



## Rates drop AGAIN for GELD customers!

*The customer charge on all bills has been lowered \$1.00, as rates in Groton remain among the lowest in the state.*

All customers will see a reduction in the customer charge of \$1.00 effective with their September 30 bill; a change made possible due to Groton Electric's sound financial planning. Although the reduction may seem modest, it demonstrates Groton Electric's commitment to keeping rates as low as possible for our customers in these trying economic times.

The GELD commissioners are pleased to announce their vote to lower the cost of electric service to all customers. The Light Board

Chairman, Rodney Hersh, stated "the department has consistently offered superior service and has made prudent decisions on wholesale energy purchases. We are very happy that our efforts have resulted in cost benefits for our customers." While all customers will benefit from the decrease, it should be especially noticed by those with smaller electric bills, particularly those struggling to make ends meet or those on a fixed income. GELD currently has the sixth lowest rate out of all 42 electric utilities in the state of Massachusetts for a 750 kilowatt-hour typical monthly bill.

### Double Discount on the September bill

*In addition to the rate reduction, at the monthly meeting held September 10, 2012, the Board unanimously voted to offer an extra incentive on our customer's September 30 bill—a double discount.*

Lower than expected natural gas prices and wise power purchases by management and the Board are two of the reasons GELD is able to offer this additional double discount on the September 30 bill. We hope all customers can take advantage of this offer!

### See How We Compare!

The following chart shows a typical 750 kWh bill amount for Groton Electric compared to two local investor-owned utilities. As you can see Groton Electric offers a substantial savings in comparison—National Grid's rates are 16% higher than Groton Electric's rates and Unitil's rates are 65% higher.

*note: this data represents the most current 12-month average*

Groton Electric	\$89.86
National Grid	\$104.06
Unitil	\$148.08

### We trim trees for the safety & reliability of your electric service

*The natural beauty that we all enjoy in Groton includes the large number of lush trees that line our country roads and cover the landscape. Unfortunately, trees and power lines don't mix.*



Trees are an important part of our environment. That's why Groton Electric is committed to balancing the importance of trees with the equally important need to provide safe and reliable electricity to the ratepayers of Groton.

To do this, we must control the growth of vegetation around power lines and other energized equipment. Tree limbs that come into contact with power lines are one of the most common causes of both brief and prolonged power outages, especially during storms. When trimming and cutting, we follow best recognized and accepted forestry standards; however, we do trim aggressively

*We trim trees continued on back*

## Cost-Effective Electric Heat

*If you use an electric thermal storage heater and take advantage of our time-of-use rate, then electric heat could now be a viable option.*

Customers often ask us what the most efficient home heating method is. While in recent years we strongly discouraged using electricity as a primary heat source, there are new factors that may make it a reasonable choice today.

Here are some facts aimed at helping you make the right decision for your home:

Electricity is now a viable heating option if you use our time-of-use rate with an electric thermal storage (ETS) heating system. ETS works by using electricity during off-peak hours to heat high-density ceramic bricks. The stored heat can then be used to warm spaces any time. Because ETS energy is purchased off-peak, it qualifies for our time-of-use rate of \$0.089 per kilowatt-hour with the early pay discount.

The list below compares the fuel price points at which operating costs will break even, after converting to BTUs and assuming furnaces have an 80% efficiency rating.

- Electricity..... \$0.089/kWh
- Natural Gas..... \$2.20/therm
- Fuel Oil #2 ..... \$3.05/gallon
- Propane..... \$2.01/gallon

Of course, you need to keep in mind the capital cost of any new system as well as energy market volatility. Fuel prices cannot be guaranteed, but here is what we know now:

**Electricity**—for the next year it appears Groton Electric will be able to maintain our rates without an increase.

**Natural gas**—in the fall of 2012, natural gas was available to residential customers for \$1.55/therm and the outlook is for prices to remain steady for the foreseeable future.

**Fuel Oil #2**—the best price we could find in September 2012 was \$3.33/gallon. In the last six months the price varied between \$3.01 and \$3.81/gallon. Future prices are expected to be volatile.

**Propane**—in the fall of 2012, propane was available to residential customers for approximately \$2.97/gallon and the outlook for one year is relatively stable. Prices can be significantly lower when volume gets up over 1,200 gallons/year.

To summarize, natural gas has the lowest operating cost followed by electricity, fuel oil, and finally propane. Electricity is now cheaper than propane and oil when used under our time-of-use rate with an ETS heater. For those looking only at cost, coal is by far the least expensive fuel and cordwood would have to rise to \$360/cord to break even with ETS using time-of-use rates.

### New office hours to better serve our customers!

**Groton Electric will remain open until 7 p.m. on Monday nights to provide service to those customers that cannot make it to our office during the day.**

Monday.....	7:30 a.m.–7 p.m.*
Tuesday.....	7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Wednesday.....	7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Thursday.....	7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Friday.....	8 a.m.–1 p.m.

*\*When there is a Monday holiday, we will offer extended hours on Tuesday following the holiday.*

We trim trees *continued from front*

since we may not return to each area of town for several years.

Our main priority is to eliminate trees or branches that are potential safety hazards. We now employ two tree-trimming contractors and both are certified arborists—they only remove trees that are or will become a direct threat to our distribution system.

Also important to note: the trees we remove are within the public utility easement—this easement was specifically designed to allow utilities to mow, trim, or remove branches and trees that may affect the reliability of the electric system.

We set our standards high and we believe it is in the best interest of all customers when we can avoid unnecessary power outages due to downed trees and overgrowth in the electric lines.

Thank you for your understanding as we work to balance responsible vegetation management and reliable electric service.