







Plant Trees to Save on Air Conditioning Costs

Trees shading your house are one of the best home efficiency measures. Good shade can reduce your summer cooling costs by up to 30 percent.

Now is a good time to plant trees! That's why we celebrate Arbor Day early in north Florida: Trees and shrubs planted now have a good chance of surviving Tallahassee's next dry season.

-  Plant trees on the eastern, southern and western sides of your home.
-  Choose "deciduous" trees that drop their leaves in winter. You'll have leafy shade in summer but sunny warmth coming through in winter.
-  To block cold winter winds, plant evergreen shrubs and trees on your home's north and northwest sides.
-  Shading your outdoor air conditioning condenser cuts operating costs, improves cooling ability, and extends equipment life. Leave three or four feet of clearance around the air conditioner. Remove clinging leaves, pine needles and encroaching plants. The condenser needs good air circulation to release heat effectively.

National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but many states observe Arbor Day on different dates according to their best tree-planting times. For more information on Arbor Day, visit The National Arbor Day Foundation at arborday.org. You can also find out information about the City's "Adopt-a-Tree" program in this issue of Insight.

For more information about saving energy, please call Energy Services at 891-4YOU (4968); or visit us online at Talgov.com/you.









Adopt-A-Tree

Program Returns! Tallahassee residents eligible for two trees

The City of Tallahassee once again is offering free trees to eligible homeowners within the city limits. To help ensure our well-known canopy of trees remains intact, residents can apply to receive a tree through the City's popular **Adopt-A-Tree** program. Applications and tree adoption information are available online at the City's **Talgov.com** website.

To receive one of three different types of trees from the City, citizens must adhere to the following guidelines:

-  live inside the city limits
-  receive a maximum of two trees per address
-  trees must be planted on City right-of-way (usually within 15' of curb or roadside)
-  location(s) for planting must be clearly marked by a stake or flag
-  homeowner is responsible for locating trees in areas free from non-municipal infrastructure such as invisible fencing, irrigation systems, etc. (the City will locate municipal utility lines prior to planning)
-  agree to keep it watered for one year

Trees available this year include red oak, elm and maple, with details on each available online. To adopt a tree from the City, simply visit **Talgov.com** and complete the online application and liability waiver.



about City services and related items of interest. For more information, call 891-8533 or visit the City's website at **Talgov.com**. If you require an accommodation because of a disability in order to participate in a program, service or activity, please contact the appropriate City department. For persons using a TDD, please call 711. Requests should be made at least 72 hours in advance. Sign language interpreters require 10 days advance request.



JANUARY 2009

INSIGHT

Wholesale Natural Gas Prices Falling



City Utility Customers Should See Impact on Spring Bills





Good Neighbor Program Helps Those in Need

Utility bill assistance for eligible customers

The Tallahassee City Commission recently approved funding for a new program to help low-income and disabled residents with utility bill payments and improve their home energy efficiency. The **Good Neighbor Program** is designed to help the following groups of customers during the peak heating and cooling months of the year when the need is greatest:

- 1) **Low-income senior citizens age 65 and older,**
- 2) **Low-income families with children under the age of five, and**
- 3) **Disabled persons living independently.**

The \$1.2 million in program funds are divided with two-thirds earmarked for immediate bill assistance and one-third going toward weatherization and other efficiency measures. The bill-pay would cover 25 percent of customers' electric portion of their utility bills. The remaining money would go to repairing home insulation, water heaters and other energy saving measures up to \$500.

The plan is to provide assistance during three peak periods of consumption: December 2008 to March 2009, June 2009 to September 2009 and December 2009 to March 2010. City utility customers interested in the program should contact the Capital Area Community Action Agency at 222-2043, for applications and further information. Program details are available online at Talgov.com/you.



Wholesale Natural Gas Prices Falling

City Utility Customers Should See Impact on Spring Bills

Good news! Today's falling prices for "future" natural gas foretells lower City electric rates by spring.

"While this is good news for our electric and gas customers, wholesale natural gas prices are not expected to stay low for the long term," said Reese Goad, director of Utility Business and Customer Services. "For this reason, we still plan to work closely with our customers to reduce energy consumption." Goad pointed to the City's new **e+ (Energy Smart Plus)** comprehensive energy efficiency campaign to help customers make wise energy choices.

Customers may wonder why our electric rates do not fall immediately when wholesale natural gas prices fall. The answer lies in how natural gas is purchased. Natural gas is similar to other commodities in that it's purchased on long-term contracts, as well as short-term on a highly volatile spot market. Natural gas is the primary fuel source we use to generate electricity. To avoid price spikes in electricity and natural gas, the City purchases most of its natural gas well in advance. This locks in our power plant fuel costs for six to 12 months at a time, resulting in less frequent rate changes to our customers.

As such, the City is now contracting for less expensive natural gas for delivery next summer. This will result in lower utility bills for our customers this spring and into 2010.



Natural gas is the cleanest-burning fossil fuel. The City uses natural gas to produce more than 95 percent of its electricity, and as a result, our fleet of power plants is the cleanest in Florida. The carbon footprint is low, compared to other electric utilities using more-polluting fuels such as coal, providing substantial benefits for our local environment.

As the nation plans its future energy policy, there are several things we can do together as a community to use less energy. The City of Tallahassee offers numerous "Energy Smart Plus" (e+) programs to help customers lower their electric consumption.

These include free energy audits, rebates for new natural gas appliances and Energy Star electric appliances, and low interest loans.

And many homes have had ceiling insulation added through a popular City program. Ceiling insulation is one of the best ways to lower the cost of heating and cooling a home. The City's Ceiling Insulation Program pays 80 percent of the installed cost up to a maximum City contribution of \$400 (or 100% of the cost for income-qualified customers up to a maximum of \$500). For information on the various City energy efficiency programs and offerings, as well as a variety of energy saving tips, visit Talgov.com/you, or call 891-4YOU (4968).

Monthly Recycling Fact

Tallahassee citizens have endorsed the change to weekly recycling by placing more materials in their Smart Carts than ever before! And to encourage recycling even more (keeping the waste stream out of the landfill as much as possible), Insight features monthly recycling facts. For more information on recycling, please visit Talgov.com/you or call Your Own Utilities at 891-4YOU (4968).



Recycling **creates four jobs** for every one job created in the waste management and disposal industries.

CALENDAR FEBRUARY

- 11** City Commission regular meeting at 4 pm
- 18** City Commission workshop at 3:30 pm
- 23** Community Redevelopment Agency Board meeting at 2 pm
- 23** Blueprint 2000 Intergovernmental Agency meeting at 3 pm
- 23** City Commission regular meeting at 4 pm

All meetings are held in the City Commission Chambers, located on the second floor of City Hall (300 S. Adams St.), unless noted otherwise. Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change. City Commission meetings are shown live on WCOT, the City's government access channel, Comcast Cable channel 13, and replayed the following Thursday at noon and 7:30 pm, and the following Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm. Call the Department of Communications at 891-8533 for more information or view the current City Commission agenda via the Internet at Talgov.com.