



## On-Going Capital Improvements Ensure Reliability

Continual investment is critical to maintaining the integrity of BPU's electric and water systems, ensuring dependable service for existing customers and meeting future community growth and demand requirements. Long-term capital improvement project (CIP) planning and other studies set a roadmap to follow, with BPU committing nearly \$70 million toward key capital improvement projects and initiatives over the next year throughout the community. *Continued on page 2*



## Lowering Energy Usage and Costs this Winter

Home heating costs account for nearly 30% of a household's total utility bill on average. With wintry weather nipping at the door, there are some things everyone can do to reduce their usage level and save on energy costs this time of year. Even a few minor changes in daily habits, around the home and in the kitchen, can make a difference. From using the sun's natural warmth to heat southerly facing rooms to cooking meals with a crockpot instead of an oven, everything adds up to some level of savings. See page 6 for a checklist of easy, innovative ways to reduce energy usage this winter.

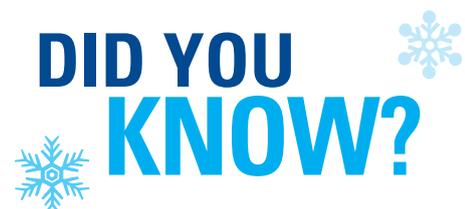


## BPU Public Board Meetings

Board Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at BPU HQ. Attend in person, by phone, or join via Zoom. Call 913-573-9025 to verify dates and times.



Winter runs from December 21, 2023 thru March 19, 2024. The KC metro area averages 18" of total snowfall annually, with the average winter temperature ranging from 29-33° F.



# Key Capital Improvement Projects

*continued from page 1*

Multiple capital improvement projects are planned or underway to improve customer service, operational efficiency, and system reliability – ensuring the utility meets all regulatory requirements while simultaneously working to reduce on-going operational costs. These initiatives will help maintain and sustain an aging infrastructure across BPU’s 135 sq. mile service area while preparing for future community needs, ensuring residential, commercial, and industrial customers always have access to the utility services they need – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

*in Millions*

- Nearman Power Station upgrades..... \$5.4
- Aged Water Main replacements ..... \$5.0
- Overhead Transformers ..... \$4.2
- Underground Transformers ..... \$1.3
- Argentine 7MG Reservoir ..... \$3.0
- Annual Overhead Construction ..... \$2.0
- Distribution Pole inspection and replacement ..... \$2.0
- Water Transmission Main 98th & Parallel..... \$2.0
- Water Pump Station Electrical upgrades..... \$1.0
- Mill St 161kV Substation..... \$1.2



## BPU | *president's letter*



### ROSE MULVANY HENRY

President  
BPU Board of Directors

As the Winter season officially begins and with many looking to the new year, this edition of the BPU Connection newsletter includes helpful information on how to manage energy consumption levels during cold weather months, key capital improvement projects currently underway, and various utility assistance programs available for those experiencing difficulties in paying their utility bills, among other things.

On average, heating typically accounts for 29% of home utility costs. However, by following a few simple steps (see page 6) like lowering the thermostat while away from home or lowering the hot water heater temperature to 120° F – one can reduce their overall energy usage level and lower utility costs. It is also important to be vigilant this time of year as online scammers continue to target some utility customers, so if

something does not seem right, call BPU Customer Service (913-573-9190) directly to verify the information that seems off to you. As a reminder, **never** provide financial or personal information to an unknown third party over the phone or online.

As a nonprofit municipal utility, BPU remains publicly owned and operates as a true community enterprise. It encourages customer participation and input, with all Board meetings, proceedings, and hearings open to the public. As always, stay informed about the latest happenings about the utility via BPU’s website, social media channels, text alerts, or watching Board proceedings online or in person.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, and BPU employees that all live, work, and play right here in Wyandotte County, we appreciate the opportunity to serve you and would like to wish you a Happy New Year. 🇺🇸

## Energy Assistance (LIEAP) Application Period Now Open!

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a Federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. The program is managed by the Kansas State Department of Children and Families (DCF), with the 2024 application period open from December 18, 2023 through Friday, March 29, 2024.

To qualify, applicants must be responsible for direct payment of their heating bills, with income eligibility requirements set at 150% of the federal poverty level, among other things. For all the details and requirements, go to [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov) or call DCF at **1-888-369-4777**.





**BILL JOHNSON**  
General Manager

BPU and its employees strive to remain one of the top public utilities in the nation, committed not only to ensuring quality, dependable, and accessible electric and water service, but to improving the overall quality of life in the community it serves.

Always looking for ways to better the organization and the utilities it provides, BPU remains focused on several key areas, including among others: 1) customer service and engagement; 2) electric and water system reliability; 3) identifying new efficiencies and improved processes; 4) financial stability; and 5) public outreach and communications. As a result, BPU has become a more adaptive, efficient, and focused organization over the last 12 months.

A key priority includes addressing BPU's aging electric and water infrastructure, some of it more than 70 years old. As a result, the utility is undertaking significant capital equipment improvements to replace and upgrade aged water

mains, power generation facilities, distribution lines, and more to meet all the community's current and future needs – and provide redundancy capabilities that ensure dependable, seamless utility service wherever and whenever needed.

As we enter the winter season, pay special note to the Power Outage Restoration Process Infographic in this newsletter providing an overview of the protocols/procedures BPU follows during large-scale events caused by severe weather or other factors, as well as other information customers may need to report, monitor, and manage better during these events.

As a publicly owned municipal utility, BPU's business model allows it to be responsive and accountable to the community first. We appreciate and value customer input, are continually looking for ways to improve, and remain committed to meeting Wyandotte County's utility needs going forward – just as BPU has done for more than 100 years. 

## **BPU.com** Receives *Communications Excellence Award*

The American Public Power Association recognized the utility recently for its customer friendly website BPU.com, highlighting the site's rich content and helpful information, ease of use, and layout/design. *The 2023 Excellence in Public Power Communications Awards* recognized the top public utilities from across the nation for their commitment to customer communications, with BPU receiving the top honor in the Web/Social Media category. Since its most recent enhancements, there have been 3 million page views, user sessions have increased by 21% and new visitors by 42% - with more than 1.7 million clicks to videos, banners, account logins, etc.



# **BPU: Giving Back to the Community**

## **Employee Foundation Delivers for the Holidays**

Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers, several Wyandotte County families in need received Thanksgiving holiday meals gathered and delivered by utility employees in November. Members of BPU's Employee Foundation donate their time and money to charities across the community, giving back through volunteer work, civic engagement, and philanthropic support. More recently, these volunteers coordinated a toy and coat drive for local children, setting up donation boxes across the utility – then collecting and delivering bags of toys and clothes to children and organizations that help kids in need over the holidays.



*BPU employee volunteers gathering and delivering Thanksgiving meals and bags of donated winter coats and toys for area children this holiday season.*

## **Golf Tourney Raises \$51,000 for WyCo Youth**

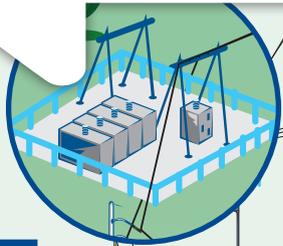
The 2023 Annual Charity Golf Tournament held in September recently distributed proceeds from the event to local organizations that help at-risk youth and young persons in need across the community. This year's recipients include the Full Throttle Foundation, Youth for Christ Serving Kansas City, The Village Initiative Inc., Wyandotte County Extension Office, Bethel Neighborhood Center, and the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Jesus Christ, among others. Proceeds will be used for educational outreach initiatives, food and clothing, and mentoring programs. Since its inception, this BPU fundraising event has raised over \$779,000 for children's charities and nonprofit organizations – helping thousands of young persons in the community.

# Power Outage Restoration Protocols

## STEP 3 Repair Substations

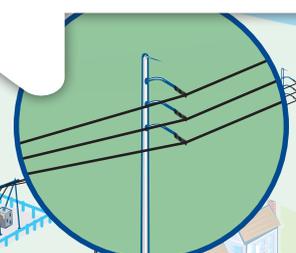
Substations distribute power to several thousand customers. When a problem can be solved at this level, power can be restored to large groups of customers at once if there aren't problems further down the line.

Sometimes, power can be rerouted to customers from a different substation while a repair is being made.



## STEP 2 Repair Transmission Lines

Transmission lines deliver power to substation. When damaged, can disrupt power to thousands of customers. These must be repaired before the system can operate.



### BPU Electrical System Overview

**2**

Power Stations

**27**

Substations

**60,866**

Electric T&D Poles

**3,000+** Miles

Electric T&D Lines

**13,666**

Transformers

**19,000**

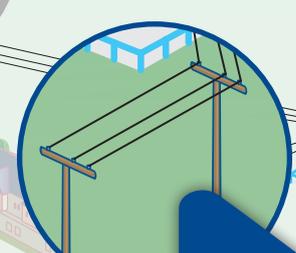
Streetlights

**5,300**

Traffic Signal Heads

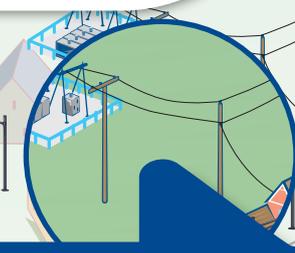
## STEP 4 Repair Main Distribution Lines

Main distribution lines, which carry power away from substations to multiple neighborhoods or businesses are then checked. When power is restored at this level, all customers served by these lines see the lights come on, unless the problem is further down the line.



## STEP 6 Repair Neighborhood Tap Lines/Transformers

The final supply lines, called tap lines, carry power to utility poles or transformers outside houses, businesses, or other buildings – and can be impacted by falling trees or limbs. Line crews fix the remaining outages based on restoring service to the largest number of customers, and include removing and installation of new poles, transformers, etc.



BPU's electric generation, transmission, and distribution system spans a 135 sq. mile area, providing power to 65,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers. If a major outage occurs, BPU follows specific industry Outage Restoration Processes and Protocols for restoring power quickly and safely to the entire community. This includes Assessing Storm Damage to identify required resources, establishing Repair Plans, Prioritizing Restoration Work, and Mobilizing Additional Crews if needed. Depending on the extent of damage and the size of the outage, this methodical step-by-step process can take time.

BPU works year-round to maintain a dependable and reliable electric system, but when extreme weather hits power outages can occur. The illustration below shows how power is restored after a major outage, and the step-by-step process that BPU must follow first to identify the extent of the problems and then work to fix them.

## Transmission Lines

Sub-stations, and tens of thousands of miles of power lines before other parts of the system.

## STEP 1 Check Generation Facilities

Power Plants produce and generate the energy we use and are a critical component in the system.

## Track Outages Online or via Mobile!

Stay informed of electric outages in your neighborhood either online or via mobile device with BPU's Outage Map tool. Using a birds-eye view of the entire service area, you can see outages "live" down to the street level at [outage.bpu.com](http://outage.bpu.com). To alert BPU about a power outage in your area, dial **913-573-9522**.



View outage updates at [outage.bpu.com](http://outage.bpu.com)

**POWER  
OUTAGE  
MAP**



## STEP 5 Prioritize Public Health & Safety Facilities

Ensuring hospitals, police facilities, fire stations, and other critical public functions have power and are capable of providing services.

## STEP 7 Repair Individual Service Lines

Sometimes damage will occur on the line between your house and the transformer on a nearby pole. This explains why you have no power when your neighbor does. BPU needs to know when you have an outage here, so crews can be dispatched to repair it. The line crews must tackle these repairs to every single connection one at a time – which is labor intensive and time consuming.

If necessary, BPU has Mutual Assistance Agreements in place with other utilities that can deploy crews and equipment to help during widespread outage emergencies.

# Ways to Save Energy Around the Home

Between heating a home or apartment, entertaining indoors, and other activities, the amount of energy used during cold weather months can be elevated. To offset this increased usage, there are several tips and steps you can take to lower utility costs. These include:

## 1. Let the sun warm you up.

Open curtains on south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat the home and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

## 2. Only heat the rooms you use.

Close off vents and keep the temperature lower in rooms you rarely use like storage areas, extra bedrooms, etc.

## 3. Make sure air vents aren't blocked.

If certain areas are colder than others, something may be blocking air vents. Move couches, chairs, and anything else that may be blocking heating vents in rooms you use.

## 4. Close your chimney damper.

If you have a fireplace, close your chimney damper when not in use. Cool air seeps through and makes your home feel drafty and cold.

## 5. Use a drying rack.

Clothes dryers use lots of energy. Instead, try using a drying rack or hang up your clothes – and situate them in front of a sunny window.

## 6. Use LED light bulbs.

LED bulbs use 75% less energy than incandescents and last around 25 times longer. If you haven't already, make the switch to LED today.

## 7. Adjust your water heater and conserve.

Water heating accounts for 18% of a home's energy use. Installing low-flow faucets and shower heads can reduce usage levels by 35-60% - and lower your water heater thermostat to 120°.



## Be Energy Smart in the Kitchen

*This is the time and season for gathering indoors with family, friends, and food. Keep energy costs under control by using these tips for conserving energy throughout the new year.*

### ✓ Keep the Oven Door Shut

Don't open the oven frequently to check on food when baking. Each time the door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by up to 25 degrees, forcing the oven to use more energy to restore the proper cooking temperature. Instead, turn on the oven light and peek through the window.

### ✓ Use Small Appliances

Consider using crock pots, toaster ovens, microwaves, or warming plates instead of the oven when possible. These appliances use less energy than the stove, which can help keep costs down.

### ✓ Lower the Thermostat While Cooking

Ovens and stovetops generate lots of heat while being used, which can help keep the temperature in a home comfortable without using the furnace.

### ✓ Don't Hand-Wash Dishes

Use the dishwasher instead of washing by hand. Dishwashers use less hot water, and only run the dishwasher after it's fully loaded.

### ✓ Cook Multiple Dishes at Once

Plan dishes that can be cooked simultaneously at the same temperature. If side dishes cook at the same temperature as the main dish, it reduces the amount of time the oven needs to run and the amount of energy required to prepare a meal.

## Beware of Utility Imposter Scams

Always be vigilant for potential scams, especially over the phone or online. In the latest hoax, a customer receives a call from a 913- area code number saying the utility hasn't received utility payments for several months. The caller provides a first and last name for contact purposes, an agent ID number, as well as a call back phone number and extension – telling the customer they should hang up and call back themselves for supposed "verification" purposes. Upon call-back the scammer may then threaten

that utilities will be shut-off if some payment isn't made immediately, and then request confidential credit card or personal account information.

BPU will never ask for payment over the phone or make cold-calls to customers and demand immediate payment. If you suspect you're being targeted by a scammer, hang up and call the BPU Customer Service Department at 913-573-9190.



# What To Do During a Power Outage

BPU has outage management protocols and procedures in place to restore power as quickly as possible in major outages. It's also important that customers prepare for potential power failures and know how to react. A few preparations can reduce the inconveniences caused by a power outage.

## STEP 1

If your power goes out, check first to see if your neighbors have power. If you're the only home without electricity, check the main fuse in your electric service panel or fuse box to see if the main circuit breaker has been tripped or if a fuse has blown. If your neighbors do not have electricity either, then you know there's likely a power outage in your area. Go to BPU's Outage Map at [outage.bpu.com](http://outage.bpu.com) or via mobile device to determine if your area is impacted, the extent of the outage, repairs made, outages remaining, etc.



## STEP 2

If you don't see your area listed on BPU's Outage Map, report your power outage by calling BPU's Trouble Call System at 913-573-9522. An automated system will prompt you for information. Simply follow the instructions and utility crews will immediately be notified of your outage.

## STEP 3

Turn off major appliances such as your electric range and washer/dryer. Turn off the majority of your light switches but leave a few on so you know when the power has been restored. This reduces the electrical demand once the power has been restored.

## STEP 4

Unplug sensitive electronic equipment such as your TV, personal computer, microwave, etc. This will reduce the chance of damage caused by electrical surges.

## STEP 5

Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed to conserve the cold inside. You never know how long the power will be out, and you don't want food to spoil.

## Convenient Options To Pay Your Utility Bill

 <b>ONLINE</b> Visit <a href="http://bpu.com">bpu.com</a> and click <b>PAY BILL</b> .	 <b>FLEXPAY™</b> Create an account and pay as you go.	 <b>KIOSK</b> Visit one of our convenient PaySite® kiosks.
Visit <a href="http://BPU.com">BPU.com</a> 24/7 to securely pay with a credit card or set up an Automatic Payment Plan with a bank account.	Create an account for a flexible way to pay as you go. Visit <a href="http://bpu.com">bpu.com</a> for more info.	Pay with cash or check. To find the nearest kiosk, call 1-877-876-7076 or go to <a href="http://paysitekiosklocator.com">paysitekiosklocator.com</a>
 <b>PHONE</b> Pay 24/7 by calling 1-855-BPU-BILL.	 <b>DROP BOX</b> Drop off a check or money order payment.	 <b>MAIL</b> Mail a check or money order.
Call 1-855-BPU-BILL and pay with a credit card or bank account.	Drop off a check or money order payment at our Drop Box at 540 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66101.	Send a check or money order to: KC Board of Public Utilities, PO Box 219661, Kansas City, MO 64121.

## Utility Assistance Programs Help Those in Need

### Utility Payment Arrangement Options

BPU works with customers to assist with payment options. The sooner a customer reaches out when experiencing issues, the more BPU and others can do to assist. BPU understands the unique circumstances some customers are facing and will work to assist whenever possible. Simply call 913-573-9145 and we are here to help.

### Customer Payment Hardship Program

This program helps offset utility expenses related to employment/income status, health emergencies, etc. Administered by the United Way, call the Hardship Hotline at 913-371-6772 or 2-1-1 for more info.

### Community Assistance Programs

Numerous human services organizations and programs are available to provide utility assistance, including the Salvation Army, the LIHEAP fund, and others. Go to [www.bpu.com](http://www.bpu.com) for more info.

### Utility Assistance Program

BPU provides funding disbursed thru the United Way to eight partner agencies including El Centro, Cross-Lines, Avenue of Life and others. Call 2-1-1 for more info.



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Kansas City, Kansas 66101

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## WHAT'S UP?

Solar panels keep generating clean, renewable energy throughout the winter. In fact, they perform most efficiently as temperatures drop, with snow having little impact as the panels absorb infrared heat once the sun returns – melting any snow quickly. **BPU's Community Solar Farm** in KCK includes 3,780 PV panels producing 1,000 KW of power – and is one of the reasons 48% of BPU power today comes from “green” renewable energy! Residential and commercial BPU customers can sign up to lease panels, providing them access to affordable, locally produced, and sustainable clean energy. Call 913-573-9997 or email [solarpanels@bpu.com](mailto:solarpanels@bpu.com) to enroll today!



### BPU | BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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**THOMAS GRONEMAN**  
Vice President  
Member Second District  
[tgroneman@bpu.com](mailto:tgroneman@bpu.com)



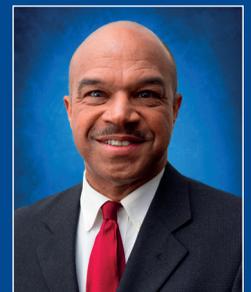
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### WHAT NUMBERS TO CALL:

<b>Customer Service</b>	573-9190
Billing Inquiries by phone—7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday	573-9190
If your electricity is out	573-9522
If your water service is out	573-9622
If you need service turned on or off	573-9190
<b>Billing questions</b>	573-9190
If you need to make payment arrangements on your bill	573-9145
BPU Job Line	573-6900
BPU Ethics Commission Hotline	271-6337
To request public information	573-9173
If you have administrative questions	573-9000
Heat Pump Hotline	573-9988
If you need a “dig” check for electrical cables or water lines	1-800-DIG-SAFE
Administrative Office Number	573-9000
Contact your BPU Board Member	573-9025

## CONTACT US

### MAIN OFFICE

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540 Minnesota Avenue  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
Phone: (913) 573-9000  
Visit our Website at: [www.bpu.com](http://www.bpu.com)

### OFFICE HOURS

**8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday**

