

**UTILITIES**&YOU

April 2019



Spring this way...

JUST IN TIME FOR SPRING

# MyTPU.org refresh

An updated MyTPU.org has launched with new features that can make using our site easier than ever.

The new MyTPU.org is now mobile friendly, allowing you to access important information in the palm of your hand. It also features improved organization and navigation that will lead you to the content you want in fewer clicks. You can also look forward to faster access to outage information and the ability to add TPU events to your personal online calendar.

We hope these improvements, along with a beautifully updated design, better search function, and news feed highlighting the projects in our community that impact you, can help make your experience more seamless. **U\***



## Four ways to manage your utility bills

Do you or someone you know need help paying utility bills? We may be able to assist.

Visit [MyTPU.org/Assistance](https://www.myltpu.org/Assistance) for income guidelines and to see if you qualify for:

**1. Bill Credit Assistance (BCAP)**

Get credit (up to \$47 per month) each time you pay your utility bill in full and on time. We base the amount of credit you receive on the number of services billed.

**2. Discount Rate Program**

Get a 30% discount if you are 62 and over or receiving qualifying disability income.

**3. Budget Billing**

Pay an average monthly amount to make budgeting easier.

**4. Rebates and grants**

Find info, tips, and tools at [MyTPU.org/Rebates](https://www.myltpu.org/Rebates). **U\***



## New advanced meters are coming

You will soon receive greater conveniences, control, and choices over your utility services as TPU transitions to a modern, digital utility with advanced meters.

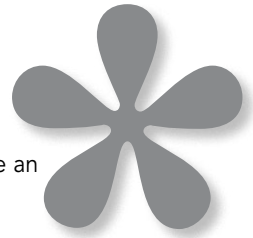
New advanced meters will offer you monthly billing, remote service reconnection, improved outage notifications, faster outage and leak detection, and more. The meters will automatically and securely send TPU accurate meter data and eliminate the need for manual meter reads, which gives you more frequent and detailed information about your water and electricity use.

Other service providers, such as the banking and healthcare industries, have already adapted to their customers' digital needs. The utility industry is currently undergoing the same transition. Over 75 million households nationwide already use advanced meters.

Installation of advanced meters will begin in mid 2020. Stay up-to-date at [MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters](https://www.myltpu.org/AdvancedMeters). **U\***

EFFECTIVE APRIL 1

# New power rates



A power rate adjustment went into effect April 1. You will notice an average bill increase of about 84 cents per month. Some major activities you support through rates include:

- Operating seven hydroelectric dams and four fish hatcheries.
- Purchasing electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration.
- Maintaining and upgrading nearly 2,400 miles of power lines.
- Keeping the electric system secure from cyber and physical threats.
- Investing in technology to comply with federal regulations, improve reliability, and enhance customer service.
- Improving safety programs for customers and employees.

While we know any rate increase affects you, Tacoma Power customers enjoy some of the lowest rates in the Puget Sound region. The rate adjustment allows us to continue investing in projects that ensure you receive clean, reliable electricity every day.

Before presenting the rate adjustment to the Public Utility Board and Tacoma City Council for approval, we held over 45 public meetings to ensure all stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback.

Find more information at [MyTPU.org/Rates](http://MyTPU.org/Rates). U\*



SURVEY SAYS!

## Satisfaction + with services holds steady

Results are in. The 2018 TPU Customer Satisfaction Survey shows overall favor with steady or slight improvement from 2017.

Most people trust TPU, feel we are managed well, control costs (with a slight improvement), a good corporate citizen, easy to do business with, and environmentally responsible with stable community involvement. Scores for accurate, easily understandable bills also remain steady or slightly improved.

Tacoma Power and Tacoma Water received very positive overall satisfaction ratings. Reliable service and responsiveness are the most cited reasons for Tacoma Power. Water quality and reliable service are the most cited reasons for Tacoma Water. The value of service, water quality, reliability, maintenance, outage notification, and service restoration are consistent year-over-year.

Rates, billing, and payment are the most cited concerns associated with less positive ratings.

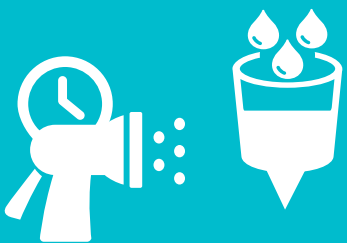
One-third or more people who receive “all services” (Power, Water, and Environmental Services) indicate their bill is not very or not at all affordable compared to 16% of those who receive fewer services. This indicates people with the highest bills tend to give the least positive ratings. Concerns may also increase due to bimonthly billing.

We use results from the survey to identify needs, plan work, and monitor how well we serve you over time. U\*

## Pick up your **FREE** outdoor smart watering kit

Get up to three free items that will help you save water outdoors and money on your utility bills if you are a Tacoma Water customer. The kit includes a seven-pattern spray hose nozzle, a hose timer that does not need batteries, and a rain gauge that can measure up to 2 inches of water.

Stop by the TPU lobby (3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma) and select one, two or all three items. You can also visit Tacoma Water's booth at any community event we visit this year – watch our calendar of events at [MyTPU.org/Calendar](http://MyTPU.org/Calendar). Renters, if you do not pay your water bill directly, you can still get a free kit. The kits are limited to one per household. **U\***



## EARTH DAY Help reduce water use through the Mayor's Challenge

Tacoma is joining cities across the country during April to participate in the Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation. Since April 1, 2018 U.S. residents have pledged to save nearly 4.7 billion gallons of water. You can pledge to help the environment and enter to win drawings for fun prizes for yourself and a local charity. **Tacoma currently ranks #5.** Let's raise our community's rank to #1! Pledge your support with Mayor Woodards at [MyWaterPledge.com](http://MyWaterPledge.com). **U\***



Sign up at [SurvivetheSound.org](http://SurvivetheSound.org) by May 5.

### SURVIVE THE SOUND

Learn about saving salmon by playing an interactive game with us! Pick your fish (ours is Utilifish), create or join a team (ours is Tacoma Public Utilifish), then compete to see whose team has the most surviving fish over the migration from May 6 to 10! **U\***

## How to beautify your landscape while saving water

Overwatering accounts for about half of the water waste in yards. You can water less and save money while maintaining a beautiful, healthy landscape.

### Follow these simple tips:

- Water early in the day when less water gets lost to evaporation.
- Don't overwater – Most lawns only need 1 inch of water per week.
- Plant appropriately for sun or shade (right plant; right place).
- Group plants according to their water needs.
- Use native plants adapted to our region's climate. **U\***

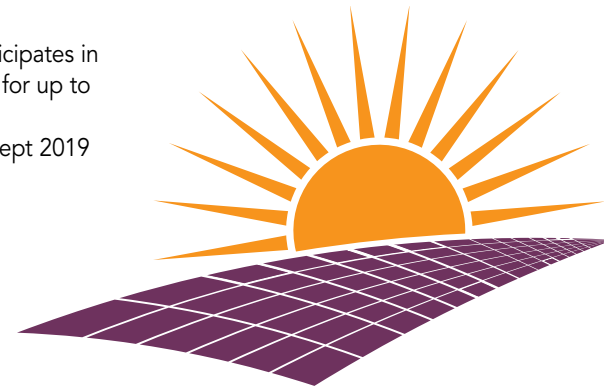
## Know or work for a place interested in renewable energy?

Schools, non-profits or government agencies can offset their impact on the environment beyond saving electricity by investing as little as \$3 a month in local Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) through Evergreen Options – a voluntary program that supports the development of new renewable energy resources in the Pacific Northwest.

Each year, any non-profit that participates in Evergreen Options can also apply for up to a \$50,000 grant toward an on-site renewable energy project. We accept 2019

grant applications from April 1 through July 31. Grant recipients will be announced by Aug. 31. Anyone participating in Evergreen Options also gets to vote for their favorite grant projects.

Share the information at [MyTPU.org/Evergreen](http://MyTPU.org/Evergreen) with your employer or have them call 253-502-8363. **U\***



## Prep your irrigation system for the watering season

Checking your irrigation system will give you a head start on efficient water use and saving on your utility bill this spring and summer. Before ramping up your outdoor watering, ready your irrigation system in four easy steps:

- 1. Inspect**  
Clear sprinkler heads of debris.
- 2. Connect**  
Check for leaks and tighten or replace connections that drip (even small leaks can waste a lot of water).
- 3. Direct**  
Aim sprinkler heads toward only the areas you want to water.
- 4. Select**  
Update your system's watering schedule to align with the season.

Visit [MyTPU.org/WaterSmart](http://MyTPU.org/WaterSmart) for more tips and information. **U\***

# Reserve your campsite through the new parks reservation system

Reserving a campsite at one of Tacoma Power’s four popular parks just got easier.

Tacoma Power Parks have a new reservation website [MyTPU.org/Parks](http://MyTPU.org/Parks) and phone number, **833-290-8180**. Our parks previously shared Washington State Parks’ reservation system, but when our contract ended, we created our own. You can experience a fresh look and improved functionality, including:

- ▶ Optimization for any device.
- ▶ Easier navigation of campsite maps.
- ▶ Saved preferences and applicable discounts that automatically populate future reservations.

Since the middle of January, campers have made 2,500 reservations in the new system. Many campers have already expressed positive feedback; we hope you will feel the same! Over 300,000 people visit our parks each year, so make your reservations now – sites are filling up fast! **U\***

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

# Building women and families in our community

A new, unique partnership with Habitat for Humanity in Tacoma and your utilities helps build homes for families while building up women in our community.

Women throughout the community and female employees at TPU will get to participate in a Habitat for Humanity Women Build this spring alongside future Habitat homeowners. Volunteers work under the guidance of trade professionals to practice construction skills



and get a chance to test those skills in a safe environment on site.

The partnership aims to help women in our community and female employees at TPU see the wide-range of jobs available to them in utilities while helping families build strength, stability, and independence. **U\***



## U\* trivia – answer and win!

**How much water do most lawns need to stay green in the summer?**

If you are one of 50 randomly chosen customers with the correct answers, you’ll get a free irrigation kit from Tacoma Water that includes a spray nozzle, rain gauge, and other helpful items. To enter, submit your answer by May 30 either

1) online at [MyTPU.org/Trivia](http://MyTPU.org/Trivia) or 2) by mail to U\* Trivia, 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma, WA 98409. Include your name, phone number, and mailing address. **U\***

\* City of Tacoma employees and their immediate family members are ineligible to win. One entry per household.

## U\* readers resolve to update account info

Congratulations and thanks to the whopping 279 customers who correctly answered the trivia question published in the January 2019 issue of U\*. You can update your account info by logging into [MyTPU.org/MyAccount](http://MyTPU.org/MyAccount), calling Customer Services at 253-502-8600 or stopping by our lobby at 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma 98409. **U\***



# U\* Calendar

All events take place in the Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma, unless otherwise noted.

## APRIL

22

### FREE EARTH DAY GIVEAWAYS

Water savings kits, LEDs, and renewable energy info

TPU Lobby | 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

(Water savings kits are also available after the event at the Water Permit Counter.)

24

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

## MAY

8 & 22

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

18

### FREE WORKSHOP

Electric Vehicles: Why Now; What to Know

The EnviroHouse

3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma

10:30 a.m. | Registration required

27

Memorial Day | TPU Offices closed

12 & 26

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

## JUNE

12

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

16

### FREE WORKSHOP

Heat Pumps: Heating/AC, Water Heaters

The EnviroHouse

3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma

10:30 a.m. | Registration required

30

### FREE WORKSHOP

Electric Vehicles: Why Now; What to Know

The EnviroHouse

3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma

10:30 a.m. | Registration required

### FREE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION AT:

[cityoftacoma.org/workshops](http://cityoftacoma.org/workshops)

## You make the call



Area code (253)

Report a power outage.....502-8602

Start or stop service.....502-8600

Order Click! Cable TV.....502-8900

Home weatherization.....502-8363

Fishing recreation.....502-8690

Fish & wildlife programs.....502-8008

Education programs.....502-8224

Power conservation.....502-8363

Water conservation.....502-8723

Report a water emergency.....502-8384

### Bill Payment Assistance

(available for limited-income customers)

- Electric bill assistance
  - City of Tacoma residents.....572-5557
  - Pierce County residents..... 855-798-4328
- Click! Cable TV discounts..... 502-8900
- TPU Utility Bill Assistance.....502-8400



## FIRST 100 VISITORS

# Free LED giveaway

McLendon Hardware

1015 N. Pearl St., Tacoma

**April 27 | May 11 | May 25**

*For a limited time purchase...*

## LEDs for less than \$1

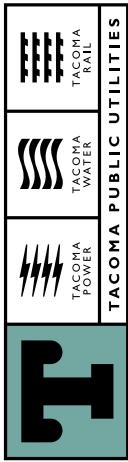
Now through May 31





UTILITIES YOU

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**THE END**



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