

CCEA study measures NPU's economic impact on community, region

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) has always done well when evaluated by typical metrics for a utility company. Our rates are often lower and always competitive with investor-owned utilities; exceptional storm response is a point of pride within the organization, and our customer service is available to Norwich residents every minute of every day of the year.

But a recent study by the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) measuring the economic impact of NPU in Norwich and New London County provides a new way of appreciating the value of NPU. The CCEA is a University Research Center in the School of Business at the University of Connecticut.

NPU's direct contributions to Norwich are nearly \$13 million a year, not taking into consideration the significant capital investments that are being made – and that will continue. Over the past 10 years, NPU has returned more than \$80 million to the City's General Fund, reducing the overall tax burden for Norwich residents.

With a workforce of 150 and an annual budget of more than \$97 million, NPU is supporting expanded community economic activity in Norwich that includes:

- The creation of 130 – 189 jobs each year between 2016 and 2036;
- Putting an additional \$11.3 to \$24.1 million in disposable personal income into the hands of individuals and families in Norwich each year;
- Generating \$1.1 million to \$4.7 million in state and local taxes annually.

The CCEA study reveals an even bigger

impact on New London County when combining community activities and investments from 2017 to 2022, such as:

- 199 - 777 jobs created annually;
 - Adding \$167 million in disposable income into the local economy over the six year period;
 - Generating \$26 million in new state and local taxes over and above the \$8.5 million a year NPU returns to the city budget.
- These projections come from the dynamic model of Connecticut's economy developed by the Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI), of Amherst, Mass. State agencies and CCEA have used increasingly sophisticated versions of the REMI model to provide economic analysis of a host of activities and policy proposals in Connecticut since 1992.

NPU will invest tens of millions of dollars in its natural gas, water, electric and wastewater infrastructure in the years to come. These dollars, while not fully captured in this study, will only add to the significant impact NPU has on Norwich and New London County in the future.

And this study does not capture the economic benefits of NPU commercial customers paying lower electric rates, a critical component for a business of any size. Again, these benefits, while difficult to quantify, expand the economic benefits for Norwich and the region; recognition of those unmeasured benefits underline the conservative nature of the analysis.

The CCEA analysis helps us fully appreciate the overall economic impact of NPU. For a mid-sized Connecticut city, a well-run utility with an eye on the future and commitment to progress is a valuable asset.

NPU Mutual Aid efforts continue in US Virgin Islands

Norwich Public Utilities continues to participate in mutual aid efforts in the US Virgin Islands under the supervision of the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA).

While NPU has a long-standing commitment to mutual aid efforts, we don't make crews and equipment available to assist other utilities unless or until we are meeting the needs of our community. This approach allowed us to respond to the severe weather and related outages that impacted Norwich on October 29-30 in a safe, timely and efficient manner.

The U.S. Virgin Islands continue to struggle in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Initial reports were that every utility pole was either damaged or brought down; power plants and transmission lines also suffered significant damage. As a result the power restoration process has been very challenging and labor intensive.

Despite the number of challenges, including the terrain, heat and humidity, the NPU and NEPPA employees have made very significant progress.

Ten Tips...

To save energy this winter

1. **Schedule an energy audit:** NPU works with Lantern Energy to perform free energy audits for our customers. Call Lantern at 1-877-878-3006 to schedule an appointment.
2. **Consider replacing your heating system.** You may want to upgrade your heating system to a more efficient unit if your heating system is more than 15 years old.
3. **Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as recommended.**
4. **Use sunlight to your advantage.** Open draperies and shades on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to enter your home.
5. **If your hot water tank is warm to the touch, consider insulating it.** This can help you save up to 16% annually in water heating costs.
6. **Insulate your hot water pipes.** Doing this will reduce heat loss and allow you to lower your temperature setting.
7. **Repair leaky water faucets.** A leaky faucet wastes many gallons of water in a very short time frame.
8. **Close draperies and shades at night.** This will help protect against drafts.
9. **When buying any new appliance, look for the Energy Star label.**
10. **Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators as needed.** Make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.



For more energy savings tips, download the free energy saver guide from the U.S. Department of Energy: <https://energy.gov/energysaver/services/energy-saver-guide-tips-saving-money-and-energy-home>

NPU employees raise money for co-workers families in Puerto Rico

Five employees of Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) have immediate family members in Puerto Rico whose lives have been turned upside down since Hurricane Maria hit the island on September 20, 2017.

NPU Customer Service Representatives Evannie Bocachica, Karla Ithier, Maria Medina and Keana McQueen along with Linemen Elier Alvarado all have numerous family members who are struggling with every aspect of daily life in Puerto Rico.

Each family has their own challenging stories and circumstances including:

- The inability to account for everyone in a family for several weeks
- Sick and injured relatives unable to get medical attention; the loss of a life due to the extenuating circumstances of the disaster
- Dozens of people living in a single small house
- The loss of nearly all personal property
- Very limited and inconsistent cell phone and internet service
- A lack of electricity for more than eight weeks (and counting)

While the challenges facing the people of Puerto Rico and their families seem insurmountable, the men and women of NPU wanted to provide some level of support for their friends and coworkers.

Michele Addabbo led a fundraising campaign among NPU employees that quickly raised \$6,000, including \$1,000 from the Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

While the organizers of the fundraising effort considered a single contribution to one of the major relief organizations, it was determined that the best and most immediate way to help the extended NPU families was to wire the money to a contact person for each family.

After overcoming communications issues with the wire transfer process, \$1,200 was sent to each family on November 8. The use of these funds by the families is completely unrestricted and to be used in whatever way is most helpful – for food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, transportation, or anything else that will help with the rebuilding process.

Text-to-Pay

A new service for paying your bill

NPU customers now have the option of paying their utility bills via text message, the latest effort to increase the efficiency and convenience in the utility's payment process.

According to Jeff Brining, Division Manager for Customer Service, this new text-to-pay option provides our customers with the ability to pay their NPU bill from anywhere and at any time. This option will save time and money for both customers and for NPU.



The process for signing up for text-to-pay is simple:

- On the NPU website, customers simply update their account information, including a credit card if they have not registered one with NPU.
- Select the text and email option in the drop-down menu for receiving invoices.
- Enter the mobile phone number and email addresses for the appropriate account(s).

Once registered, NPU will send a confirmation email and text to the customer; once 'OK' is responded the customer is now ready to pay their bill via text.

NPU customers can text "Stop" to unsubscribe or "Resume" to restart the text-to-pay option at any time.

As part of this new offering, NPU will enter all text-to-pay customers registered between now and February 28, 2018 into a sweepstakes for a chance to win one of two Apple iPads. The winners will be selected randomly and will be notified via text message in early March. *NPU employees and their families are not eligible to win an iPad.*

NPU's enhanced online bill pay and billing service, which was launched in June 2017 is off to a very strong start, with the number of electronic payments to NPU increasing by more than 15%. This enhancement results in fewer phone calls and paper transactions being processed by NPU each month, increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our Customer Service Center.

Removing Snow from Gas Meters

Connecticut Regulations require utilities provide this safety information on an annual basis

Norwich Public Utilities is reminding customers of the importance of keeping the area around natural gas meters free from snow. Fire departments and other emergency response personnel must have access to gas meters in case of an emergency shut-off situation. NPU Meter Readers also need access to meters to avoid estimated bills.

When removing snow around gas meters:

- Make sure you know the exact location of your meter before you begin to remove snow
- Maintain a safe distance between gas meters and shovels, snow blowers, and other equipment while shoveling
- **NEVER** push snow against gas meters, gas piping, or appliance vents (make sure all vents are free of snow or other obstructions)



- **NEVER** pile snow on top of gas meters, gas piping, or appliance vents

All natural gas customers should be aware that gas meters that are buried in deep snow or damaged by snow removal equipment could begin to leak. Gas meter leaks are a potentially hazardous situation.

Customers are encouraged to report any problems with their meters to NPU's Gas Emergency line at **860-887-7207**. If there is a natural gas odor present, exit the premises and call **911** right away.

HERE TO SERVE YOU

Visit our website for more information: norwichpublicutilities.com
Please call, fax or e-mail us your questions, comments and suggestions.
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