

What is a Vera Water and Power Customer?

A Customer is the most important person in our office in person or by mail.

A Customer is not dependent on us . . .
we are dependent on him.

A Customer is not an interruption of our work . . .
a customer is the purpose for it. We are not
doing a favor by serving our customer . . .
a customer is doing us a favor by giving us the
opportunity to do so.

A Customer is not someone to argue or match wits
with
Nobody ever won an argument with a customer.

A Customer is a person who brings us their wants.
It is our job to handle them beneficially to them and
ourselves.



Dear Customer:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our District. Vera Water and Power is a publicly-owned and operated utility District that provides water and power to about 25,000 people living in the Spokane Valley.

This booklet contains information about the District, our people and summaries of our policies. Vera is a unique utility in this state, and several of our policies are very different from any other utility. If you need detailed information about these policies, we have them available in our office. I urge you to read this booklet and become familiar with your utility. It will benefit us all over time.

Our primary mission statement at Vera is to provide the *highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost, while responsibly managing our resources, our employees and our environment*. We pride ourselves in our Customer Service and our rates. If at any time you have questions or concerns about our utility, please call us. Inside this booklet is a list of whom you can call with specific questions, concerns or suggestions.

Once again, welcome to Vera! We are looking forward to a long and beneficial relationship.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Wells
General Manager

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
What to Do When You Move In	1
What to Do When You Move Out	2
What to Do During An Outage	3-6
Monthly Electric Billings	7-8
Monthly Water Billings	9
Annual Water Billing	10
Credit Policy	11
Special Information For Renters	12
Special Information For Non-Resident Property Owners	13
The Lien	14
How We Are Governed	15
A Brief History	16
Where We Get Our Water	17
Where We Get Our Power	18
Whom To Call At Vera	19
Water Services and Meters	20
Energy Efficiency Programs	21
New Home Landscaping and New Sewer Lines	22-24

WHERE WE ARE

Mailing Address: Vera Water and Power
P.O. Box 630
Spokane Valley, WA 99037-0630

Street Address: North 601 Evergreen Road

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
(Except Holidays)

There is a drive-up drop box for **AFTER HOURS** in the office parking lot.

Check us out at www.verawaterandpower.com

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MOVE IN

Since you have received this information book, we obviously have already been informed that you have moved into the District. Within the first 40 days that you are in your new home, you should receive your first bill. When you do, check to make sure that the information is correct. Name, address and zip code are all important.

This book contains information that you may find useful in dealing with us. Please take the time to read those sections that you find informative, especially the billing, credit and water service sections. If you are moving into a new house, please read the section on landscaping.

Once you are settled into your new home, we suggest that you take the time to locate your main water shutoff-valve and make sure that it operates. This may save you considerable trouble and expense in the future. We also suggest that you locate your main electrical panel and see if the individual circuits are labeled. This will save time and effort if they ever operate and you have to reset them in the dark.

When you get a chance, you may want to locate the electric meter and make sure that the meter reader has access to it. The meter reader has to read it every month. The water meter may be located in the house or outside. If it is inside, make sure that you don't enclose it and that it is available to read each fall.

If the water meter is located outside, make sure that it is not buried and that the shut-off valve inside the vault works. This is a good backup for the one in the house. There should be insulation in the meter vault above the meter and the lid should be safe and secure. This meter will be read each fall. Enjoy your new home! Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MOVE OUT

When you learn the actual date you will move out of your home, please contact us and provide the following information:

- Customer Number
- Move-Out Date
- Forwarding Address
- New Phone Number

If you have sold your home, we will also need the following additional information:

- Name of New Customer
- Closing Attorney's Name and Address
- Closing Date

Before processing a closing bill, we must have the meter readings. Please make sure we have access to both the water and electric meters. We will read the meters within two working days of the move-out date. If your water meter is located in the basement, you can either arrange an appointment to have our representative read the meter or read it yourself and call us with the reading.

A closing bill will be issued when we have all of the necessary information and will be mailed to the appropriate forwarding address.

We thank you for the opportunity to have provided service and hope that we can do so again some time in the future.

WHAT TO DO DURING AN OUTAGE

Why We Have Outages

At Vera, as at all utilities, our customers sometimes experience electrical outages. These outages have many different causes, will last different lengths of time, and will affect different customers uniquely. At Vera, our goal is to limit the number and length of all outages. As a customer, you can do several things to help us make the outage as short as possible.

Most outages are caused by two problems. If you are in an area served by overhead power lines, the most common cause of an outage is an animal making contact with the power lines. There are thousands of squirrels living in our District and they like to use the power lines for overhead freeways. When they make contact with an energized line, it causes the protective device to shut off the power. If the line is protected by a fuse, we then need to come out and replace the fuse. If the line is protected by a breaker, it may reset itself after blinking once or twice.

If you live in an area served by underground lines, the most common cause of an outage will be a faulted cable. During the mid and late seventies, we received many miles of cable that have not performed up to its initial claims. This cable is failing, and when it does, it causes the protective fuse to blow. There is a large explosion that normally precedes the outage. When this cable does fault, our crews must isolate the faulted section and bypass it to restore power. This can take anywhere from one to four hours under normal circumstances, longer if there are complications.

There are several other potential causes for outages; cars hitting poles, equipment failure, wind, trees, ice, lightning, etc. However, these other causes account for only about 10% of our total outages.

What to do when there is an outage - Step 1 - Check

If you have circuit breakers, flipping them all of the way off and then back on should reset them. If you have fuses, the easiest way to check is to have a few new ones available, and install them. If the power is out, the first thing that you should do is to see if there is a problem with your equipment or with our supply. The easiest thing to do is look outside and see if the neighbors' lights are off also. If so, call us. If it appears that the problem may only be at your home, you should check your fuses or breakers. If you try these things and still don't have power, call us. If you are ever in doubt, or worried about your electrical service, call us, that's why we are here.

Step 2-Call Us

It is important that we hear from you during an outage. Outages range in size from one or two customers to 1,000 or more. If there are just a few, you may be the only one to call and without a call, we can't start trying to solve the problem. When you call, be sure to give your name, address and phone number. In many cases, we will need to contact customers to insure that power has been restored and the phone is the quickest way to do so.

We have the same phone number night and day (924-3800). When the office is closed, this number is answered by a service. They may ask you to stay on the line while they contact the individual "on-call" so that you can talk directly to him or her, or they may simply take a message and pass it on to the "on-call" person. Please make sure that you leave a return phone number in this case.

If you have any special circumstances you feel we should know, please tell us when you call. If you have life support equipment with limited battery backup time, it is imperative that we know. If the outage is going to be lengthy and the battery life is in jeopardy, call us, we may be able to suggest alternatives and/or sources for rental of small generators.

If you hear or see anything that will help us to identify the cause of the outage, please pass that information on to us. If you hear a loud explosion or see a flash in a certain direction, that can be very useful information.

If you know the cause specifically, please let us know. We have to try to find the cause of the outage before restoring power. If you see a car hit a pole and drive off, or a bird fly into the lines, or a squirrel climb onto a transformer and the power goes off at that time, this information can cut the outage time significantly.

If you are unable to get through on the phone, wait a few minutes and try again. We have a limited number of phone operators and the lines can get jammed easily when there is a large outage. Our operators will try to give an estimate of when the power will be restored, but these are only estimates. Please bear with them as they are only giving you what is relayed from the field, and it is the best available information at that time. The operators are constantly being updated.

Step 3 - Waiting

While you are waiting for the power to be restored, there are several things that you can do to protect your equipment and to facilitate the restoration of power to your home. One of the first things you should do is to unplug sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, TV's, VCR's and stereos. This type of equipment is very sensitive to surges that may be created by testing, switching and repair procedures.

After lengthy outages occurring during cold weather, it is very difficult for us to pick up all of the load that is without power at one time. Sometimes it is necessary for us to spend several hours breaking lines into small sections and re-connecting them one at a time. If customers would turn off the thermostat to electric heat when the power goes out and then wait until the power has been back on for about a half hour before turning the heat back up again, it would allow us to restore power to everyone much faster.

If you have waited longer than what you were told to expect when the power went off, feel free to call us again. It is possible that a large problem caused one or more smaller problems. While correcting the large one, we may not know about the others and may need this information from you to restore power as quickly as possible.

When the Outage is Over

After the outage is over, if you notice that something is not working right, please call us and let us know. It is possible that your service was not restored completely, or that we have more damage than we know. If you had set back your thermostat, and the power has held for about a half an hour, move it slowly back up to its normal setting. If you do this for a period of an hour or so, it will help to insure that we can keep the power on.

We would like to thank you in advance for your patience if you should happen to experience an outage in the future. It is much more efficient if our customers are working with us to solve outages. If there were any way to prevent outages altogether, we would have done so immediately. However, with our goal of providing high quality service at a reasonable cost, it is always going to be a balancing act between installing more equipment and the rates needed to pay for it. At this point, we believe that the system is in very good condition and that the rates are fair. Thanks again for your help! We wish we would never need to, but I'm sure we'll be talking some late night in the dark.

MONTHLY ELECTRIC BILLINGS

Bills are issued each month. The billing dates will vary slightly. The same bill includes the cost of the energy used, the monthly water base, the annual water excess charge in the fall, the monthly street lighting charge, the monthly sewer charges (when applicable) and any miscellaneous charges that may be due. This bill will include balances due for any work that was done and invoiced previously.

With so much information on one bill, it can become confusing. We have tried to make the billing format as straight-forward as possible, but still find times when it is difficult to understand. If you ever have a question with your bill, please call us.

Your first bill should arrive 10 - 40 days from the date that you move in. Your first bill will include a new account set-up charge. This charge is to help offset the cost of reading the meter, changing the computer data and modifying all of our files. This charge applies even when you move within the District.

This bill is due and payable upon receipt and will become delinquent 30 days from the date it was printed. If you do not receive a bill, please call. We have had cases where a new customer did not get a bill and the first they were aware was when we showed up at their door to collect or disconnect. This is not how we want to get to meet you, so please call if you think that you should have been billed by now.

It is important that you maintain a clear access to your electric meter. If it is in the backyard and you wish to keep your gates locked, we can arrange for our meter reader to carry a key to the gate or a combination to the lock. We will need to read this meter every month.

If you are planning an addition to your house that will enclose the electric meter, it will need to be relocated to the outside wall of the addition.

In the rare case that we are unable to obtain a reading for the month, we will estimate your bill for the month. Estimates are based on the usage for the same period last year. We try to avoid this because two years are never the same, but in some instances it is the only way to issue the bill.

AVERAGE PAYMENT PLAN

Vera now offers an *Average Payment Plan (APP)* to assist you with your monthly bill. This plan lets you pay the same amount each month for your utility services, including your electric, monthly water bill, annual excess water bill and any fixed charges such as street lights. Normally, you must have been a customer for at least a year without any significant credit problems to qualify for APP but earlier starts are possible in some situations. Please call our office for information about how you can start an APP plan.

AUTOMATIC PAYMENT EXPRESS

To save having to mail your regular Vera monthly payment, it can be automatically deducted from your bank account. Call 924-3800 or stop by our office to fill out an authorization card and provide us with a voided blank check from the financial institution from which you want us to automatically withdraw your payment. We will mail you a statement each month prior to the automatic deduction so you are aware of the planned payment and can call if there are any problems.

WEB PAYMENTS

You may view your current billing statement and pay your bill on Vera's web payment site at <https://verawaterandpower.merchantransact.com>, or by clicking on the ebilling link at <http://www.verawaterandpower.com>. Consumption history, billing history, and the ability to setup automatic payments are also available. When making a payment online, you will have the option to pay using your checking account or a credit card. Best of all, this service is now offered free to Vera Water & Power customers. Please be sure to register on the web payment site using your correct account number and your first and last name exactly as they appear on your most recent billing statement. If you have any questions, please contact us at payment@verawaterandpower.com or call us at 509-924-3800.

MONTHLY WATER BILLINGS

The monthly bill will also contain your monthly water base charge if you are responsible for paying the water on this account. In some rental homes and apartments, the landlord pays the water bill.

This charge is for up to 2,000 cubic feet of water unless you live in one of the hillside areas with a booster pump where the monthly allowance is only 1,500 cubic feet. All water used over that amount will be billed annually.

A cubic foot of water is 7.5 gallons. It takes approximately one cubic foot to flush your toilet, 3 cubic feet to take a shower or bath and 2 cubic feet to wash dishes.

The water meter is read only once a year, normally in September or October. We try to issue all of the annual water bills in October. The meters are read at this time of the year because 90% of the water is used in June, July and August. By reading the meters immediately after the main usage period, we can best tell if there is a leak or any other problem with the water service.

If you hear water running when everything is turned off, it may be that you have a leak in your water service. The easiest way to check for a leak is to turn off all of your water and then check the meter. Most meters have a small indicator that rotates when there is water flowing. This will give a pretty good indication that there is a leak.

If you have any questions about your water bill, please call us.

ANNUAL WATER BILLINGS

Once each year, probably in October, your bill will include your *Annual Excess Usage*. This bill is for all of the water that is used *over the monthly minimum* amount that is billed monthly.

The meter will be read in September or October. If you have the meter available (move items stored there, uncover if buried in landscaping, or keep cars from parking there,) it will save us a lot of time. This reading is normally done by contracted firms or individuals, so the easier it is to read, the lower our expenses and your costs.

All of our meter readers carry picture-type identification cards. Since these individuals will have to enter about half of our customers' homes to read meters in basements, please feel free to ask them to show you their ID first. We feel much better knowing that you asked.

Monthly water base charge rates vary depending on your meter size. Call us for information on your meter size and base charge rate. Our annual *excess* water bills are calculated on a 1,000 cubic foot basis. The *residential* rate for water used ranges from \$3.08 per 1,000 cubic feet down to \$.97 per 1,000 cubic feet. The more you use, the lower the rate per 1,000 cubic feet.

Our meter readers are instructed to replace any insulation over the top of the meter after they read the meter. However, since other people sometimes have to get into outside meter settings, (sprinkler system people for example,) we recommend that after your meter is read each fall, you should check to insure that the insulation is still in place.

If the meter reader notices that you have inadequate insulation or a broken meter-box lid, he will leave or mail a card to you. Call us for information on repairs.

CREDIT POLICY

All bills issued by Vera are due and payable on receipt. The bills will become delinquent 30 days after the date they are printed and collection procedures will be initiated.

The *first* step in our collection process is the mailing of a late notice letter. This letter will give you a few additional days to pay the bill, but there will be a \$2.25 charge added to your account to pay for the cost of sending this notice.

The *final* step in the collection process is to make an attempt to collect the past due amount at the door, and if unsuccessful, to disconnect the service. The costs added to the account for this step are as follows:

Representative to Residence	\$20.00
Reconnect During Work Hours	\$30.00 - \$200.00
Reconnect After Hours	\$150.00 - \$500.00

We like to avoid the final step whenever possible. If you are having difficulty paying your bill, please contact us. We can't help if we don't know about the problem. We are here to help you work through those difficult times.

For assistance in paying your power bill, the *Spokane Neighborhood Action Program* distributes funds during the heating season. Dates will vary with funding. You may qualify for these funds depending on income and the number of people in your family. In order to determine eligibility, you may contact their office at 456-7110. SNAP also distributes funds year round on an emergency basis, from the PROJECT SHARE donations.

The *Spokane Valley Partners* at the Valley Center at 927-1153 has emergency assistance funds available for Vera customers. The maximum is \$75.00 per year per household. Please be advised that customers are responsible for their utility bills until Vera actually receives the grant or purchase order number from these agencies.

CREDIT POLICY (Cont'd.)

Sometimes these grants can take *six to eight* weeks to process, so if you think that you may need help, call them early.

We realize that these credit terms are strict, but this, along with the lien right allowed by Washington State law, helps us to keep our rates as low as possible. We average less than \$100.00 per year in uncollected accounts which then have to be passed on to the other ratepayers, compared with an average utility's rate of 4% to 5%.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR RENTERS

Because all of our bills become liens against the property if they are not paid, we have some special policies that affect renters. First, copies of all late notices and collection attempts are sent to the Landlord. The Landlord's property rights require that we keep them informed of all potential liens.

Secondly, if you are having trouble paying your bills, and want to postpone payment beyond the disconnection date specified in your late notice, we must have the Landlord's approval before the disconnect date. Contact your Landlord and have him/her call us to extend your credit.

The property rights of the Landlord prohibit us from giving voluntary extensions of credit *without their approval*. We cannot provide any leniency without the Landlord's involvement.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR NON-RESIDENT PROPERTY OWNERS

If you currently own property in the District that is rented to someone else, there are a few things that you should be aware of. Primarily, you should know that all unpaid charges for services delivered to this property, regardless of whether there was a renter on the property at the time or not, by law are a lien on the property and therefore, will be your responsibility. You should take the necessary steps to insure that you reduce your potential liability as much as possible. This may include deposits or other contractual methods to insure that your renter is responsible to you.

We will attempt to mail you copies of all late notices and collection orders so that you are informed of any potential credit problems. We will attempt to require that any renter who desires an extension on their bill, contact you for approval prior to granting that extension.

If you have a tenant move out without paying the bill, we will make *three* written attempts to collect from that tenant. If they have moved within our District, we will disconnect their new service for non-payment of previous bills.

If, after these attempts are made, we are still unable to collect this bill, it will be transferred to your "Owner's Account" for the property. You will have 30 days to pay this account. If it is not paid, the service to the property will be disconnected.

If, for some reason this charge is still not paid, the bill will be transferred to the delinquency roll and continues to be a lien against the real property.

THE LIEN

If a bill is not collectable through the disconnection of service, the next step in the process is the enforcement of the lien right. This process begins with the transfer of the bill to the delinquency roll, and the notification of the property owner that this has happened.

Once a bill is transferred to the delinquency roll, it is legally certified as delinquent. There will be a fee of \$170.00 added to the bill to cover this legal process. The bill will begin to accumulate interest at the rate of 12% per year. Large General Service Accounts (*commercial and non-residential electric customers whose demand exceeds 30 KW any one month during the eleven preceding months*) shall pay all actual costs including but not limited to, labor costs incurred while setting up and maintaining the Assessment Account in lieu of this fixed fee.

At the end of one year, the foreclosure proceeding may begin. In the foreclosure procedure, the property will be sold to the highest bidder and the proceeds will be used to satisfy our lien and all costs incurred in the foreclosure procedure.

This is a long and costly process, but insures that eventually all of the District's bills are paid and that the other customers do not have to assume the responsibility of paying these bills.

HOW WE ARE GOVERNED

Vera Water and Power is organized, and operates, under Chapter 87 of the *Revised Code of the State of Washington*. The financial and other records are audited annually by the Washington State Auditor. These reports, and other records, are available to the public during normal office hours.

The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The Directors are elected to serve staggered, three-year terms, by position. The Directors' election is held on the second Tuesday in December of each year. In order to file for the election, a Declaration of Candidacy and Petition of Nomination must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on the first Monday in November. The Declaration must indicate which position the filing is for. If only one candidate files for the office, no election is held and the single candidate is declared elected.

The Board of Directors is the policy-making body. They are responsible for the adoption of rules and policies which will implement Chapter 87 of R.C.W. The Board of Directors hires a general manager, who is responsible for the administration and day-to-day operation of the District. All employees of the District are responsible to, and report to the general manager.

The Board of Directors meets the second Wednesday of each month at a public meeting. It would be advisable for a customer wishing to make a presentation to the Board to call the office in order to be placed on the agenda to insure time is available.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF VERA

Vera Water and Power was organized in the early 1900's by a small group of land developers. They bought 2,500 acres in the Spokane Valley and broke it up into 10-acre tracts. There were apple trees and cherry trees planted on most of these tracts, and they were marketed back East as mini-orchards. Vera was formed to provide irrigation water, domestic water and a single 20-watt light bulb for each of these orchards.

The people who bought these orchards expecting to have immediate incomes from the fruit, found them to be several years away from maturity and many of the orchards were replaced with truck farms, cantaloupe being one of the most popular crops.

Originally, we purchased our power from the electric railroad that ran from downtown to Liberty Lake. Next, we bought power from Washington Water Power.

In the mid-thirties, when we needed to sell bonds to finance improvements to the water system, we reorganized as an irrigation district. With this, we became a public agency instead of a privately-owned corporation.

On Jan. 1, 1946, we signed on as a customer of the Bonneville Power Administration to take advantage of the low-cost power that was being generated by all of the new dams on the Columbia River. Our organization remains pretty much the same today.

To see an interesting piece of our local history, you can view our original well. It is located directly north of our office and is still in use today.

WHERE WE GET OUR WATER

All of the water that we provide you, is pumped directly from an aquifer that runs through this area. This aquifer is fed from most of the area lakes including Coeur d'Alene, Pend Oreille, Spirit, Twin, Newman, and Liberty Lakes.

The water is so pure that we can pump it directly into the water distribution system without treatment. There are *no chemicals* added to the water that you drink.

We have ten wells from which we pump water, located throughout the District. These are all tied together with the piping system, so you might be receiving water from our oldest well, hand dug in 1906, located here at the office, or our newest well, located just west of Sullivan on Springfield which was drilled in 1994.

Any water that is pumped and not needed for immediate use by the customer is stored in one of 5 large reservoirs. Three of these are visible from the valley floor. A one-million gallon reservoir, that is painted blue and white, is located at the east end of 24th avenue. A four-million gallon reservoir, painted forest green, is located at the east end of 16th avenue. The 900,000 gallon reservoir with evergreens painted on it, is located in Morningside Subdivision.

The water that we pump is fairly hard in comparison with other areas of Washington. You may want to consider a water softener on the hot water in your home. If you do not, you should plan on flushing your hot water tank every couple of years to remove the calcium build-up.

In order to insure that the water is safe, we have twenty samples tested by the Spokane County Health Department every month. In addition to this, we test for several hundred chemicals, as prescribed by the State of Washington and the EPA. If you ever have any questions about your water, please call.

WHERE WE GET OUR POWER

We purchase our power from Bonneville Power Administration, also known as BPA. Most of BPA's power is generated by the dams that are in place on the Columbia, Snake and other Northwest rivers. The output of the nuclear power plant owned by Energy Northwest, located at Hanford, Washington is also purchased by BPA. For other sources of power, some is purchased from British Columbia, some from as far south as Los Angeles, and much from smaller generators in between.

We take delivery of power from BPA at three local substations, the newest of which is located at the intersection of Valleyway and Sullivan. We also own the 2.5 acre lawn at 16th Avenue and Sullivan Road for the site of a future substation. This substation is planned to look just like the one at Valleyway and Sullivan, and will probably be built sometime around the year 2018.

When we bill you for your electrical usage, over 60% of that money is being used to pay our power bill from BPA. As you can see by that percentage, a rate increase from BPA will have dramatic effects on the rates that we charge to the customers.

WHOM TO CALL AT VERA

Questions on your monthly electric bill

Natalie

Customer Information

Office Staff

When you move in or out

Deanne

Credit questions

Office Staff

Requests for new residential service work, customer service-
water & electric

Kim Poffenroth

Questions on our newsletter, or customer communications

Gail Gibson

Energy Efficiency programs, tree trimming, area lights and street
lighting

Michael DeVleming

Material purchasing, customer service – water and electric

Todd Henry

Crew scheduling, new service connections, water quality, installation
of new facilities

Todd Henry

Customer accounting questions

Jim Fields

New subdivisions, new commercial services, or if you have a
question on our service

Kevin Wells

WATER SERVICES AND METERS

Vera is somewhat different from many other utilities in the way that water services are installed. All of your water service from the water main into the house was bought and paid for at the time the house was built by the builder or owner of the property. With the exception of the meter itself, all of this equipment now belongs to you, the customer.

This means that you are responsible for repairs to the service line and meter box, if they are required. We can help with these repairs if you want, but many times it is less expensive to do this work yourself or contract for it to be done. We will always provide our expertise and experience at no charge when you have a problem, but you may choose anyone to do the actual work.

We will maintain the meter forever for no charge, unless it freezes. Because the meter is located in your box and connected to your lines, you are the only one who can insure that this meter is not damaged by freezing. If it should freeze, you will be billed for the cost of repair.

The best way to insure that this does not happen is to see that the meter box contains adequate insulation. We have insulating material available at the office at no charge, if your service does need additional insulation. Any insulation you use should be water proof. Fiberglass-type insulation does not work when it is wet.

Water service lines are normally buried 4 feet deep. Every decade or so, we get a freeze that threatens to go this deep or deeper. If this happens, service lines are in danger of freezing. Keeping the water running in a stream the size of a pencil lead will prevent freezing in these circumstances.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Energy-efficient hot water tanks, new residential and commercial energy-efficient building programs are some of the programs that are currently available.

If you are considering replacing your hot water tank, we have rebates available for the use of an energy-efficient electric hot water tank. Stop by our office for a list of *approved* brands and model numbers and where to find them. Don't forget to pick up an installation pad prior to installing your new hot water tank.

We have rebates available if you are considering replacing or upgrading your heating system to a high-efficiency heat pump. Please call Michael at 924-3800 for more information regarding these rebates.

Currently, Vera's Energy Management Department will perform an energy audit on your home at no charge to our customers. These audits take about 30 - 45 minutes. Please call the office for more information on these programs and any other energy questions at 924-3800.

NEW HOMES AND SEWER LINES

If you have purchased or built a brand new home, there are a couple of things that we can do together to provide better service in the future.

The next two pages show sketches of areas where you should restrict your planting. When landscaping around a pad-mounted transformer (that three-foot square green box normally located in the front property corner), please remember that we will need to work inside of this transformer.

In order to do this work safely, we use fiberglass tools with 6 foot long handles. If we can keep an area in front of the transformer clear for the workmen, it will make their job safer and more efficient.

In other areas, we may have power lines overhead, mounted on wood poles. It is important that trees that will grow tall enough to grow into the lines, not be planted under the lines. Trees cause about half of all of our outages in overhead areas, and we have an aggressive trimming program to keep them clear of the lines. If you can avoid planting under the lines, we will cut down on our trimming expenses and the number of outages that we have.

If you are installing a sewer line from your house to connect to the County system, it is important to remember that sewer lines must be kept 10 feet away from water lines. This is a Washington State law, intended to help maintain the safety of our water supply.

If you need to “locate” your water line to plan a sewer line installation, call the **"One-Call" Center at 800-424-5555**, and all of the utilities will locate their lines at no charge to you.

Enjoy your new home! We are pleased to provide service.

NOTES

NOTES
