

# Electric Rate Increase Communications Plan

Improving the public perception of and educating citizens about the forthcoming vote and implementation of the changes to electric rates by utilizing multiple communications channels to reach our customers successfully. As part of this messaging, electrical conductivity and infrastructure will be crucial in communicating the benefits of the projects.

With numerous contact points for citizens to reach out to the City, consistent and accurate messaging and information across all platforms will be crucial to the success of this initiative. Coordination between Utility staff and the City Manager's Office will be necessary to ensure successful communications with the public.

## Upcoming events to get ahead of

- Council introduction on August 4
- Public hearing on August 18
- Council vote on September 2
- Implementation of electric rate changes on bills starting in October

## Goals

1. Inform the public of the public hearing on the FY 26 budget, which includes changes to the electric rate increase (Phase 1)
  - 1.1. What are the underlying reasons for the rate changes
  - 1.2. Who was involved with the rate change (WLAB, Pre-council, parties involved)
  - 1.3. Introduction - Aug 4
  - 1.4. Public Input opportunity and vote - Aug. 18 and Sept. 2 (vote)
  - 1.5. Educate citizens about processes
  - 1.6. What are the proposed changes going to be, and what is the impact on the bill
2. Inform customers of how changes to rates impact their bills (Phase 2)
  - 2.1. Ensure customers are informed of the benefits that come from the Council-approved rate changes
  - 2.2. Inform the public of the Council's vote and impact on electric rates starting in Oct 2025

## Outreach

1. **Customers being informed before the Public Hearing on the FY 26 budget (Phase 1)**
  - 1.1. Proposed changes published on the Utility Rates page
  - 1.2. Publish on the MyUtilityBill homepage slideshow
  - 1.3. Add to the slideshow in the UCS lobby

- 1.4. Create a slide to promote the meeting to be put on TV at the Health Department
- 1.5. Create BeHeardCoMo page
- 1.6. Create informational flyers for UCS, public events, etc.
  - 1.6.1. Bulletin boards on Broadway from Seventh Street to Hitt Street
  - 1.6.2. Bulletin boards on Ninth Street from Broadway to Elm
  - 1.6.3. Shops
    - Peace Nook
    - Yellow Dog Bookshop
    - Skylark Bookshop
    - Lakota Coffee
    - Main Squeeze Juice Bar and Market
    - Columbia Art League
    - Hittsville/Ragtag/Uprise Bakery
  - 1.6.4. Columbia/Boone County Public Health & Human Services
  - 1.6.5. ARC
  - 1.6.6. Hillcrest Community Center
  - 1.6.7. Daniel Boone Regional Library
  - 1.6.8. Cashier's office at City Hall
  - 1.6.9. HOA Contacts
- 1.7. Promote the public hearing on social media
  - 1.7.1. Facebook and X
    - July 22
    - July 31
    - Aug. 5
    - Aug. 15
  - 1.7.2. NextDoor
    - July 31
    - Aug. 15
- 1.8. Talking points delivered to City Call Center, Utility Customer Service - July 29
- 1.9. Publish press release - Aug. 13
- 1.10. Constant Contact email blasts to all electric customers about the public hearing on the FY 26 budget - Schedule for week of Aug. 11
- 1.11. Featured story on the front page of the website - schedule for week of Aug. 11
  - (Work with Warren on placement)

## 2. **Customers being informed after the Council vote (Phase 2)**

- 2.1. Press release on the rate change - scheduled for Sept. 3
- 2.2. Update Utilities rates page - scheduled for Sept. 3 (with "as of Oct. 1" column)
- 2.3. Update MyUtilityBill front page slideshow - Sept. 3 (with "as of Oct. 1" column)
- 2.4. City Source article for October -
- 2.5. Update BeHeard page-

- 2.6. Constant Contact email blast to electric customers - Scheduled for Sept. 3
- 2.7. Promote on social media
  - Facebook/X
    - Sept. 3
    - Sept. 15
    - Sept. 25
    - Sept. 30
  - NextDoor
    - Sept. 3 (after vote)
    - Sept. 30 (reminder of change starting next day)
- 2.8. Outreach to HOAs, neighborhood associations, CMCA, Love Columbia, Columbia Housing Authority, etc.
- 2.9. Send letters to residential, commercial, industrial, and Key Account customers to ensure they are educated on the implementation and impacts - Scheduled for the second week of September
  - 2.9.1. Direct outreach to Key Accounts - Scheduled for the second week of September
- 2.10. Outreach at public events
  - 2.10.1. Food Bank - Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5
  - 2.10.2. Family Fun Fest - Sept. 17
  - 2.10.3. Boone Country Ready Festival - Sept 18
  - 2.10.4. Heritage Festival - Sept 20-21
  - 2.10.5. City Staff Picnic - Sept. 18
- 2.11. Featured story on front page of website - Scheduled for Sept. 3
  - (Work with Warren on placement)
- 2.12. Create informational flyers on approved changes for UCS, public events, etc.
  - 2.12.1. Bulletin boards on Broadway from Seventh Street to Hitt Street - week of 9/8
  - 2.12.2. Bulletin boards on Ninth Street from Broadway to Elm - week of 9/8
  - 2.12.3. Shops -
    - Peace Nook
    - Yellow Dog Bookshop
    - Skylark Bookshop
    - Lakota Coffee
    - Main Squeeze Juice Bar and Market
    - Columbia Art League
    - Hittsville/Ragtag/Uprise Bakery
  - 2.12.4. Columbia/Boone County Public Health & Human Services - week of 9/8
  - 2.12.5. ARC - week of 9/8
  - 2.12.6. Hillcrest Community Center - week of 9/8
  - 2.12.7. Daniel Boone Regional Library - week of 9/8

- 2.12.8. Cashier's office at City Hall - week of 9/8
- 2.12.9. CMCA - week of 9/8
- 2.13. Create an updated slide for TV display at the Health Department - week of 9/8