

Coastlines

July 2015



Playing "chicken" with the Pacific?? A bald eagle ignores the "never turn your back on the ocean" rule near Yachats. Photo © Ken Gagne

And the Survey Says....?

Our customer survey results are in, telling us what we're doing well, and where we need to do more

Every three years we ask a professional polling company to talk to a representative sample of our customers to find out what makes our customers happy with us, and in what areas we need to improve. This year, 414 customers were surveyed across our service area from Lincoln Beach to North Bend.

96% gave Central Lincoln's reliability—keeping the power flowing—a rating of 7 or higher on a 0-10 rating scale, with 10 being the highest satisfaction rating.

76% of you heat your home or business with electricity.

70% know we offer rebates or incentives for qualified energy-saving projects, such as new windows, insulation, lighting upgrades, and heat pump water heaters. But we'd like 100% of our customers to be aware of our energy efficiency programs, and this will be a priority in the coming year. On a 1-10 scale of importance, with 10 being a top priority, customers' average rating for our incentive program was 8.09. One in three customers thought they might use one of these programs in the future, with window updates being the top choice, followed by heating upgrades, and water heaters.

Satisfaction in our energy-efficiency programs received an average 7.13 score, providing us with another opportunity to improve.

21% of those surveyed said they would consider paperless billing. To sign up, go to clpud.org, click on "MyAccount Online" follow the prompts, and then click on "Enroll in eBill."

We asked what customers thought about Central Lincoln's involvement in the communities we serve. 56% of you gave

community involvement a 7 to a 10 rating, with just 51% rating your satisfaction in our involvement in community events and activities a 7 to a 10. It appears this is an area in which we have the opportunity to do better.



72% rated their satisfaction with our communication an 8 or higher. 89% think the info they receive from us is 'somewhat to very' useful, and more than 80% say they read "Coastlines" regularly to occasionally. (Thank you, readers!)

We've had six customer surveys completed since 1999, and this year we received the highest customer satisfaction rating since we started polling: 82% of you said you were very satisfied with us, with 14% saying they were somewhat satisfied.

"It was humbling to get the high ratings we did," says General Manager Debra Smith. "But we definitely see areas where we can improve. We will keep pushing for excellence from all of our departments, always keeping in mind Central Lincoln exists for just one reason: to serve our customers. When you're happy with our performance, we're happy, too."



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SUCCESS STORIES

Florence-area customer thrilled with his ductless heating, sees his bills go down some 30%

In January of 2013, Jerry Christean's power bill was \$171.22—electricity use in his double-wide manufactured home was 2,444 kilowatt hours. In December of that year, Jerry had a ductless heat pump installed.

The next month, his bill went down to \$140.74 with 1,961 kilowatt hours used, and since then his electricity bills have been much more affordable, ranging from \$92.85 to \$51.91 last month. He's ecstatic: "I tell my neighbors; I tell the guys I have coffee with about my ductless heat pump. Several of them have since had these units put in."

Jerry received a \$1,500 rebate from Central Lincoln for having a ductless heat pump installed (that rebate is now \$1,000), and he estimates that after tax credits for installing his energy-efficient system, his net cost was about \$1,000.

Jerry, like many of our customers, has used less electricity due to unusually warm temperatures in the past year. Residential power use has been down 11% over the last 12 months. But Jerry gives the rest of the credit for his smaller bills to his quiet, almost invisible ductless heat pump: "What a great experience—the installer who came to my house was the most professional of any I've ever worked with. The installation took about three hours, and



Jerry Christean and Charlie appreciate the comfort of their ductless heat pump (red circle above)

everything worked perfectly" when the installation was finished. "It even circulates heat into the other rooms of my home," he says. "The installation went swell!"

Ductless heat pumps can be used for air conditioning, although Jerry has never used his for that purpose: "I just open a window," he laughs.

For more info about Central Lincoln's energy-efficiency rebates, please call our energy experts at 888-883-9879.



CSR Laura helps a customer with a billing question

Rate Increase to Begin July 1st

At its June board meeting, Central Lincoln's Board of Directors voted to approve new rate schedules that will increase the average customer bill by about 7%. The changes are effective July 1, meaning the bills customers receive in August will reflect the changes.

During deliberations, Board members discussed several factors in their decision making:

- Central Lincoln's largest cost (60%) is power purchased from BPA. Including an anticipated increase of 6.7% this coming October 1, BPA will have raised its rates 28.7% since 2010.
- This year's increase will result in the average Central Lincoln residential customer's bill going up an estimated \$5.90 a month. That includes an increase in the Facilities Charge (formerly known as the Basic Charge) from \$18 per month to \$20 per month. The Facilities Charge helps to pay the costs of providing infrastructure (lines, transformers, utility poles, substations, etc.) to customers' properties—the actual cost is higher than \$20 per customer per month.
- Even with this rate increase, Central Lincoln's average residential bills will be in the lower third for Oregon.
- During this most recent recession, Central Lincoln's board kept rates low, recognizing many customers were struggling financially. However, this reduced the utility's reserve funds to a level lower than recommended by financial experts.
- Central Lincoln has worked to reduce costs wherever possible, including staffing reduction through attrition, and closing satellite customer service offices. Additional cost-cutting, such as helping customers switch to paperless billing, is a priority going forward.

"Success Stories" is a new occasional feature about customers who have successfully saved energy through our energy efficiency programs and initiatives.