



News Release

July 29, 2008

By Board Order 115/08, the Public Utilities Board (Board) approves on an interim *ex parte* basis revised natural gas rates effective August 1, 2008 for Centra Gas Manitoba Inc. (Centra).

Centra's Primary Gas rates will increase by 6.9% (from \$0.3084m³ to \$0.3297m³), affecting only customers receiving primary gas from Centra. The "typical" residential customer receiving primary gas from Centra may expect an overall annual increase in their natural gas bill of \$73, or 5.8%. Larger volume customers also provided primary gas by Centra may expect annual natural gas bills to increase in a range of 4.7% to 7.4%, as of August 1.

With this latest increase, Centra's Primary Gas rates have increased by 14.76% over the past year. The next review will take place as of November 1, 2008.

By the Order, the Board also directs Centra to develop a low-income bill assistance plan for the review of the Board, and reiterates a number of previous recommendations:

1. Consumers of natural gas should consider upgrading their heating plant and heat retention, and inform themselves of Manitoba Hydro's energy efficiency programs; and
2. Centra Gas should consider acting on the previous advice of the Board with respect to:
 - a) operating a fully integrated natural gas and electricity energy efficiency program; and
 - b) moving more quickly to implement a furnace replacement program, targeting low-income households.

The Board also recommends Manitoba Hydro and government pursue building code changes to improve energy efficiency, and that the government consider:

- i) suggesting to the federal government that GST not be charged on residential space-heating bills;
- ii) redirecting the proceeds of provincial and municipal sales taxes on residential natural gas to further develop low-income energy efficiency; and
- iii) establishing a new agency to focus exclusively on DSM and low-income issues.

With electric space-heat now expected to cost less than natural gas space heating for homes without a high efficiency furnace, consumers with conventional and mid-efficiency natural gas furnaces should consider an upgrade ahead of the coming winter.

A copy of the Order, which contains additional information, may be reviewed on the Board's website www.pub.gov.mb.ca, or be obtained through the Board's Office.

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