

## financial assistance available

Financial hardships can happen to anyone. Fortunately, there are many resources to help those in need pay their heating bills during the winter. Here are some of the programs available in Westfield.

**Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** from the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) provides low income customers with financial assistance based on household income and family size. Contact VOC at (413) 552-1548 or visit their website at [www.valleyopp.com](http://www.valleyopp.com).

**The Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Program** provides energy assistance to residents in temporary crisis who are struggling to pay their energy bills and do not qualify for federal or state energy funds. Contact the Westfield Chapter of the Salvation Army at (413) 977-8759 for guidelines.

**Westfield Warm Fund** is offered by the Westfield Gas and Electric for customers who qualify for LIHEAP or the Good Neighbor Energy Fund. Contact WG+E Customer Service at (413) 572-0100 for more information.

**The Citizens Energy/Distrigas Heat Assistance Program** was created for those who are struggling to pay their natural gas heating bills in Massachusetts. The program is open to low income families who have exhausted their federal fuel assistance benefit or to individuals ineligible to receive federal fuel assistance and who cannot afford to pay their heating bills. For more information on this \$150 utility credit, contact Citizens Energy at (866) 427-9918.

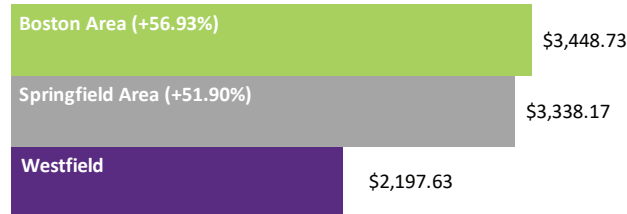
Finally, WG+E offers budget and payment plans to help our customers manage their utility bills.

Please call Customer Service Department at (413) 572-0100 for more information about or help with any of these financial assistance options.

## great news for westfield customers

### utility rate comparisons

Total Residential Electric & Gas Bill Comparison  
January - December 2018



Data based on average residential consumption of 785 CCF and 9000 kWh for the year.

Projected Winter Period Utility Cost Comparison  
for the period of October 2018 to March 2019



\*Data based on average residential consumption & actual/projected WG+E pricing for the period

\*\*Oil price projection source U.S. EIA 11/2018



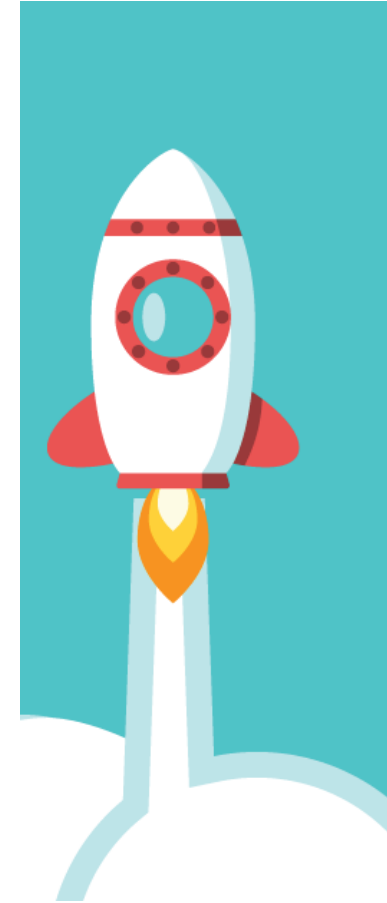
Customer Service: (413) 572-0100  
Emergency Response: (413) 572-0000

[www.wgeld.org](http://www.wgeld.org)

winter  
2019



powerline



WESTFIELD GAS + ELECTRIC



## happy new year to all!

Although this is my first correspondence to our customers as your new General Manager, I am certainly not new to Westfield Gas and Electric, having started here in early 2001 as an Operations Supervisor and then becoming the Energy Supply Manager in 2009 under the leadership of former General Manager Dan Howard. Dan recently began his well-earned retirement in November after an admirable 34-year career with the Department and, in doing so, left behind a legacy of progress and innovation that we are all proud to represent. And I am equally proud and humbled to have been selected by our Municipal Light Board to take the helm as General Manager and continue leading this impressive organization.

The launch of Whip City Fiber (WCF) is indicative of this innovative thinking and has forever changed the face of this Department and the city. Our customers now have another option for internet service and we back this product with the same standards that apply to the gas and electric sides of the house – reliable service with competitive rates and outstanding local customer service. In less than three years, and with a whole lot of effort behind the scenes and along the roadways, high-speed Whip City Fiber internet service is available to nearly 14,000 homes, well beyond our original 70% target. Future plans call for additional WCF expansion in a measured fashion to ensure that prudent business practice prevails as each of the utilities offered, (electric,

natural gas and internet) are legally required to be self-supporting with distinct and separate sources of funding.

This past September, many of us heard of the tragic and unfortunate natural gas incident that impacted the Merrimack Valley, affecting thousands of homeowners and businesses. As a result of this event, and at the direction of the Governor's Office, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities has secured a third party to conduct an assessment of the safety and operations management of the eleven gas distribution system operators in the Commonwealth. Four of these entities are municipal utilities (Westfield, Holyoke, Middleborough and Wakefield) with the others being investor-owned companies (Columbia, Berkshire, Blackstone, Eversource, National Grid, Unitol and Liberty). This assessment will focus on identifying any challenges or opportunities for improving natural gas safety across the Commonwealth. The WG+E has always taken a proactive approach toward inspecting and maintaining the integrity and reliability of its natural gas distribution system and the results of this assessment can only further enhance our knowledge and procedures going forward.

In my former role as Energy Supply Manager, my team was charged with the overall planning and securing of needed electric and natural gas supplies while also managing the rates passed on to our customers. As we illustrate in each of these quarterly Powerline publications, our gas and electric rates consistently fall well below the state average. As you may recall from last year, a national firm had reviewed our rate structures to ensure they accurately reflect WG+E's operational costs. In accordance with their recommendation, we gradually shift the fees for individual line items and we've been making these minor adjustments since that time and will further expand it this coming May. As was the case last year, customers generally will not see any impact to their overall total bill. We also have implemented financial strategies to provide rate stability, keep your costs down and protect ourselves from energy cost spikes which often occur

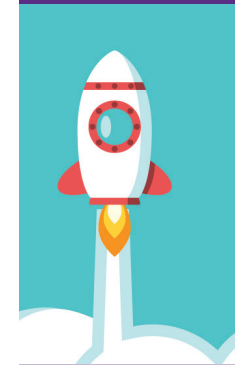
during harsh New England winters. Long range weather forecasts indicate that this winter will be somewhat warmer than normal but, as we know, anything can happen in New England.

In closing, please keep in mind our team of dedicated employees remains committed to providing our customers and the community great service, safe and reliable products and tremendous value.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and prosperous New Year,

Tony Contrino  
General Manager

### WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM OUR CUSTOMERS



this moment  
is brought  
to you by



*I love my faster fiber service! I can stream music in the kitchen, while my boyfriend watches Netflix, and our smart home devices automatically turn on and off the lights, the thermostat and other devices as needed. I might not have my flying car yet, but I feel like I'm living in the future the Jetsons promised me! Very happy I made the switch from cable internet.*

—Laura via FB