

Postage-Free Options To Fit Your Needs

As many of our members and customers are aware, Parkland Light & Water Co. (PL&WCo) has implemented changes to the way we bill our consumers this year. Beginning in February, we began our new program, which included outsourcing the creation and mailing of our bills. We went from card stock bills to a complete full sheet bill with remittance envelope. This new bill includes new information and a consumption graph to better help you manage your electric and water use.

In addition to the new format of our bills, PL&WCo began several new online features that allow our member/customers to view or pay their bills online. For those who wish to pay online without activating an online account, you may now make a one-time payment using a credit card.

Customers also have the option to activate an online account, which allows the customer to view current and past billing statements, make a one-time payment or create auto-payment rules. These payments may be made with a credit card or checking account. Flexibility is built in to activated accounts, allowing you to switch back and forth from one-time payments to continuous payments and back again.

For customers who don't want a bill sent to them through the post office, they can sign up for e-bill and have their bill e-mailed to them. So far, 801 of our customers have activated an online user account and 457 have chosen e-bills.

Each month, these features are used more by our member/customers.

For many years, PL&WCo has had



PL&WCo offers more ways to pay your bill than writing a check and putting it in the mailbox. There are many options available to our members.

in-house auto pay programs available for both checking accounts and credit card accounts. When you are signed up for one of these programs, our office automatically withdraws from your account the amount due on the last day prior to the delinquent date. Many of our customers like this option because they never have to worry about getting their payment to us when they are traveling or busy doing other things.

PL&WCo has 217 customers using our auto pay credit card program and 725 customers using the auto pay checking program.

As you can see, there is a multitude of options for every customer, from traditional mail to online billing all available so customers can customize and design how they want to be billed and how they want to pay in a way that meets their needs.

For years, PL&WCo has made available blue postage-paid envelopes for our customers as another way of providing customer service to our membership. This program is expensive. For each

blue postage-paid envelope handled by the postal system, PL&WCo is billed a minimum of \$1.18. Additionally, we have the cost of printing the envelopes and the annual permit fee paid to the postal system. With the advent of all the new postage-free payment programs, the use of our blue postage-paid envelopes has dropped dramatically to below 400 a month, with an expected continued drop based on our trend during the last year.

Your board of directors evaluated the cost versus benefit of continuing this program and decided the costs outweigh the benefits.

Therefore, PL&WCo will

phase out the postage-paid envelope program in the next few months. We will stop distributing the blue envelopes altogether, effective January 1.

We encourage customers who have been using the blue envelopes to consider using one of our other postage-free programs as a substitute. For those who want to continue to mail in their payments, our paper billings now come with a remittance envelope.

We hope the end of the postage paid-envelope program does not create any undue hardship for our members. Be assured that your board and the management of PL&WCo are constantly evaluating all programs with the intent of keeping your rates as low as possible, while providing quality service in keeping your lights on and water flowing.

We are always mindful that we are owned by the members we serve. ■

If you have any questions or wish to sign up for any program offered, please call our customer service department at (253) 531-5666.