

CONNECTIONS

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January 2010

**ANNIVERSARY
OPEN
HOUSE**
125th
1885
2010
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Hometown People. Hometown Power.



BWL General Manager J. Peter Lark



Q: Driving one evening along Grand Avenue in downtown Lansing, I notice the streetlights looked ... different. What are they? C.S., Lansing

A: These are LED (light emitting diode) streetlights, which are enormously energy-efficient and will save thousands of dollars a year in maintenance costs.

LEDs are the wave of our lighting future. They are nearly 80 percent more energy efficient than traditional lighting sources. And because an LED streetlight lasts about 14 years, we expect our labor and material costs will be reduced significantly.

The BWL has been testing LED streetlights for more than a year in isolated locations throughout Greater Lansing. The feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive. LEDs are also considered to be superior in "directional lighting" so there is less light pollution.

In the coming years, expect to see more LED streetlights in the Lansing community and in other cities. Incidentally, LED holiday lights adorn the official state Christmas tree each year – donated to the state of Michigan, in part, by the Lansing Board of Water & Light.

Do you have a question about some aspect of Lansing Board of Water & Light operations? Include your name, city of residence and phone number, and send it to Q Corner:

E-mail: mdn@lbwl.com
Fax: (517) 702-6855
Mail: Lansing Board of Water & Light
1232 Haco Dr., P.O. Box 13007
Lansing MI 48901-3007

Dear BWL Customer,

2010 marks the Lansing Board of Water & Light's 125th year of serving Greater Lansing. I think it's safe to say that very few existing businesses in our community reach that far back in time.

For historical perspective, consider these reference points. When this utility began in 1885, Ransom E. Olds had not built his first car. Marconi didn't send the first radio broadcast for another 16 years. The BWL was serving Lansing nearly 20 years before the Wright Brothers made their historic flight in a powered airplane.

The photo below is the origin of what is today Michigan's largest public utility. We began as the Lansing Water Board. The 150-foot standpipe in the photo was the source of clean drinking water for Lansing residents. Clean drinking water was critical, because typhoid was an ever-present threat.

The standpipe also served as a reservoir for Lansing's fledgling fire department. Fire had destroyed the original state Capitol building (made almost entirely of wood), so it was determined that fire hydrants were needed at strategic locations throughout Lansing.

It was not until 1892 that our company began providing customers with electric service. A steam utility was later added, and much later – in the 1980s – a chilled water utility began providing air conditioning to office buildings in downtown Lansing.

The passage of time changes many things, but not everything. The BWL remains a hometown utility dedicated to providing excellent service at affordable rates. In fact, our electric rates are consistently lower than competing utilities; those utilities' rates are between 25 percent and 30 percent higher than the BWL's.

We are also national leaders for reliable service. In 2009, we again won a top reliability award from the American Public Power Association.

For the first time in a quarter-century, we have also introduced a new company logo. The new logo has a more modern feel to it, befitting the 21st century. More important, the color scheme reflects the BWL's commitment to environmental stewardship.

The BWL is a leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency. We own Michigan's largest solar array, power more than 10,000 homes with electricity generated from landfill gas, and we were the first utility in Michigan to offer customers a comprehensive set of programs to help them save money through energy efficiencies.

The BWL began in the 19th century by offering a vital service to this community. Today, in the early years of the 21st century, our mission is still the same. We are your Hometown People delivering Hometown Power.

Sincerely,

J. Peter Lark
General Manager



Medical Alert Form

If in-home medical equipment depends on electricity or water, you probably should be on our medical priority list. Call (517) 702-6006, or go to www.lbwl.com and click on Medical Alert Form.

Seniors Shut-off Protection

If you are 65 or older, the BWL will not shut off your electricity during the heating season. Call (517) 702-6006.

Military Families

Families with active members of the U.S. Military are protected from shut-offs. For details, call (517) 702-6006.

Low-Income Families

You may qualify for a winter protection payment plan. Call (517) 702-6006.

Anniversary Open House
February 16th, 2010

125th
1885
2010

The Lansing Board of Water & Light is throwing a birthday party – for itself!

Mark the date: Tuesday, February 16, 2010.

On that date, our company – Michigan’s largest public utility – celebrates its 125th anniversary.

As part of the celebration, the BWL will host an open house in the boardroom of its corporate headquarters, 1232 Haco Drive, Lansing.

The event is free. We plan to offer light refreshments, and there will be historical photos and “artifacts” from our past.

On Feb. 16, 1885, the Lansing Water Board was established – the forerunner of the Lansing Board of Water & Light. (See General Manager J. Peter Lark’s letter to customers, Page 1).

Electric service was first offered to Lansing customers in 1892. Steam utility service was added in the early part of the 20th century, and we continue to provide steam heat to several buildings in downtown Lansing. We also provide chilled water services for air conditioning to state offices and others in the downtown.

Our Feb. 16 open house will take place during normal business hours. Please drop by if you have the chance.

Still time to cut winter heating costs

Even though energy experts say heating costs may be slightly lower than last winter, money-conscious consumers can and should take some basic steps to save on their heating bills.

■ Look for “heat leaks.” Gaps between doors and door frames and where windows meet window sills are two obvious areas that allow heated air to escape outside. Inexpensive caulk and weatherstripping can mean real energy savings, with a short payback time-frame.

■ Lower thermostats, wear warm clothing. Without going overboard, people can live comfortably by putting on a sweater and lowering the furnace thermostat. Each degree you lower a thermostat can save up to 5 percent of your heating bill.

■ Purchase a programmable thermostat. Once properly set, a programmable thermostat will automatically keep your home at a cooler temperature when you are away, and automatically begin heating the house before you return home.

■ Change the furnace filters frequently. During the coldest months, a filter may have to be changed every month. A dirty filter restricts air flow, reducing the furnace’s efficiency.

■ Have a licensed company or individual service your furnace once a year. It’s like a car; servicing the furnace will make it more efficient and will extend the furnace’s life.

■ If your home has a ceiling fan, make sure it’s rotating clockwise. This forces warm air near the ceiling down to the living area.

Unfortunately, some people struggle to pay their utility bills – even after they’ve made efforts to conserve energy. Please see Page 1 of Connections, where we outline several utility shut-off protections for vulnerable customers.

If you are behind in your BWL payments, please contact our Customer Service Department at (517) 702-6006. We want to work with customers to set up a payment schedule.

Finally, for those who are able, we encourage customers to be part of Pennies for Power, which assists needy families. Please see the Pennies for Power coupon below.



YES! I WANT TO HELP NEEDY FAMILIES

Pennies for Power helps provide shut-off protection for local families that are struggling to make ends meet. Help out by mailing this coupon back to us with your utility payment.

- Round my utility bill each month to the nearest dollar and contribute the difference to Pennies for Power
- Please add \$ _____ to my bill each month as a contribution to Pennies for Power
- Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ as my one-time contribution to Pennies for Power

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

BWL Account Number: _____

