

Opinion: Explaining electric rates

By Paulette Sproul

Liberty Utilities wants to help customers understand the often complex and confusing world of electric rates and billing statements, and have developed several documents to do just that.

Customers continually tell us that they don't fully understand how electric rates are determined and specifically how they can read their bills. We want to explain this as fully and transparently as possible to our customers, so we developed several tools to help with this.

Electric rates explained: This four-page document answers basic questions like: How are rates determined? What is my rate class? How do I know what rate class I'm in? How am I charged? How is my bill calculated? The information is presented in a color-coded format, and includes a breakdown of the specific charges for the four major customer classes.

Sample bills with glossary of terms: Liberty Utilities has also prepared a sample bill for residential, budget payment, small commercial, medium commercial and large commercial customers with an associated glossary of terms. Customers can reference the numbered item on the sample bill to the corresponding definition in the glossary of terms.

All documents are available **online**. Simply click on the "my account" link at the top and scroll down to the "understanding my bill" section. Customers can download and print at home or visit any local Liberty Utilities office for a printed copy. Customers are also encouraged to call the local customer care number, 800-782-2506, with any questions about their bills.

While we hope these documents will help customers understand their bills better, we hope they will call our local customer care representative if they ever have any questions.

Also, beginning Sept. 5, the South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Vista Liberty offices will open one hour earlier; regular office hours will be 8am-5pm Monday through Friday.

Paulette Sproul is Liberty Utilities' director of customer care.