

# LIVE WIRE

A newsletter for customers of the  
Mansfield Municipal Electric Department

[mansfieldelectric.com](http://mansfieldelectric.com)

Spring - Summer 2020

## Mansfield Electric is Here for You....



Joe Sollecito

This is an unprecedented time for the country and the world as we grapple with COVID-19 and the gradual reopening of our state and country. This global pandemic has changed life as we know it.

It also changed the way that we do business at Mansfield Electric (MMED). Our office was temporarily closed to the public, our line crews and staff adjusted to the rules of social distancing, and much of MMED staff worked remotely from their homes or other offsite locations. Our first priority has always been for the health and safety of our customers and our staff. This resolution was clearly evident in the response to the challenges posed by the April 13th storm that wreaked

havoc on a part of our system. I am proud of the MMED crews and the work that they did over several days to repair and restore power to more than 2,000 customers. Page 3 includes pictures of some of the damage caused by the storm.

While COVID-19 has affected our ability to have face-to-face contact with our ratepayers, it has not affected the work that we do every day to maintain low rates and provide safe, reliable service. During the stay-at-home advisory, business certainly went on as usual as our Municipal Light Board approved a new rate change in late April. As a result of this rate change, all customers should see at least a 5% reduction in their bills! What makes this news even more exciting is that MMED already had the 3rd lowest residential electric rates in Massachusetts! In fact, all MMED rate classes have been among the lowest in cost of service among all electric utilities in Massachusetts – including investor-owned and municipal utilities – since 2016.

As we slowly return to a more “normal” life, please remember that Mansfield Municipal Electric Department crews and office staff are making sure you have the power you need to keep your home running smoothly and safely. As your locally-owned public power utility we’re here when you need us – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## We’re Lowering Our Rates!

The MMED Light Commission recently approved a rate change that will reduce customer bills by at least 5%. The rate change, which goes into effect on July 1st, affects all MMED customers.

The new rates are the result of adjusted purchase power charges that reflect projected decreases in power costs for the department.

According to General Manager Joe Sollecito, residential energy charge will drop from 11.65 cents per kilowatt hour to 10.97 cents per kilowatt hour (6.2% reduction), while the commercial energy charge will be reduced from 14.59 cents to 13.86 cents.

*Continued on page 4*



## COMMUNITY OWNED

Mansfield Municipal Electric Department is owned by the people of Mansfield and governed by an elected Board of Commissioners who oversee our local utility.



MMED's Board of Commissioners  
from left to right:

Steve Schoonveld (Clerk)

Neil Rhein (Chairman)

Jess Aptowitz

Frank DelVecchio (Vice Chairman)

Michael Trowbridge

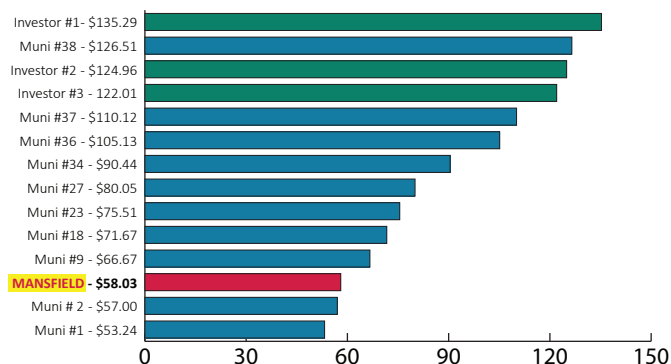
## Mansfield Electric Has 3rd Lowest Residential Rates in Massachusetts

In a recent 12-month average rate comparison analysis compiled by Massachusetts Municipal Electric Cooperative (MMWEC), MMED residential customers paid the third lowest electric rates in Massachusetts in 2019. According to General Manager Joe Sollecito, the analysis compares similar electrical usage of residential customers of the 40+ municipal electric and investor owned utilities in the Commonwealth.

When the new rate reduction to all MMED ratepayers goes into effect on July 1st, MMED is projected to have the second lowest rates in the Commonwealth!

In addition, since 2016, MMED rates among all classes have been among the lowest in cost of service in Massachusetts.

12 Month Average Rate (January 2019 - December 2019)  
Residential Rate Comparison 500 kWh



## MMED Replaces Gilbert Substation Transformers



### Mounting of the new transformers

Originally budgeted at \$1.25 million, the final project cost to replace the transformers was \$1.097 million. This was result of a competitive bidding process for both the equipment and the site contracting work, and MMED staff overseeing daily work progress.

At the time of their installation in 1974, the two transformers were heralded as the first steps to modernize the electrical system in Mansfield. Throughout the past 45 years, MMED has continuously re-invested to build up the power supply distribution system to make it both reliable and affordable. Such work included: expansion of the Gilbert Substation; building a new Bird Road substation (2011); and installing a 2.5MW Distributive Generator (2017) to reduce costs during peak energy times. This unit has already saved ratepayers over \$1.1M in avoided costs.

In addition to capital investments, MMED maintains a daily inspection routine and annual testing program to ensure the integrity of its major equipment and minimize equipment failure. As a result of the ongoing maintenance and investment program, Mansfield Electric's 1974 transformers provided customers with 45+ years of reliable service.

MMED completed a major investment in its system in February with the replacement of two 1974 substation transformers at the Gilbert Substation.

According to General Manager Joe Sollecito, the completion of the replacement project was the culmination of several years of planning.



### Transformer removal

## Customers Can Earn Money

MMED is proud to announce its participation in the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company's (MMWEC) Connected Homes program, an innovative development program that allows residential customers to reduce power and earn money.

Connected Homes is offered through MMWEC's Home Energy Loss Prevention Services (HELPS) residential energy conservation service. Connected Homes allows customers to leverage the technology of smart appliances and devices into cost savings. At the same time, the program allows MMED to better manage the electric load, reduce costs and keep rates low.

By enrolling a smart device in the Connected Homes program, customers agree to allow Connected Homes to make brief, limited adjustments to their Wi-Fi enabled devices during times of peak electric demand. Potential devices which may be enrolled include home batteries, electric vehicle chargers, electric hot water heaters and mini-split controllers. Customers will be notified of adjustments in advance via email and will be given the choice to opt out of each adjustment. Customers who participate will receive a rebate check quarterly.

For general information, please go to <https://munihelps.org/rebates-incentives/mansfield-municipal-electric-department/>

## ENE Offers Virtual Energy Assessments

MMED and Energy New England (ENE), the utility's energy efficiency partner, want to help customers stay safe while still keeping their energy consumption in check. During this unprecedented time and need for increased social distancing, ENE is offering virtual home energy assessments via smartphones and android platforms to MMED residential customers in place of a traditional energy assessment performed by ENE energy advisors in the home.

"The stay-at-home advisory led to many people being at home for longer periods of time, working from home and learning from home," General Manager Joe Sollecito said. "This increased energy consumption and created higher energy bills."

The virtual energy assessment allows MMED customers to make an energy saving plan for their home. After contacting ENE and scheduling an appointment, ENE will capture the information about the home from the video feature on the smartphone or android phone. The energy advisors will use the information to assess the home's energy efficiency to help find ways to identify heating, lighting, and weatherization opportunities that can lead to energy savings.

Customers who want a virtual energy assessment can complete the online intake form on the ENE website [ee.ene.org/energy-assessment](https://ee.ene.org/energy-assessment), or they can sign up by calling 888-772-4242 or emailing [solutions@ene.org](mailto:solutions@ene.org).



## MMED Solar Rebate Program

**NEW!!!**

**Massachusetts Municipal Light Plant Solar Program**

**Program Details**

The new Massachusetts Municipal Light Plant Solar Program allows residential customers of municipal light plants, such as the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department, to apply for a rebate for the purchase, installation, and usage of PV solar panels on their homes.

The program includes a solar rebate of up to \$1.20/watt, capped at 50% of total installed costs. Eligible solar installations must be 20 kW or less, with less than 20% shading, and facing between 90 and 270 degrees. Other restrictions may apply.

**How to Apply**

Interested customers should contact the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department for pre-approval, then submit an application with the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC), MMED's joint action agency. The form can be found online at [www.mmwec.org](http://www.mmwec.org). Customers may call 435-308-3400 to check application status.

Application deadline is December 30, 2020; rebate subject to availability.

**Step One**

Obtain pre-approval from MMED and submit application to MMWEC. Upon successful review, MMWEC will forward it to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

**Step Two**

After the DOER evaluates the application, customers will be notified of their rebate status.

**Step Three**

Upon approval, customers have one year to schedule and complete installation of their solar panels. The rebate will be paid to the customer by MMWEC.



MMED customers have a limited amount of time to take advantage of the Department of Energy Resources (DOER)'s rebate program for the installation of small-scale solar projects in communities served by a municipal light plant. **The program is scheduled to end on December 30, 2020 or until remaining funds are reserved, whichever occurs first.**

MMED is among the 36 municipal light plants (MLPs) participating in the DOER program that is available to residential and

business customers for the purchase and installation of photovoltaic solar panels. The DOER and the participating municipals each provide half of the funding for these rebates. DOER has committed \$2.3 million and each participating MLP has committed to a specific amount of funding to this rebate program. MMED has committed \$43,000 to the program. The DOER and the participating municipal utilities offer rebates of \$1.20 per watt, up to 50% of system costs on installations of 20kW or less. Installations must have less than 20% shading, facing between 90 and 270 degrees.

Information about the availability of funds can be obtained before submitting a rebate application by calling MMED at 508-261-7361. Customers who are interested in the rebate program should go to the program website [www.mass.gov/guides/municipal-light-plant-solar-rebate-program](http://www.mass.gov/guides/municipal-light-plant-solar-rebate-program) for details and links to the application process.

## Go REO Program has Launched

A total of 47 MMED customers have signed up to participate in Go REO (Renewable Energy Option), a new voluntary program that allowed customers to pay a small fee to help reduce their impact on climate change. MMED launched the Go REO (Renewable Energy Option) in October 2019 for customers who want to ensure that clean, renewable energy is delivered to the regional power grid on their behalf. The MMED participants' contributions account for \$785 each month in contributions, which are separate from the customer's personal utility bills.

Under the program, participants' energy consumption is matched with Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). A REC is generated each time one megawatt (MWh) hour of renewable energy is generated and delivered to the grid. One hundred percent of the funds collected through the Go REO program will be used towards retirement of renewable energy certificates.

Every 12 months, MMED will use the Go REO program collective funds to purchase Massachusetts Class I RECs for investment in future renewable projects such as wind or solar power. The RECs will be purchased and retired through Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC), MMED's joint action agency.

According to MMED, the amount of carbon emissions offset, based on an average electric usage of 750 kWh per month, range from 2,900 pounds to 14,300 pounds the equivalent of the amount of carbon emissions it takes to drive a car for roughly three months to more than a year.

For information about future Go REO opportunities contact MMED Office Administrator Laurie Anderson at [landerson@mansfieldma.com](mailto:landerson@mansfieldma.com) or (508) 261-7361.

## April 13th Storm Causes Devastation

While the winter was relatively uneventful, early spring was much more of a challenge for MMED crews. Heavy winds on April 13th caused massive destruction to a part of the system in the area of West and Grove Streets.

Several trees were felled by the winds, taking power lines with them, according to General Manager Joe Sollecito.

"More than 2,000 customers were initially without power for approximately two hours as crews worked to repair the damage," he said. "Approximately 20 customer-homes were isolated as crews took on the monumental work of cutting the cables, switching the power to other circuits and rebuilding the system in the area."

"I am extremely proud of the work and the dedication of our staff and line crews. The area was devastated by the storm and they were able to quickly and safely repair, rebuild, and restore power. Many customers who were impacted by the outage took the time to thank our crews for a job well done."



## ENERGY STAR Appliance Incentive Rebate

MMED residential customers can take advantage of the Energy Star Appliance Incentive Rebate Program which offers rebates on qualifying energy efficient ENERGY STAR qualified central air conditioners, refrigerators, clothes washing machines, electric clothes dryers, dishwashers, dehumidifiers and window air conditioners.

ENERGY STAR appliances are significantly more energy efficient than conventional models and can save between 15% and 50% in energy costs. Additional benefits include the reduction of global energy consumption and the need for additional generation and a decrease in pollution from fossil fuels used to generate electricity.

MMED offers rebates for the following ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances:

<b>CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONERS:</b>	<b>.... \$100.00</b>
<b>REFRIGERATORS:</b>	<b>..... \$100.00</b>
<b>CLOTHES WASHING MACHINES:</b>	<b>.. \$100.00</b>
<b>ELECTRIC CLOTHES DRYERS</b>	<b>..... \$100.00</b>
<b>DISHWASHERS:</b>	<b>..... \$75.00</b>
<b>DEHUMIDIFIERS:</b>	<b>..... \$50.00</b>
<b>WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS:</b>	<b>..... \$50.00</b>

Please remember that this offer is limited to a TOTAL of \$150.00 of ENERGY STAR appliance rebates per customer account for appliances purchased in the same calendar year. Proof of purchase in the form of a sales receipt dated between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2020 is required. ENERGY STAR appliances **must be purchased** between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2020 to qualify for a rebate.

Additional eligibility requirements can be found on the website: [www.mansfeldelectric.com](http://www.mansfeldelectric.com) or by calling 508-261-7361.

## We're Here to Help

These are challenging times for many who have been laid off or furloughed from the jobs or may have even lost their job due to the ongoing global pandemic. Mansfield Electric is aware that the stay-at-home advisory has meant that we are in our homes for longer periods of time. Unfortunately, we may all be using more electricity than in past years. If anyone is experiencing financial hardship, we encourage you to contact MMED at 508-261-7361 so that we can work with you.

We also encourage anyone who is having trouble paying their energy bills to contact the Mansfield Community Assistance Fund which provides financial assistance directly to Mansfield residents who are struggling to pay for their energy bills. MMED is proud to be a part of this charitable donation fund that was established in 2018 as a cooperative effort with West Side Benevolent Circle, the Council on Aging and Social Services, and Mansfield Bank.



In difficult times, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic, families may struggle to pay for heating, energy and utility costs due to loss of employment or illness.

The Mansfield Community Assistance Fund, a charitable donation fund established in 2018 as a cooperative effort by West Side Benevolent Circle, Town of Mansfield Council on Aging & Social Services, Mansfield Bank, and Mansfield Electric, provides financial assistance directly to Mansfield residents who are struggling to pay for their energy bills.

This fund is unique in two ways. First, it helps those who are not income eligible for state and federal funding programs. Second, it is completely funded by Mansfield residents for Mansfield residents. With the assistance of all involved, all donations go directly back to the community.

To make a charitable donation to this fund, please send your contribution to:

**Mansfield Community Assistance Fund**  
**C/O West Side Benevolent Circle**  
**P.O. Box 506**  
**Mansfield, MA 02048**

To donate using a credit card, please see link on [www.mansfeldelectric.com](http://www.mansfeldelectric.com)

## We Need Your Help!

We're again reminding customers to refrain from placing yard sale signs and other notices on our utility poles. These signs and the staples and nails used to attach them to the wooden poles can create dangerous debris that can injure a lineworker's hands and tear their protective gear, increasing the risk of injury. The damage they do can also shorten a pole's life, which raises costs for everyone.

## We're Lowering Our Rates!

*Continued from page 1*

The new residential rate and commercial rate are 45% and 30% lower than current National Grid rates, respectively, and will mean that Mansfield Electric customers will pay the second lowest rates of all electric utilities in Massachusetts.

"Our rates are low because our staff and Board of Commissioners are committed to keeping cost of service affordable while providing efficient and reliable power to our customers," the General Manager said. "During this time of uncertainty, we want our customers to know we are committed to keeping our rates as affordable as possible."



**Mansfield Municipal  
Electric Department**

**125 High St., Unit 2  
Mansfield, MA 02048**

**Phone 508-261-7361**

**Fax 508-261-7391**

### Directory

**Customer Service & Billing.....508-261-7361**

**Emergency.....508-261-7395**

**Off-hours Emergency.....508-261-7300**

### Payment Boxes:

**Town Hall parking lot  
Six Park Row, Mansfield**

**Front of Billing Office  
125 High St., Unit 2, 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**

### Payment, New Service & Customer Inquiries

**125 High St., Unit 2, 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**