



NEW LOOK TO VERA'S NEWSLETTER

We are trying a fresh look to our newsletter as you can see! We are presenting a new, more compact version of *Voice of Vera* and will be including it with some of your monthly bills, perhaps on a quarterly basis. This is an attempt to bring you timely news, plus it will also help save District funds by having this one sheet newsletter ride along with your bill. It will eliminate postage costs that are incurred with a separate mailing. This edition brings with it good news for Vera's customers' pocketbooks! Let us know your thoughts by either calling Gail at (509) 924-3800 or by e-mail at gail@verawaterandpower.com.

BPA ANNOUNCES RATE DROP

Good news, finally! Bonneville recently made the announcement that it will reduce its wholesale rates to customers in October. That means Vera's energy costs will be slightly less, and subsequently, we will reduce this rate to you. For the last couple of years, Vera and other public power utilities that purchase their power from Bonneville, were forced to pay a surcharge on top of our regular electric rates as a result of power contracts made during the power crisis in the West and the retail market's being manipulated by independent power marketers. Since then, BPA has worked very hard to cut costs internally and to secure agreements with investor-owned utilities on the benefits they receive from the Federal Columbia River Power System. Those and other moves saved BPA \$70 million. They anticipate that another \$350 million can be saved in 2005 & 2006 and promise to continue this course of cost controls and rate reductions. Next year's variable amount of BPA's savings will be based on the amount of revenue generated from sales of surplus power in the West coast market.

BPA technically reduced a portion of the overall surcharge which Vera customers have been paying on top of the actual electric rates Vera charges. These surcharges were set in place to assure that Bonneville could make its US Treasury annual principal and interest payment for the construction costs of the Columbia River dams and high voltage transmission grid.

Not all utilities may pass this reduction on to their customers in their retail rates. There are many variables as to how BPA's wholesale customers are charged from one utility to the other. In fact, there are many factors that impact rates to retail customers, but we assure you that we will pass the full reduction on to you as soon as it becomes effective. We are pleased to provide any relief we can to our customers who have borne the brunt of these surcharges. Right

cont'd. page 2

VERA'S CUSTOMERS AWARDED ENERGY GRANT

We have more exciting news to report! On September 16, 2004, The Seattle Foundation announced the award of twenty-three grants totaling \$13,473,043.00 from the *Washington Consumer Energy Fund* (WCEF). The grants will help residential electricity customers throughout the State. The portion of the grants allocated to Vera's customers is \$57,412.00. Vera's Controller/Treasurer, Jim Fields, completed the lengthy grant application process. Through his efforts, Vera's low income customers will have the opportunity to apply for an annual energy assistance grant through the *Spokane Valley Center*.

WCEF was established at The Seattle Foundation last December by Attorney General Christine Gregoire for energy efficiency and assistance efforts statewide. The funding for WCEF comes from antitrust settlement dollars received from three energy companies: Williams Energy, El Paso Energy and Duke Energy. The settlements followed investigations by the attorneys general of Washington, Oregon and California into alleged illegal manipulation of electricity prices during the West Coast energy crisis of 2000-2001. The \$57,412.00 grant will be allocated to Vera customers via the energy assistance program available to qualifying low-income families. Each grant will be in the amount of \$150.00 per year.



Jim Fields

cont'd. page 2



How to reach us . . .

The offices are located at: N. 601 Evergreen Road
Spokane Valley, WA

The mailing address is: P.O. Box 630
Spokane Valley, WA
99037

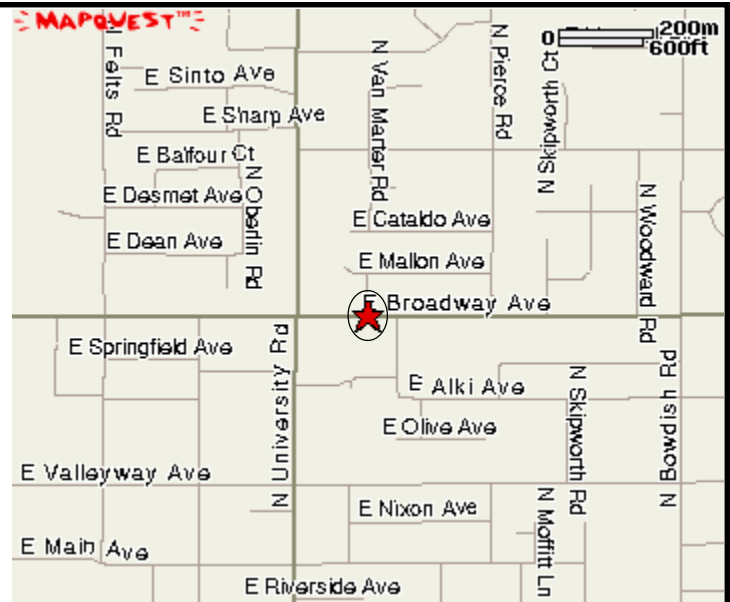
Our Office Hours are:
7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Monday ~ Friday except holidays

You can reach our office at **924-3800** which is also Vera's answering service after-hours emergency number.

Office Info: For questions on the following: Electric & Water Billing, Meter Readings, Credit Problems & Questions, Moving In or Out, Account Information;

Please Call our Office Team at 924-3800.



The red star indicates the location of the Spokane Valley Center

ENERGY ASSISTANCE GRANTS CONTINUED

Individuals who are interested in applying for the once per year energy assistance may contact the Valley Center in person to sign up at their location at **Spokane Valley Community Center**, 10814 East Broadway Ave., Spokane, WA 99206, Phone: **(509) 927-1153**.

Here is a map above showing the street location for your convenience. Vera Water and Power is excited to have obtained these additional funds because this will mean that for a while, the energy grant that is administered to qualified Vera customers will be twice as much as it has been.

So for these customers, not only will there be a reduction in their rates starting late this fall due to Bonneville's decrease in wholesale rates, they will also have the advantage of applying for this new amount of energy assistance. As always, we encourage any one who is having difficulties paying their Vera bill to contact us as soon as possible at 509-924-3800 to work out credit arrangements.

RATE REDUCTION CONTINUED

now, BPA's announcement affects only 2005. BPA is trying to continue the cost-cutting efforts into 2006 in an effort to maintain the rate reduction. It has been Vera's promise to our customers that if and when the surcharge is reduced or removed completely, we will pass this on to you. We have worked long and hard along with other public utilities in the region to put pressure on Bonneville to contain their costs and reduce their rates. This is a step towards BPA reducing the electric costs to the consumers thereby impacting the economy of this region in a positive way!

NOW THAT FALL IS HERE, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO PREPARE FOR WINTER

- When the temperatures start to drop below 32 degrees, make sure you insulate your outside water meter. We have free insulation blankets for your meter in our office. Please drop by and pick one up if you need it. It should be placed loosely over your water meter to create an air space below the meter. This helps prevent freezing. Don't forget to make sure your water meter lid is placed on securely.
- Check all your weather stripping and clean or install new furnace filters to help conserve energy.
- A friendly reminder that if you plan to head south this winter, don't forget to give our office a call so that we can set up a temporary alternate address for your account. Or if you prefer, you may sign up for an **Automatic Payment Plan** which automatically deducts your payment from your checking or savings account. Please call our office for sign up forms at (509) 924-3800.

