The Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities Commission authorized a review of the electric rates for customers of Lake Crystal Utilities (LCMU) in early 2015. The results and recommendations that were developed in the review have been approved by the Commission, and will be implemented in 2016. The result of this action will be a “modernization” of the electric rates in Lake Crystal.

The primary changes of the modernization of the rates are as follows:

- The existing “Electric Power Cost Adjustment” feature will be eliminated. The cost of energy per kWh will no longer vary month to month.
- For Residential and Small Commercial customers, the rates will be simplified by removing the multi-step rate structure, and implementing a single rate for all energy used.
- The rate structure for the 23 largest commercial customers will be changed to include a demand charge coupled with a lower energy charge.

The overall revenues of the electric utility will be unchanged (i.e., no general rate increase). Individual customers, however, may experience generally small variations from their existing cost. In some cases, customers will see a decrease in their cost for electricity, while others will see a slight increase, depending on their level of usage and how efficiently the customer uses electricity. The rates being implemented correspond to the results of a “cost-of-service” study performed for the electric utility.

The overall goal of the modernization of rates (in addition to bringing LCMU’s rate structure closer in line with current electric industry practice) is to send the proper “signal” to customers to use energy in a way that will minimize the overall cost of purchasing power for the community’s needs. The new rate structure will work in tandem with the recently-begun Load Management program to reduce the demand charges paid to LCMU’s power supplier.

It is the intent of the Commission to closely monitor the performance of the new rates in light of the overall financial status of the electric utility, and make annual adjustments only as necessary in order to keep the utility on a solid financial footing in the future.

The Utilities Commission invites you to an Open House on Monday, October 26th at 7 p.m. at the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center to discuss and answer any questions regarding the new rate structure and what it will mean to the customer.
MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE
Notice of Residential Customer Rights and Responsibilities

This document explains the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) and the steps you must take if you cannot pay your bill or your electric service will be disconnected.

The CWR does not forbid all disconnections. If you receive a Notice of Pending Disconnection this winter you must act immediately.

Each year, some Lake Crystal Municipal Utility (LCMU) customers are unable to pay their electric bill during cold weather. If you can’t pay your electric bill please contact us.

The Minnesota CWR was established to protect residential customers from electrical service disconnection between October 15 and April 15. CWR protection is available if all three of the following conditions exist:
1. The disconnection would affect your main heating source.
2. Your household meets CWR payment plan guidelines.
3. You and LCMU agree to a payment plan.

If you receive energy assistance between October 15 and April 15, you are eligible for CWR protection; however, you must call LCMU with your specific information.

AVOIDING DISCONNECTION
If you receive a Notice of Pending Disconnection, you must call LCMU at 507-726-2538 ext. 1 immediately and apply for CWR protection by filling out and returning the Inability to Pay Form to LCMU. You will not be protected from disconnection if LCMU does not receive this completed form.

Your service will be subject to disconnection without further notice if you do not make the agreed upon payments. If you cannot keep your original payment plan, advise LCMU immediately, it may be possible to make a new payment plan and avoid disconnection.

The law provides for income verification, which maybe requested by LCMU. The customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection if you are a recipient of energy assistance.

COLD WEATHER RULE PAYMENT PLANS
If you can’t pay your entire bill and need to make arrangements, call LCMU at 507-726-2538 ext. 1 to enter into a payment plan which is acceptable to both you and LCMU. The arrangement must cover the amount that is past due plus your current charges must be paid each month. The arrangement must be put on the Inability to Pay Form and returned to LCMU.

If you and LCMU cannot agree on a payment plan, you have 10 days to appeal to the State Public Utilities Commission. Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

The CWR only protects you from having your electricity shut off and energy assistance can be applied only to electric charges on your bill. Water, sewer, and refuse charges are the customer’s responsibility to pay each month. Your water can be shut off for non-payment.

THIRD PARTY NOTIFICATION
LCMU offers all customers the opportunity to have a third party notified when their electric service is about to be disconnected. This program can be especially helpful for the ill, senior citizens, or those who live alone. The purpose of this program is to notify a third party, as well as the customer, that a Notice of Pending Disconnection has been sent out. If you want to name a third party, please call and request the Third Party Notice Form.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

MEDICAL ALERT
If you have a medical emergency, disabled person in the residence or require medically necessary equipment, a Physician’s Certificate of Illness Form needs to be filled out by your physician and given to LCMU.