leaks coming from gas mains in the street. The other is a Remote Methane Leak Detector, an eye-safe laser technology resembling a police officer's speed gun. This high-tech unit can detect leaks up to 100 feet away on customers' service lines.



Auburn gas fitter Larry Thomas tests a hand-held leak detector, while “sniffer cones” mounted near the tires of the Segway sample ground air for traces of natural gas.

We're conducting this research to see if it's practical to use all three of these technologies in combination. It's just one part of NYSEG's ongoing commitment to customer service and safety.

> NYSEG regularly conducts leak surveys of natural gas mains and service lines. This work takes place year-round throughout our service area.

Keep your family *safe this winter*



Protect yourself from a silent killer. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is the product of incomplete combustion. When inhaled, carbon monoxide crowds out life-sustaining oxygen from your red blood cells. Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause flu-like symptoms, including headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea or loss of muscle control. Carbon monoxide can result from a faulty chimney, flue or vent from a heating appliance or water heater. If you suspect a carbon monoxide problem in your home, get out and contact us immediately at **1.800.572.1121** from a neighbor's home.

Services designed with *you in mind*



We offer a host of free services to customers with special needs. To sign up for any of these services or to learn more about them, call us at **1.800.572.1111**.

Friendly Reminder • Enables a friend, agency or organization you designate to receive a copy of any important notices we may send to you – helping you make sure that nothing is overlooked.

Hearing and Speech Impairment Assistance • If you use a text telephone (TTY) device in your home, just dial **711**, and ask the New York Relay Service operator to contact NYSEG at **1.800.572.1111**.

Sight-Saver Bill • Your NYSEG bill and our *EnergyLines* bill insert are available in large print.

Language Line • If you or someone you know has difficulty speaking English, and needs to contact us about their bill or service, call us at **1.800.572.1111** and ask to speak with an interpreter.

Power Partner • Provides energy and financial planning assistance to income-eligible NYSEG customers. Contact Power Partner at **1.800.284.7988**.

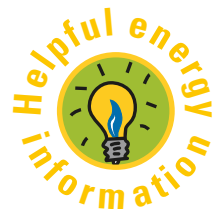
One Less Worry • One call to us will place your NYSEG bill on hold for 30 days should you or a household member be hospitalized.

Critical Customer Care • If you or a member of your household relies on life-sustaining equipment, we'll notify you before a planned interruption of your electricity service.

Special Identification • If *you and all other members* of your household are either 62 years of age or older, 18 years of age or younger, disabled or blind – please let us know. Our Special Identification program helps us better serve you.

Be energy smart

- ▶ **If your home isn't adequately insulated**, you may be wasting energy dollars. It may pay for you to insulate or have a reputable contractor do the work.
- ▶ **Run your dishwasher only when it's full**, and let the dishes air dry.
- ▶ **If you have an older water heater**, you can wrap the sides of it with a specially made insulation jacket.
- ▶ **Close all heat registers in unused rooms.**
- ▶ **Set your thermostat at 65° during the day and lower it to 60° at night** (May not be advisable if you have frail, ill or young people in your home).
- ▶ **Consider installing automatic set-back thermostats.**



Be prepared *for winter storms*

Ice and winter winds can cause power interruptions. Should a problem occur, NYSEG will respond quickly and work diligently to restore power.

Here are some tips to help you prepare for and stay safe during a power interruption:



- ❄️ Keep flashlights, a battery-operated radio and a supply of fresh batteries easily accessible.
- ❄️ Have at least one telephone that does not depend on electricity. (Cordless house phones will not work during a power interruption.)
- ❄️ Keep non-perishable food and bottled water supplies on hand.
- ❄️ If someone in your home depends on electric life-sustaining equipment, such as a ventilator or kidney dialysis cycler, call us now at **1.800.572.1111**.
- ❄️ Never use a natural gas or propane oven or range to heat your home.
- ❄️ Provide an adequate supply of fresh air for combustion when using a fireplace or wood stove.
- ❄️ Never operate an emergency generator indoors. Follow all safety instructions and place it outside, well away from your home. For more information on emergency generator safety, visit **nyseg.com** or call **1.800.572.1111**.
- ❄️ Stay away from broken or downed power lines; even insulated lines are dangerous.



We're just **a phone call away**



To report a power interruption in your neighborhood, call our electric emergency line at **1.800.572.1131**, day or night. Using our automated system, you can report interruptions and receive restoration updates. Your call also helps pinpoint the location of the problem.

Remember, if a power interruption should occur, we're just a phone call away.

NYSEG

Reliable. *Essential.*

www.nyseg.com


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