

# ENERGY Connection

February 2011



## Customers Can Soon Receive, Pay Bills Online

Black Hills Power is here to meet customer needs and provide superior customer service.

That service takes many forms, including delivering safe and reliable electricity, providing timely and accurate bills, and being an active partner in our communities.

A convenient new customer service — eBill — is on the horizon. EBill will complement other Black Hills Power existing billing and payment services. With eBill, our customers will have the option to receive and pay their monthly electric bill online, free of charge by converting to electronic (i.e., paperless) billing and using their bank accounts.

EBill — it's simple, dependable, secure and environmentally friendly. Please stay tuned for details at [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com) and in future monthly utility bills.

While we are excited to offer eBill, our other billing services — SpeedPay, budget billing, mail and phone options — are still available to meet your needs.

As always, we are here to help customers having a hard time making ends meet. We encourage customers experiencing financial difficulties to call us as soon as they know of a billing challenge because there are more options available the earlier we are notified. We want to do all we can reasonably do to help customers make payment arrangements or obtain assistance.

For more information about these or any Black Hills Power program, product or service, call our 24-hour customer service center at 800-742-8948 or go to [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com).

## Electric Utilities Complete AMI Projects

Black Hills Corporation's electric utilities — including Black Hills Power, Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, and Colorado Electric — were able to check off a major “to-do” from their lists as they completed smart meter installations in 2010.

In October 2009, BHC announced that the Department of Energy, as part of a national effort to increase efficient energy usage, had selected each of BHC's electric utility subsidiaries for smart grid investment grant funding, matching BHP's investment.

This new smart meter technology, called Advanced Metering Infrastructure or “smart” meters, will increase meter-reading efficiency

by sending electric usage information wirelessly to Black Hills Corporation's customer information system, reducing the need for physical readings of electric meters. In the future, BHP will utilize this technology to improve service outage response, and work with customers to provide additional information related to electric use at homes and businesses.

At Black Hills Power, more than 69,000 new meters were installed, and throughout Cheyenne Light's service territory, almost 40,000 customers received new meters. The project was in its third phase for Colorado where Colorado Electric installed about 42,000 additional smart meters.

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Power, more  
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*Improving life with energy*

**BHP**  
Black Hills Power

## Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program a Key Priority

Black Hills Power parent company, Black Hills Corporation, maintains contact with our U.S. Senators and Representatives in Washington, D.C. We let them and their energy staff members know how federal legislation that is under consideration would impact BHC's 750,000 utility customers in Wyoming, South Dakota, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska.

Proposed legislation may impact customers in a variety of ways. Examples include the "cap and trade" program that was considered but not passed in the 111th Congress, legislation promoting alternative-fueled vehicles, or renewable electricity.

One of our key legislative priorities is urging funding for low income energy assistance, also known as LIHEAP, the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

In 2009, nearly 20,000 households in



South Dakota, 12,000 in Wyoming and 22,000 in Montana were helped by the program, though many more were eligible.

Federal funding for LIHEAP was \$5.1 billion in 2010, and we're urging Congress to keep the funding at current levels rather than cutting it by 40 percent to 50 percent, as has been proposed.

As Linn Evans, president of Black Hills' utilities said in a recent letter to Congress, "LIHEAP provides a vital safety net for our states' fixed-income elderly and families with children, and the need for energy assistance has grown rapidly during the recent recession."

For more information on the LIHEAP program, go to [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap).

## Take a whole-house approach to heating your home

Below are a few actions that you can take to help reduce your energy consumption and help increase the efficiency of the energy that is used:

- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on your south facing windows open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter your home and closed at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.
- When you are home, keep your thermostat set at the lowest comfortable temperature setting. When you're out,

decrease the temperature. By resetting your programmable thermostat from 72 degrees to 65 degrees for eight hours a day, you may be able to cut your heating bill by as much as 10 percent.

- Take the time to weatherize your home. Caulk and weatherstrip any doors and windows that leak air.
- Properly maintain and clean heating equipment. Replace furnace filters regularly.
- Check the insulation in your attic, ceilings, exterior and basement walls, floors and crawl spaces to make sure you're not letting cold air in.

For additional tips, visit [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com).

## Black Hills Power Payment Options

Black Hills Power offers convenient ways to make your utility payment:

**eBill:** Sign up at [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com) to eliminate paper billing and receive your bill online.

**Budget Billing:** The no-fee way to budget your monthly payment by spreading bills for higher seasonal usage out over the year. Call 888-890-5554 for details.

**Bank Withdrawal:** Have your bill automatically paid from your bank account each month. Go to [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com) or call 888-890-5554 for more information.

**Banking Institutions:** You may pay at most banking institutions in the Black Hills area by presenting your payment stub at the time of payment.

**Phone\*:** Call SpeedPay's toll-free number at 866-537-9039 to pay your monthly bill with a credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Discover) or by check.

**Online\*:** Go to [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com) to pay online.

**Mail:** Mail your payment in the envelope provided with your bill.

**In Person:** Visit any Black Hills Power district office during regular business hours.

*\*The payment service provider may require a convenience fee for this option. Visit [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com) for details.*

## Community Events

Feb. 4-20	<i>Almost Maine</i> Black Hills Community Theater Rushmore Mall Rapid City, 394-1787
Feb. 10	Newell Field & Home Show Newell
Feb. 19	American Heart Association Heart Ball & Banquet Rapid City, 754-6267
Feb. 19-20	Black Hills Power Shootout Basketball Tournament Rapid City, 343-0381
Feb. 26	CASA Fire & Ice Gala Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn Rapid City, 394-2203
Mar. 5	Black Hills Symphony Orchestra's <i>Virtuosos</i> Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Theatre Rapid City, 348-4676
Mar. 7	Rapid City Concert Association The Glenn Miller Orchestra Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Theatre Rapid City, 394-4101
Mar. 9	Tree Care Workshop Pennington County Extension Building Rapid City, 394-4175
Mar. 12	Custer Trade Show Custer, 673-2244
Mar. 12-13	Spearfish Optimist Home & Garden Show Donald E. Young Center Spearfish, 645-0810
March 18- April 3	Black Hills Community Theater <i>Oscar &amp; Felix</i> Rushmore Mall Rapid City, 394-1786
Mar. 7-11	American Cancer Society Daffodil Days of Hope Rapid City, 342-7740
Mar. 8	Women In Science Career Day South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Rapid City, 394-6082
Mar. 19	Destination ImagiNation Regional Tournament Central High School Rapid City
Mar. 25-27	Black Hills Home Builders Association Home Show Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rapid City, 348-7850
Mar. 26	Cultural Expo South Dakota School of Mines & Technology Rapid City, 394-6884

Contact us at

**1-800-742-8948**

or [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com).