

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

SUBJECT: *Status Report*

DATE: March 6, 2014

1. BGE Smart Meter Opt Out Program

The PSC has finally established criteria for BGE customers who wish to participate in the Smart Meter Opt Out Program (see attached). Customers who wish to opt out of the smart meter program will be required to pay a one time fee of \$75, paid in three installments, and then be charged an additional \$11.00 per month. Procedures for customers to opt out are included on the attached. Those customers who have chosen to temporarily opt out of the smart meter program will be contacted regarding the new opt-out provisions. Also, all customers will be informed of these new procedures.

2. MD 197 Design Initiation Meeting

Last Thursday, Planning staff attended the State Highway Administration's Design Initiation Meeting for the reconstruction of MD 197, between Kenhill Drive and MD 450. The State's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) includes over \$11 million to fully fund engineering over the next several years. The project will design the selected alternate resulting from the project planning study, which concluded in 2009 (Alternate 4 Modified). The current schedule shows completion of Preliminary Investigation (PI) plans, which are approximately 30% of full design, by the end of 2014, and completion of engineering in October 2017. Survey work has been ongoing in the corridor over the past few months, and adjacent residents were notified of surveying activities by certified mail. SHA hired the firm of Johnson Mirmiran and Thompson as the engineering consultant for the project. SHA will hold a public meeting later this year to provide an opportunity for residents to give their input on the plan as it is being engineered. These meetings will be similar to the meetings held on the MD 450 engineering project (Stonybrook to MD 3) during 2005-2007. At the meeting last week, staff learned that SHA's noise wall criteria have changed such that they no longer require a majority of abutting property owners to concur, in order for a particular noise wall to be included. Noise walls are automatically included in the design unless there is substantial opposition. The current cost estimates for the project include \$14,840,500 for right-of-way and \$74,053,000 for construction. Neither right-of-way nor construction is funded at this time.

3. Winter

The storm earlier this week cost the City approximately \$86,200. This pushed the season total to about \$453,474. The budgeted amounts in the Streets Division in Public Works for FY14 and the amounts spent year to date are:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Spent</u>
Contractors	\$135,000	\$255,293.01
Salt/Sand	127,500*	133,727.60*
Overtime	<u>65,000</u>	<u>64,453.33</u>
	<u>\$327,500</u>	<u>\$453,473.94</u>

*All but \$2,000 is for salt.

Funds will need to be drawn from Contingency and possibly the Fund Balance of the General Fund. We are fortunate that this winter is following two years when contractors were not used at all.

4. Green Team Pesticide and Fertilizer Workshop for Residents

An educational pesticide and fertilizer workshop was held at the City’s Parks and Grounds Building on March 1, 2014. The workshop was titled, “Best Practices to Green Your Lawn.” The workshop lasted two and one-half hours, and there were four presentations with 39 attendees. Rosalie Donatelli from the University of Maryland Extension gave an overview of Maryland’s new fertilizer laws. Ed Hall from the City of Bowie talked about the City’s best practices for greening lawns and explained the value of soil tests. Becky Sunday, a Green Team Executive Committee member, discussed how to calculate the appropriate amount of fertilizer needed for a yard, and Monica McNeal from the University of Maryland Extension provided information about grass alternatives. Informational handouts were provided during the workshop.

Attachment



An Exelon Company

News Release

Contact

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BGE Ready to Implement Maryland Public Service Commission Order on Smart Meter Opt Out and Fees

BGE customers can now opt out online, by mail or by phone

BALTIMORE (February 29, 2014) – [Baltimore Gas and Electric Company \(BGE\)](http://www.bge.com) is prepared to accommodate customers who wish to decline having a smart meter installed based on the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) order issued on February 26. This PSC order follows an order from January 2013 that stated that Maryland customers should have an alternative to smart meters, or the ability to “opt out,” and that they should pay the related cost of not having a smart meter. The recent order outlines the opt-out specifics, including fees. The fees do not apply to customers who wish to keep their smart meter or who choose to have one installed. BGE will begin informing customers of the recent PSC order within the next few weeks, including sending a letter to customers who have previously contacted the utility to decline the smart meter installation. Opt-out information is also now available on the company’s website, [bge.com](http://www.bge.com).

“While we believe the smart metering system can offer benefits to customers, including the opportunity to participate in programs that can lead to savings on their energy bills, this PSC order will help us better plan our continuing smart meter rollout,” said Christopher Burton, vice president of smart grid and technology for BGE. “It is important for customers who have written us before the Feb. 26 PSC order, asking to defer their smart meter installation, to let us know if they have reconsidered. If these customers do not contact us, the PSC order provides that utilities assume those customers will continue as opt-out customers and incur the related costs.”

The Feb. 26 order allows customers who do not want a smart meter to have a standard meter at an initial cost of \$75, billed in three installments, and an additional monthly fee of \$11. BGE will begin billing opt-out customers in July 2014.

Customers who wish to opt out may contact BGE online at [bge.com/smartmeteroptout](http://www.bge.com/smartmeteroptout), by phone, or by letter. Letters should be sent to **Smart Meter Opt Out BGE, P.O. Box 1475, Baltimore, MD 21203** and include the following information:

1. Name(s)
2. Address
3. Account Number
4. Phone Number
5. Email Address

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BGE began installing advanced or smart meters in spring 2011, a system modernization effort to enable two-way communication between BGE and the meters, lower operational costs and provide customers with tools to manage and reduce energy usage. There are currently close to one million smart meters installed in BGE's service territory to date.

In 2012, BGE began rolling out energy management and savings tools to customers, beginning with the online BGE Smart Energy Manager® that provides customers with detailed information about their energy use and tips on how to conserve energy and save money. In 2013, eligible customers with smart meters were able to participate in the BGE Smart Energy Rewards® program, earning bill credits for voluntarily reducing their energy use on specific days during the summer.

For more information on smart meters, including details on savings programs and common customer questions, visit bge.com/smartenergy.

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[BGE](#), headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.2 million electric customers and more than 655,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. The company's approximately 3,400 employees are committed to the safe and reliable delivery of gas and electricity, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider, with 2012 revenues of approximately \$23.5 billion. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).