

City of Minot
Flood Recovery Press Release
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Concerned groups provide safety, energy-saving tips for flood-affected residents

Minot, N.D. – A coalition of utility companies, non-profit entities and public officials are determined to help Minot residents keep their energy bills as low as possible, as they may be receiving bills this winter that are higher than they are accustomed to.

“Homeowners in the Minot area are likely to experience higher energy bills for a variety of reasons,” said Jason Zimmerman, flood recovery coordinator for the region. “Obviously, a number of families are living in situations very unlike last year – in FEMA’s Temporary Housing Units or with family and friends – and this can have a big impact on utility costs. We’re very pleased to see a number of organizations come together in the Minot region to address these issues.”

Xcel Energy, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. and Verendrye Electric Cooperative recommend a number of safety and energy-saving measures.

With safety as a top priority, the companies suggest the following:

- Follow manufacture’s recommendations to prevent fires and burns from the use of portable electric heaters.
- Do not use open-flame unvented propane or kerosene heaters indoors.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Test existing detectors to ensure they work.
- Unplug indoor holiday lights before leaving the house or going to sleep.
- Check for and remove ice/snow accumulation on your natural gas meter.

“There are a number of good practices that sometime get forgotten during the winter,” said Carl Pedersen, North Dakota State University Extension energy educator. “We hope that people think twice about doing something out of the ordinary this winter season. Please contact your utility provider or the Ward County Extension Service office if you are at all worried about safely heating your home this winter.”

In addition to safety measures, homeowners can do a number of things to minimize energy costs:

- Limit the times you open and close your door to avoid an influx of cold air (especially with small children and pets that may make frequent trips in and out of the house).
- Install quilted or lined window treatments or window film to add insulating value and address any drafty areas.

- If you are heating a flooded home that is under restoration, set your thermostat at a reasonable temperature, insulate and then air seal the area you will be heating as soon as possible, as long as the home has effectively dried.
- If you are heating a home to simply prevent the foundation from frost heaving, isolate the basement with insulation and only heat the basement level.
- If you need to install a furnace, be sure to select an energy efficient model. Through December 31, rebates are available for high-efficiency natural gas and propane furnaces. Check with an area supplier or your utility provider for details.

The utilities strongly urge any customer who is experiencing difficulty paying winter bills to call to make payment arrangements. They are committed to working with customers on flexible payment plans. You may contact the utilities at the following numbers to discuss your energy bills or make payment arrangements:

Xcel Energy
1-800-895-4999

Montana Dakota Utilities Co.
1-800-638-3278

Verendrye Electric Cooperative
1-800-472-2141

For more information on safely and efficiently heating your home this winter contact the Ward County Extension office at 701-857-6450.

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