

Mansfield Live wire

A newsletter for
customers of the
Mansfield Municipal
Electric Department

August 2002

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Electric use sees unprecedented growth

It's not a picture of the Loch Ness monster, but a monster it is. The chart below is a graph of the peak power consumption of the Town of Mansfield over the past six years.

Several planning studies predicted a 1.5% average rate of growth for the next 20 years. A 1.5% growth rate is the national average. The prediction was accurate from 1990 through 2000, however, the system exploded with an unprecedented 30% increase in 2001 that continues to grow in 2002. That placed us where we expected to be in 2018.

Unlike water, there are few effective methods to manage customers' peak consumption of electricity. If consumption exceeds available supply of equipment ratings, outages result.

As the System Peak Load chart indicates, Mansfield's electrical consumption has abruptly risen faster than anyone could have predicted. While we have spent the last four years converting all of our distribution feeders to 600-ampere, 13.8 KV capacity, we will advance our planning further still to meet the expectations of our customers.

Sincerely,
Jack Beliveau, Director



JACK BELIVEAU

DIRECTOR

IN THIS ISSUE

Don't fall victim to
the summer heat.....2

Cook up savings.....2

What are power
watches and
warnings?2

News and information
about your water.....3

Treat lightning
storms with caution....4

Please don't plant
near equipment.....4

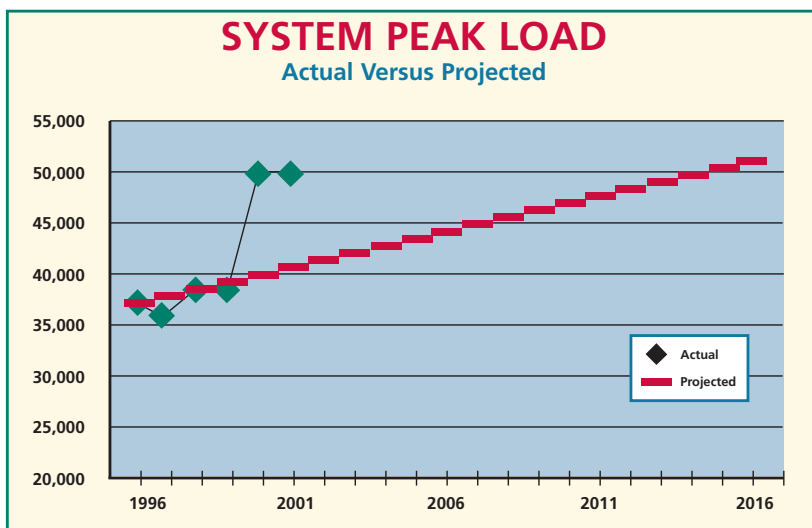
Save money in
your apartment.....4

Calendar of events.....5

Senior safety
luncheon set for
Sept. 205

Use water wisely
with these tips5

Safety tips.....6



Don't fall victim to the summer heat

As we get into the hottest days of the summer, the likelihood of heat-related illness rises, too. Although the human body is designed to cool itself, coping with the heat can stress the body's mechanisms, especially the heart.

Senior citizens and children are at particular risk from heat stress. During hot summer days, they should seek cool shelter in air conditioned environments.

Heat stress is a generic term that includes several heat-related health conditions. It is important to recognize the symptoms of different heat-induced ailments and respond accordingly.

Heat stroke, the most serious type of heat stress, occurs when the body's cooling mechanisms don't function and sweating stops. A heat stroke victim will have hot, dry, flushed skin and may have a temperature. A heat stroke victim needs to cool down — drink sips of water, loosen clothes, and sponge with cool water. And call a doctor.

Heat exhaustion occurs when the victim loses fluids to perspiration faster than those fluids are being replaced. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include weakness, nausea, and pale, clammy skin. It's important that lost fluids be replaced, so a person experiencing heat exhaustion should drink water or other fluids. If there is any trouble keeping fluids down, seek medical attention.

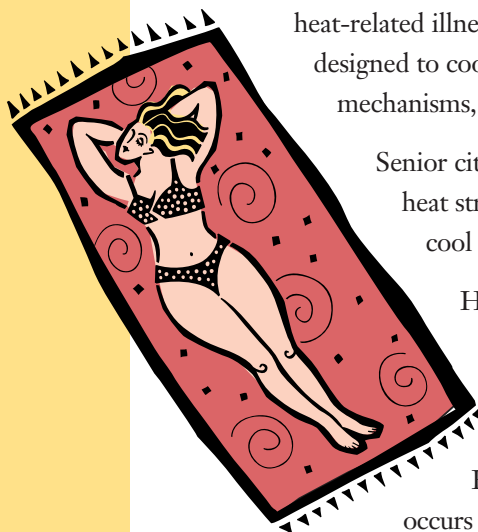
The best prevention for heat stress is to drink plenty of fluids, before and during activities in hot weather. Water, juice and other non-caffeinated beverages are best; alcohol and caffeinated drinks can actually cause dehydration.

What are power watches and warnings?

ISO New England, which manages the regional power supply, is once again using a public appeal system to request energy conservation this summer if electricity supplies become tight. There are two levels of public appeal — Power Watches and Power Warnings.

A Power Watch asks customers to voluntarily reduce electricity use in ways consistent with health and safety. A Power Warning is a more urgent appeal, issued when there is a concern that utilities may have to disconnect customers to maintain the integrity of the regional power grid.

If you hear about one of these appeals this summer, we thank you in advance for your help.



COOK UP SUMMER SAVINGS

If summer heat is driving you out of the kitchen, here are some ways to keep your cool:

- Simmer meals in a crockpot.
- Boil water in an electric kettle instead of on the stove.
- Heat food in a microwave oven.
- Fire up the barbecue grill to move cooking outdoors.
- Use a toaster oven for food that needs less than 30 minutes of baking.



Mansfield Town Hall Connection

FROM THE WATER DEPARTMENT

News and information about your water

The Water Department has some good news for residents who may have experienced rusty or discolored water. The Town has voted to appropriate \$6.7 million to build a treatment facility to help alleviate this problem.

The proposed facility will be located behind the highway garage on East Street and will service Prescott wells #8 and #9 located behind the highway, the Dustin well #7 off East Street, and Cate Springs well #1 on Maple Street. This will mean that 75% of the water we supply will be filtered.

Also, the new Morrison and Mahanu wells are on-line. We had an open house/dedication in early May attended by more than 100 people.



New meter reading system

The Water Department is also currently installing meter reading radio devices all over town. The radio reading devices enable us to get instant and accurate up-to-the-minute reads and should cut the meter reading time in half. The water meters we are currently installing in houses and businesses are all made to upgrade to this reading system. We hope to be one of the first towns to become 100% radio read.

Water ban is still in effect

The Water Department implemented our annual water ban on the first of May this year due to the expected drought conditions. We anticipate the ban being lifted in early September as long as Mother Nature cooperates and provides adequate rain.

Please use water wisely. Conservation devices are available at the Town Hall free of charge. Water audits are also available to residents by appointment.

Toilet rebate program available

The newly instituted state-funded five-year toilet rebate program is running from July 1, 2002 through July 1, 2007. This program enables residents with 5-8 gallon flush toilets to change them out to 1.5 gallon flush low-flow toilets and receive a \$100 rebate check with proof of purchase and installation.

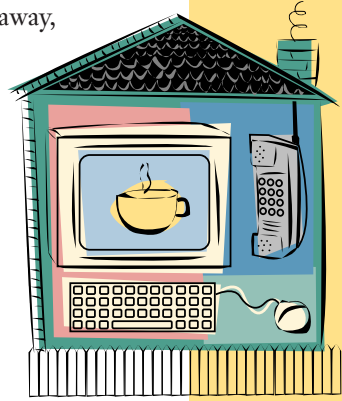
If you would like to reserve “Water Wizard” Steve Bishop for a conservation class for your youth group, church group or other, please call the Mansfield Water Department at 508-261-7376.

Treat lightning storms with caution

Just because lightning storms are common this time of year, you shouldn't ignore them. Even if the thunder and lightning appear to be far away, you still should be cautious.

Stay safe when lightning is on the way by taking these important precautions:

- First, get indoors and stay there. Do it as soon as you see lightning; don't wait for it to start raining.
- If caught outdoors, get as close to the ground as possible, and stay away from tall objects such as trees that are natural lightning targets.
- Once inside, avoid water. Do not shower or bathe.
- Stay away from doors and windows.
- Do not use the telephone unless you have an emergency.
- Turn off, unplug and stay away from hair dryers, toasters and other appliances, as well as computers, power tools and television sets. Lightning that strikes electric or phone lines can damage indoor equipment.
- Keep fresh batteries in flashlights and radios in case the power goes out.
- Equip your expensive electronics, like computers and home theater equipment, with surge protectors.



SAVE MONEY IN YOUR APARTMENT

Even if you live in an apartment and can't make major improvements, there are things you can do to lower your energy costs:

- Keep drapes or shades closed during the day to keep out summer heat.
- Use energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs, and turn off lights when not needed.
- Use fans to circulate air, and make sure that furniture doesn't block air conditioning vents.
- Run dishwasher, washing machines and dryers only when full.

Please don't plant near electrical equipment

As you plan your fall landscaping projects, please resist the temptation to plant trees and bushes near meters and other electrical equipment. And if you already have plantings within 10 feet of your electric meter or other equipment, we urge you to move them as soon as possible.

Neighborhoods with underground utility service typically include ground-level electrical transformers enclosed in boxes. Landscaping that blocks these transformers and other electrical equipment on the ground can jeopardize both electric safety and reliability.

If our workers do not have clear access to equipment, repairs during a power outage can be significantly delayed. Worse yet, our workers are at increased risk for serious injury when equipment is difficult to reach.

So please keep bushes, shrubs, trees and ornamental grasses at least 10 feet away from meters and other electrical equipment. Thank you for your help.



2002 Calendar of Events

Monday, September 2
Labor Day
Town offices closed.

Tuesday, September 3
P & R — 2002-2003 Community Calendars should be available at the Recreation Office, Library, Town Clerk and Treasurer's Offices. Call 508-261-7384 for details.

Friday, September 6
COA — Lunch Bunch, 11:30 a.m.
Call 508-261-7368 for details.

Saturday, September 7
Mansfield Youth Basketball Assoc. — Registration for all youth basketball programs, 9 a.m. to NOON, Town Hall, Recreation Office.
Call 508-339-2043 for details.



Tuesday, September 10
P&R — Autumn Preschool begins this week. Registration begins July 29 at 8 a.m. at the Recreation Office, Town Hall.
Call 508-261-7384 for details.

Wednesday, September 11
Mansfield Youth Basketball Assoc. — FINAL registration for youth basketball programs, 6 to 8 p.m., Town Hall, Recreation Office.
Call 508-339-2043 for details.

Monday, September 16
P & R — Adult basketball begins.
Call 508-261-7384 for details.
TENTATIVE

Wednesday, September 18
P & R — Adult volleyball begins.
Call 508-261-7384 for details.
TENTATIVE

Thursday, September 19
P & R — Adult basketball begins.
Call 508-261-7384 for details.
TENTATIVE

Friday, September 20
Mansfield Electric's Annual Senior Safety Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.
Call Althea at 261-7368 on or before Sept. 13 to reserve your seat.

*All dates, times and events are subject to change.
Please contact the program organizer for confirmation.*

Senior Safety Luncheon set for Sept. 20

Mansfield Electric will host our annual Senior Safety Luncheon on Friday, September 20 at the Council on Aging. As in previous years, this popular program will include a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. followed by a safety presentation by Ray Gouley from R.F. Gouley Company.

This year, our presentation will also cover energy conservation. Donna Finch and Russ MacIntosh from Energy New England will be on hand to discuss energy conservation measures and our new Energy Evaluation program.

To reserve your seat, please call Althea at the Council on Aging at 508-261-7368 on or before Friday, September 13.

Use water wisely with these tips

Here are some easy ways to save water around your home:

- Instead of letting the water run in the sink when you want a cool drink, keep a container of water cooling in the refrigerator.
- Check every faucet in the house for leaks. A single dripping faucet can waste far more water in a single day than one person needs for drinking in an entire week.
- Check toilets for leaks, too. Test each one by putting 10 drops of food coloring in the tank. Don't flush for 15 minutes. If the colored water shows up in the bowl, the tank is leaking.

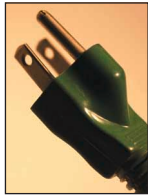
BOARD OF HEALTH

The public health nurse will be available the second Wednesday of every month from 3-4 p.m. at Town Hall, Social Services II Room, second floor, Meeting Room A/B. Call Chris Delano, R.N., at 508-222-0118, ext. 2144.

The Board of Health meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at Town Hall, third floor.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

You can call the Department of Public Works at 508-261-7335 for 24-hour information on Town Hall hours, trash pickup, and possible emergency bulletins.



safety tips

HERE'S HOW TO
STAY SAFE DURING
SUMMER STORMS

This is the season when high winds and lightning can combine to wreak havoc in our area, especially if they cause trees to topple and electric lines to fall.

There are just three words to remember if you ever see a power line lying on the ground — don't touch it! If you see a power line on the ground or anywhere else it does not belong, call us for help right away. And to stay safe, follow these safety rules:

- Never assume that a downed line is a cable television or telephone wire. Assume every wire is dangerous — it could save your life.
- Do not drive over downed power lines.
- Do not touch downed power lines or use any object — including brooms, boards, limbs or plastic — to move them. Never step in water that is touching a downed wire.
- Never touch a person who is in contact with a power line or with an object that's touching the wires. Do not touch a person who has been shocked by a power line.
- Do not try to cut or remove a tree that is entangled with power lines.
- If you are involved in a traffic accident that results in a power line touching your car, do not get out of your car unless it is on fire. In case of a fire, jump clear of the car and land on both feet. Warn people to stay away from your car.
- Do not approach a car that is touching power lines. Keep the victim in the vehicle and wait for emergency personnel to handle the situation.

LET US KNOW
WHAT YOU THINK

Have a question or comment for us? Jot it down and send it to: *Live Wire*, c/o Laurie Anderson, Mansfield Municipal Electric Department, Six Park Row, Mansfield, MA 02048, or visit our Web site at www.mansfieldma.com. Also, please let us know if you have ideas for future newsletter topics. We look forward to hearing from you!

Mansfield
Live wire

**Mansfield Municipal
Electric Department**

*125 High St., Unit 4
Mansfield, MA 02048*

Phone 508-261-7361

Fax 508-261-7391

DIRECTORY

Customer Service & Billing508-261-7361
Emergency508-261-7395
Off-hours Emergency.....508-261-7300

PAYMENT BOX:

Town Hall parking lot, Six Park Row, Mansfield

PAYMENT LOCATION:

**Town Hall, Treasurer's Office: Six Park Row, Mansfield
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. to noon**

PAYMENTS, NEW SERVICE & CUSTOMER INQUIRIES:

**125 High St., Unit 4, Mansfield
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. to noon**