

## Keeping the power on and the rates low

By the time you read this newsletter, we hope that spring has sprung. Winter began early this year with the last week of December reaching 40 degrees lower than last year during the same week; and that cold continued through the middle of January. Then, we were teased in February into the hope of a shorter winter. March and April shattered those hopes. The last five months represent all of the challenges GELD faces in securing an affordable power portfolio.

As New England is struggling to keep the power on while pursuing aggressive clean energy goals, GELD has similar challenges locally. The way we differ from the investor-owned electric utilities that serve most of Massachusetts, is since we are owned by you, the ratepayers—we make low rates and reliability (not profits) our primary focus.

The focus on low rates can be seen in hard numbers for the last year. For the 750 kilowatt-hour customer averaged over the last 12 months, Unitil rates are 104% higher than ours, and National Grid rates are 87% higher than GELD. That means, if you use enough electricity to generate a \$100 monthly electric bill in Groton, your bill would be \$204 in Townsend and \$187 in most of the surrounding towns. Our focus on reliability can be seen in the lack of outages this winter compared to the towns surrounding us.

As you can see in the graph on the other side of this newsletter, our push for reasonable rates and exceptional reliability has not come at the expense of renewable or carbon-free power. For 2017, GELD's power portfolio was 28.2% renewable and 63.5% carbon-free. This is up from 23.1% renewable and 60.1% carbon-free in 2016. GELD is looking for a cost-effective way to deliver the cleanest electricity that we can at the most affordable price to our ratepayers. This is a huge challenge in New England.

\*Residents living in the six New England states face the highest electricity rates in the country, 56% above the national average. Yet, lawmakers and regulators have repeatedly rejected

projects, from wind and water power to natural gas pipelines, that could ease the situation. The region is heavily dependent on cheap natural gas, accounting for about half of its power generation, for electricity and home heating, as many of New England's aging and uneconomical coal and nuclear plants have retired.

\*The region was forced to use dual-fuel power plants to burn carbon-laden oil for electricity during January's deep freeze, known as the 'bomb cyclone,' using about 2 million barrels. That's more than twice the oil burned in all of 2016, according to ISO New England, the operator that runs the region's power grid. The strain was so bad that the French energy company Engie, which owns the Everett Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import terminal near Boston, imported LNG from Russia.

Despite the many issues facing the Light Department, GELD remains committed to bringing you affordable and reliable power, while considering environmental factors and the challenges of the New England power markets.

We appreciate the loyalty and support of the Groton ratepayers.

*\*Excerpts from the April 10, 2018 issue of the Washington Examiner "New England Faces 'Horror Story' of Expensive Power".*



3 Nor'easters in 11 days caused significant tree damage in Groton

## 2017 Fuel Mix for Energy Purchased by Groton Electric

