



## DID YOU KNOW?

**BPU's 2021 Budget, adopted by its Board in December, is \$25 million less than last year, a reduction of 6.6%**

**(SEE PAGE 2 FOR MORE INFO)**

## Utility Assistance and Payment Options Help BPU Customers

BPU has been meeting the electric and water service needs of Wyandotte County for more than a century. As a not-for-profit, locally-run municipal utility, BPU understands the needs of the community and the unique circumstances it faces, especially during these challenging and unprecedented times.

Since the start of the pandemic, BPU has worked with customers experiencing financial hardship and those having difficulty in making utility payments, offering flexible payment plans, access to a variety of utility and financial assistance programs, and more. There are also a number of federal and state programs to help related to income loss, as well as utility and other expenses.

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## Home Weatherization Use Less Energy and Be Green

The average home in the U.S. today is 37 years older, with many lacking adequate air barriers to protect them from the natural elements like wind, rain, sunlight, and hot and cold weather. With a significant amount of energy usage from air conditioning, furnaces, etc., weatherizing your home increases its energy efficiency, which can lead to significant savings on your utility bills.

Weatherizing reduces leaks around the perimeter of a home. It also includes sealing air ducts, bypasses, recessed lighting, as well as cracks around windows, doors, etc. This added insulation supplements the barrier between the air inside and outside your home, improving its energy efficiency, which can result in savings of more than 25 percent on some energy bills. A weatherized home isn't just great for saving money – it also helps the environment.



Energy conservation leads to less carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming.

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# BPU Approves FY 2021 Budget



**ROBERT L. MILAN, SR.**  
President  
BPU Board of Directors




As President of the BPU Board of Directors, I'm pleased to provide this update on utility priorities and initiatives with you. On behalf of the entire Board, as well as our employees who live, work, and play in Wyandotte County, we truly appreciate the opportunity to serve and assist you, and to contribute to improvements to the community in which we live.

Despite disruptions in our day-to-day lives from COVID-19 over the last year, BPU has continued to remain focused on ensuring essential electric and water utility service to its 65,000 electric customers and 53,000 water customers, while working simultaneously to ensure responsive and world-class customer service. The utility has introduced and promoted new and existing programs, technology, and initiatives to help customers more easily manage their service, accounts, payments, and costs during these unique times.

Several of these initiatives are highlighted throughout this newsletter, including the Customer Hardship Payment Service Program, the Community Assistance Program, FlexPay, and more. Other convenience and accessibility programs include the Energy Engage Portal, which allows customers online access to track and manage their billings and electric and water usage information, the Automatic Payment Plan which takes the hassle out of

monthly billing paperwork, and the Equal Payment Plan in which bills are averaged over a 12-month period providing an easy way to budget utility costs throughout the year. For information on these, and other helpful programs, please take time to visit the award-winning BPU website [www.BPU.com](http://www.BPU.com).


BPU also remains a leader in renewable energy, with more than 45% of its generation today coming from wind, hydropower, and landfill gas, far exceeding the state's requirement. Today, BPU is one of the "greenest" public utilities in the nation, and it intends to stay that way. This diverse generation mix allows the utility to be less reliant on only coal and gas which can experience price fluctuations, with the community, the environment, and public health also benefiting from this clean power approach.

As public servants, please know that BPU and its employees will continue working to provide Wyandotte County with quality and reliable utility services at a competitive price, just as it has for the last 100+ years. Be assured that we will continue utilizing protocols and procedures to ensure the safety of both our customers and employees at all times, and will work to maintain programs and initiatives that help our community and residents manage through these difficult times. 

The BPU Board of Directors approved the utility's FY21 Annual Budget on December 16, 2020. The 2021 Budget totaling \$348 million is \$25 million less than last year's budget of \$373 million, a reduction of more than 6.5% related primarily to lower fuel costs. This funding provides for reliable, consistent electric and water services, including multiple power generation sources, 29 substations, 3,000 miles of electric lines, 19,000 streetlights, 9,000 traffic signals, 6,000 fire hydrants, Nearman Water Treatment Plant, three pump stations, and hundreds of miles of water pipes, and more.

BPU's goals and priorities for 2021 include, among other things:


- Maintaining its critical electric/ water production and distribution systems, ensuring safe, reliable, and efficient services.
- Fiscal sustainability, ensuring debt service management, cash-on-hand, and credit ratings through open and transparent fiscal and budget policies.
- Supporting renewable energy (i.e., wind, community solar, etc.), evaluating future generation mix opportunities, and monitoring and adhering to all environmental regulations.
- Promoting energy and water efficiency and savings initiatives through customer education and outreach.

This year's budget reduction follows a 2.8% reduction from FY19 to FY20, when the utility cut its budget by \$8 million, as well as a 5% reduction in staffing over the last three years. 

## APPLY TODAY!!

### KS Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund

The Kansas Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides qualifying households an annual benefit to help pay winter heating bills, offering a one-time per year benefit. A federally-funded program, recipients include those with disabilities, older adults, and families with children. Last year 34,000 households received an average of \$600.00 in financial relief, according to the Kansas Department for Children and Families, which offers the program. To qualify, applicants must

be responsible for direct payment of their heating bills, and the level of benefit varies according to household income, number of people living in the home, type of residence, type of heating fuel, and utility rates. Kansas energy customers can apply for LIEAP funds on the Kansas Department for Children and Families Energy Assistance website at [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov), or by calling 1-800-432-0043. The deadline for applications is Friday, May 28, so act quickly! 





## BPU | *general manager's report*

**BILL JOHNSON**  
General Manager

Like so many others in our community, BPU continues working to navigate the changes and challenges of the last 12 months. Our top priorities remain maintaining the safety of our customers and employees, and ensuring the delivery of essential electric and water service while also recognizing the strain and hardship these unprecedented times have had on our customers and the community in general.

To this end, BPU continues implementing safety protocols and procedures, has in place various tools and platforms to ensure a high level of accessibility and customer service, and offers comprehensive utility assistance and energy usage and conservation resources to help struggling customers cope with recent financial strain. This includes temporary moratoriums on disconnects, and a willingness to work with customers as necessary to ensure they remain on payment plans. While the customer service lobby at BPU's main building remains closed indefinitely, the utility has invested resources in its IVR/telephone system, website and online capabilities, and other technology to ensure fast, convenient, and free access to utility services and payment options 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. With nearly 160,000 online sessions in Q4, BPU's website alone saw a 24% increase in the amount of traffic year over year, with 41% of users accessing the Account Login page to check their usage, pay bills, and get other helpful information.

Despite working through the national pandemic, BPU is continually looking to improve services to the community while simultaneously identifying cost-saving measures. Key priorities

remain: 1) customer service; 2) operating efficiency; 3) system reliability, and; 4) reduced capital and operating costs. I'm pleased that BPU continues to remain fiscally responsible and aware that as a non-for-profit public utility, it has an obligation to provide not only reliable and dependable, but also affordable, utility services to the community. In this effort, BPU cut its FY2021 budget by \$25 million over last year and has reduced staff positions by 5% over the last 3 years.

As our community continues to grow and develop, the award-winning BPU remains focused and committed to the long-term viability of its infrastructure and meeting the needs of every part of our community. This includes ensuring future power generation and production requirements, replacing aging infrastructure before it fails or becomes cost prohibitive, adhering to all environmental and safety regulations, and ensuring open and transparent communications.

BPU's Board of Directors, its management team, and employees continually strive to remain one of the top public utilities in the nation, and are committed to improving the quality of life in this community. If you have an opportunity, please take a moment to recognize these public servants, and all of those in our community who have worked hard over the last year to maintain and ensure the delivery of critical essential government functions. As such, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate and thank the new officers serving on BPU's Board of Directors: Robert L. Milan, Sr., President; Mary Gonzales, Vice President, and; Rose Mulvany Henry, Secretary. 🇺🇸

## BPU Extends Disconnection Moratorium

BPU has extended its moratorium on disconnections for non-payment until March 31. Implemented in December, the moratorium is intended to assist residential and business customers facing financial hardship resulting from the pandemic. Customers are encouraged to stay current with their bills to avoid getting too far behind. Residential customers who are financially impacted can set up payment arrangements by calling 913-573-9145. Customers will continue to receive reminders, including collection notices as these notifications are important to remind customers of past-due balances and status of their accounts. 🇺🇸



## The Benefits of a Public Utility

BPU is a municipal utility company – which makes a difference in your life. It means that BPU operates the utility as a community enterprise, which holds down costs and allows all citizens to take part in the process. As a not-for-profit utility, BPU rates are competitive and viable, reflecting the public service nature of our mission. As a publicly-owned utility company, BPU answers to main street, not Wall Street – and will continue to do what's best for the community, just as it has for more than 100 years. 🇺🇸

### Community Ownership

Municipal utilities are customer-owned and operated and measured by how much money stays in the community, not profits for private stockholders.

### Local Control

Business decisions are made by local BPU management staff, while policy matters are made by a locally elected board. All board meetings and hearings are open to the public.

### Reliability

BPU staff can respond quickly to community needs and emergencies because they live in the community. It is a recipient of numerous recognitions and awards for Safety and Reliability, Social Responsibility and Environmental Stewardship, and Fiscal Transparency.

### Community Investment

Municipal utilities like BPU contribute far more to the community monetarily than simply providing electric and water service. From its Annual Charity Golf tournament which has raised over \$600,000 to its Summer Youth Program, customer ownership of BPU has paid dividends to Wyandotte County again and again.

# Utility Assistance and Payment Options

BPU offers a variety of assistance options and programs to help customers, including the following:

*continued from page 1*

## Utility Assistance Program

- BPU supports utility assistance programs at various human services agencies throughout Wyandotte County. Funds are disbursed thru the United Way to eight partner agencies including Avenue of Life, Cross-Lines, El Centro, Catholic Charities, Economic Opportunity Foundation, Salvation Army, Citadel, Harbor Lights Village and others. In the last 24 months, nearly 1,000 families took advantage of this program, receiving nearly \$200,000 in assistance. For more information or to enroll, call 2-1-1. The United Way offers residents access to thousands of resources and social services including rental and mortgage payment assistance, utility deposit assistance, housing matters, employment assistance, etc.

## Customer Hardship Payment Service Program

- This program provides eligible participants assistance to offset utility expenses related to health emergencies, change in employment or income status, unforeseen expenses, etc. The program has helped more than 1,500 families and provided more than \$500,000 since its inception. In 2020, nearly 300 families received assistance. The program fills an essential role in emergency assistance for the community because it is not income-based. Administered by the United Way for BPU, interested applicants can call the special Hardship Hotline at 913-371-6772 or the United Way directly at 2-1-1 for more information and eligibility requirements.
- The UG's Federal CARES Act allocation provided \$9 million in direct aid to local organizations in the community assisting with COVID-19 response, **including utility, rental, and food assistance**. Several of these programs are administered through the United Way, with hundreds of customers

utilizing these invaluable resources which wrapped up in December. Additional federal monies may be available in the future.

## Community Assistance Programs

- There are also a number of human services organizations and programs available that also provide a variety of assistance efforts, including for utilities. This includes the Metropolitan Lutheran Ministries, the Salvation Army, the federal LIEAP fund, and more. A list of these organizations is available at [www.bpu.com](http://www.bpu.com).



BPU has also implemented options to help customers make payment arrangements, managing and budgeting for on-going utility expenses. This includes:

## Utility Payment Arrangement Options

- BPU works directly with customers to assist them with a variety of payment arrangement options. As with any financial obligation, the sooner customers reach out when they are experiencing financial issues, the more BPU and other organizations can assist. Avoid getting too far behind. BPU understands the unique circumstances some customers are experiencing, and will work to assist as much as it can. Residential customers financially impacted by COVID-19 can set up payment arrangements by calling 913-573-9145. All other BPU billing or customer service questions can be answered by calling 913-573-9190.

## FlexPay

- Allows customers to monitor their electricity and water on an "as-needed" basis, with services purchased on a pre-paid basis. There are no deposits and no late fees. Call 913-573-9190 to enroll in this program.



As a community partner, BPU will continue working to help the community and assist its customers during these extraordinary times – just as it has for the last 100 years. As a not-for-profit, BPU utilizes incoming revenues to offset its operational and capital costs. Unlike investor-owned utilities, it does not operate with profit margins like larger private sector utilities, which can pass these margins along to shareholders as dividends. 🇺🇸

## Join the Paperless Movement

**With BPU's Paperless Billing option your utility bill is emailed to your inbox every month, saving you time and helping the environment by reducing waste. Make the greener choice, while also reducing your chances of identity theft. Enroll in BPU's Paperless program today using your BPU online account OR give us a call at 913-573-9190.**



# Pick Your Way To Pay

**ONLINE**

Visit [bpu.com](http://bpu.com) and click **PAY BILL**.

Visit BPU.com 24/7 to securely pay with a credit card or set up an Automatic Payment Plan with a bank account.

**FLEXPAY™**

Create an account and pay as you go.

Create an account for a flexible way to pay as you go. Visit [bpu.com](http://bpu.com) for more info.

**KIOSK**

Visit one of our convenient PaySite® kiosks.

Pay with cash or check. To find the nearest kiosk, call **1-877-876-7076** or go to [paysitekiosklocator.com](http://paysitekiosklocator.com)

**PHONE**

Pay 24/7 by calling **1-855-BPU-BILL**.

Call **1-855-BPU-BILL** and pay with a credit card or bank account.

**DROP BOX**

Drop off a check or money order payment.

Drop off a check or money order payment at our Drop Box at **540 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66101**.

**MAIL**

Mail a check or money order.

Send a check or money order to:  
**KC Board of Public Utilities, PO Box 219661, Kansas City, MO 64121**.



## Utility Bill Payment Kiosks Near You!

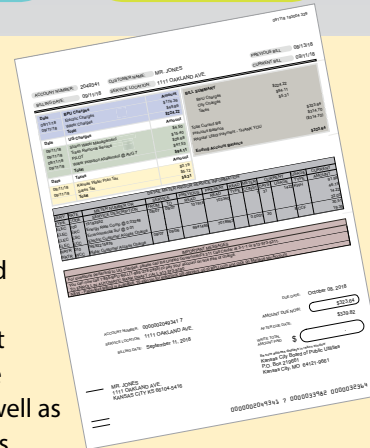
BPU customers can quickly and conveniently make their utility payments at PaySite Kiosks located around Wyandotte County or the region. These kiosks take cash or check, provide you with a payment receipt, and are FREE to use. Go to <http://paysitekiosklocator.com> and enter your zip code for a map of locations near you, or call **1-877-876-7076**.

WyCo kiosk locations include:

- BPU headquarters, 540 Minnesota Ave.
- Price Chopper, 7600 State Ave.
- Hen House, 8210 Parallel Pkwy.
- Sun Fresh, 241 S. 18th St.
- Sun Fresh, 2803 S. 47th St.
- El Rio Bravo Supermarket, 11 S. 10th St.
- Conoco, 616 S. 7th St.
- Fast Fred's Market, 1806 N. 18th St.
- Happy Foods North, 5420 Leavenworth Rd.

## Understanding the BPU Billing Statement

In addition to BPU water and electric charges, a customer's monthly BPU billing statement also includes charges from the Unified Government (UG), as well as state, city, and other local taxes.



**Stormwater Management:** This UG fee appears on bills as a result of federal mandates for localities to have Stormwater management plans. For more info, call 913-573-5400.

**Trash Removal Service:** BPU collects this fee and remits it to the UG for trash pick-up and recycling. For more info, call 913-573-5311.

**PILOT:** City ordinance requires BPU to pay a portion of its revenue to the UG to fund city operations. Called the payment-in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT), the UG sets this rate between 5 and 15 percent. For more info, call 913-573-5400.

**Water Pollution Abatement:** This is a sewage fee collected by the UG. For more info, call 913-573-1300.

# Home Weatherization

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For those that might not be able afford the upfront costs, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has weatherization assistance programs in all 50 states, helping more than 30,000 homeowners get weatherization assistance annually. Take action today. Be green and save money!

## The Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program

helps low-income households cover the cost of heating, cooling, and energy efficiency improvements – free of charge. It's funded by the Department of Energy and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and regulated by the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation. At no charge, income-eligible families can receive a comprehensive home energy audit, assessing their entire home. Certified energy auditors will search a home, inside and out, looking for inefficiencies and safety concerns using advanced equipment and identify a customized account of areas for cost-effective improvements. The improvements will be provided free of charge by a network of professional crews and contractors. For more information or to enroll, go to [www.ECKAN.org/weatherization/](http://www.ECKAN.org/weatherization/) or call 785-242-6413

## DID YOU KNOW?

*The average household can save \$100-\$200 in energy costs a year by simply unplugging unused electronics and appliances.*

# The Power to Save with Energy Engage

BPU's innovative Energy Engage portal gives you control over your utility usage, so you can maximize your savings while minimizing your ecological impact. This free tool puts insights about water and energy usage into customers' fingertips, helping them save money and the environment too. Dashboard features include:

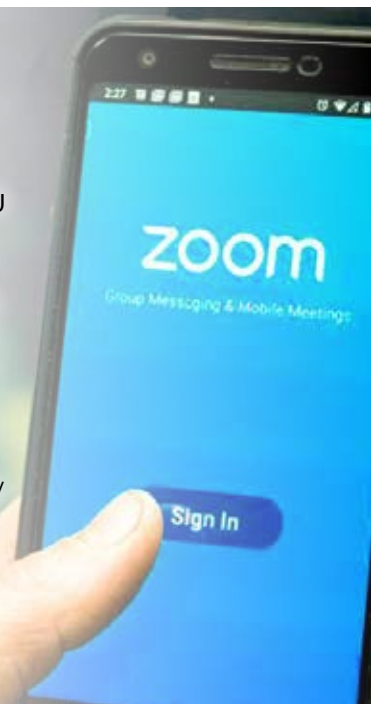
- ✓ Track energy and water usage by both amounts and dollars
- ✓ View usage by day, billing cycle, or year
- ✓ Compare usage to previous months
- ✓ Monitor usage by hour to identify peak usage times
- ✓ Set an alarm to be notified when you near a preset budgeted amount



*Turn your computer into a lean, mean, green money-saving machine.*

## BPU Board Meetings

To reduce COVID exposure risk, BPU Board of Director's meetings are currently held virtually. The public is invited to access these meetings, which occur at 6:00 p.m. CT on the first and third Wednesday of every month, either online or via telephone. Simply call 1-888-475-4499 (Meeting ID 845 2313 9724) or for Zoom meeting access go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84523139724>.






# Beware of Utility Imposter Scams

Customers need to be aware of all scams, including the latest utility scam telling residents their utilities will be shut off immediately. Some have received calls stating if payment is not made services will be shut off within 30 minutes. The caller claims to represent a local utility, and uses caller ID spoofing to convince victims the call is from a real customer service number. BPU never asks for payment over the phone or threatens to disconnect utilities due to non-payment.

- Never give credit or debit card, Social Security, ATM, checking or savings account numbers to anyone who comes to your door,

calls, texts, and/or sends an email asking for information regarding your utility bill. Verify the request is authentic by either asking to see company identification or calling the BPU Customer Service Department at 913-573-9190.

- Be suspicious if you receive an email regarding your utility bill if you have not requested online communications from BPU.
- Never provide personal information via email or click any suspicious links or attachments.

If you get a suspicious call, email, or visit from a BPU employee that you think may be a scam, please let us know immediately at 913-573-9190. 

**KNOW THE SIGNS.**  
#StopScams

**Slow down**  
Take your time. Scammers pressure customers to act fast.

**Verify**  
Scammers often pose as the utility. Always verify the info being provided to you matches your latest bill.

**Stop**  
Utilities never demand immediate payment and do not accept bitcoin, prepaid cards, or third-party payment apps.

**UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAM**

# OUTAGE MAP

Live updates online from your computer, smartphone, or tablet


[outage.bpu.com](https://outage.bpu.com)



**Stay aware of power outages in your area with BPU's Outage Map. This map gives you an online view of our service territory 24/7 and shows power outages in real-time down to the street level.**



## Arctic Weather Affects Power Grid

Thousands of people across the Midwest experienced short-term outages last month after the nonprofit grid operator that works to ensure reliable delivery of electricity to a 14-state region requested utility companies scale back the amount of power used during an extended period of frigid winter weather. The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is a regional transmission organization, granted authority by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to ensure the reliability of the bulk electric system in our region of the country. SPP coordinates with member utilities like BPU to help manage operations and transmission to keep electric supply and demand balanced across its 14-state balancing authority area. SPP does not control or direct the use of the distribution networks that directly serve homes and businesses. Rather, it acts as a "balancing authority" for the 14-states it serves, meaning it works to balance electricity production and use for the entire region, which is why energy conservation in one place like Kansas can have a meaningful impact on electric reliability in another place like the panhandle of Texas. During February's extended arctic blast, SPP issued an alert asking member utilities to request customers begin conserving energy in preparation for a potential shortfall of power. Even after using up their required operating reserve and importing power from other regions, SPP fell short of the power required to meet their electricity peak, and then directed member utilities to implement controlled interruptions of service (rolling blackouts) shortly thereafter. This request occurred over a two day period, and only for a few hours of peak demand on those two days. Fortunately, BPU was able to manage its load effectively keeping disruptions at the time to a minimum. The regional SPP is in place, among other reasons, to protect, ensure, and manage the proportional distribution of energy during significant events or disruptions that threaten one or all utilities' ability to service or meet the electric demands of their customers or territory. 



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Kansas City, Kansas 66101

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# WHAT'S NEW?

BPU recently assisted the Unified Government (UG) and the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) by helping build out electric and water service to Wyandotte County's three new mass vaccination sites. For more information on vaccines or how to combat COVID-19, go to [WycoVaccines.org](http://WycoVaccines.org) or [WycoKCK.org/COVID-19](http://WycoKCK.org/COVID-19).



## BPU | BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**ROBERT L. MILAN, SR.**  
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Member First District  
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**MARY L. GONZALES**  
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**RYAN EIDSON**  
Member-at-Large  
[reidson@bpu.com](mailto:reidson@bpu.com)

## WHAT NUMBERS TO CALL:

<b>Customer Service</b>	573-9190
Billing Inquiries by phone—7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday	573-9190
If your electricity is out	573-9522
If your water service is out	573-9622
If you need service turned on or off	573-9190
<b>Billing questions</b>	573-9190
If you need to make payment arrangements on your bill	573-9145
BPU Job Line	573-6900
BPU Ethics Commission Hotline	271-6337
To request public information	573-9173
If you have administrative questions	573-9000
Heat Pump Hotline	573-9988
If you need a "dig" check for electrical cables or water lines	1-800-DIG-SAFE
Administrative Office Number	573-9000
Contact your BPU Board Member	573-9024

# CONTACT US

### MAIN OFFICE

Kansas City Board of Public Utilities  
540 Minnesota Avenue  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
Phone: (913) 573-9000  
Visit our Website at: [www.BPU.com](http://www.BPU.com)

### OFFICE HOURS

**8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday**

