

# Welcome to the Neighborhood...From The *Reliable One*

Whether you've come here from across the country or across town, moving is a challenge. From finding the best place to shop to meeting new neighbors to getting your kids settled in school — you probably have a lot on your mind.

The one thing you don't have to worry about is your utility service. You are an OUC customer, and since 1923, we have been providing some of the most reliable electric service in the state. As your new hometown utility, we work hard every day to earn our name "**The *Reliable One*.**"

This OUC Welcome Kit provides you with a wealth of information about the programs and services available to our customers. Whether you want to check your account balance online, read your electric meter, find out more about hurricane safety, hire a plumbing contractor or even make your home more energy efficient, this booklet has the answers you need.

For your convenience, we've listed to the left the phone numbers you are most likely to need. Also, I encourage you to visit OUC online at [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com). This site features up-to-the-minute news on the services we provide, as well as special web-only services — like our Online Home Energy Audit. In addition, every other month you will receive *Connections*, our customer newsletter. Be sure to check it out for timely information on energy and water saving tips, severe weather preparation and special events in our community.

So, relax, settle in and enjoy Central Florida. We'll keep you connected . . . and we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,



**Ken Ksionek**  
General Manager & CEO



# Welcome to OUC...

For more than 85 years, OUC—The *Reliable One* has been providing outstanding electric and water service to families and businesses in Central Florida. As a municipal utility, OUC is owned by our more than 250,000 customers, the people — just like you — we serve every day.

As our region has grown, OUC has been proud to light the way. In fact, total electric sales now top 8.5 trillion kilowatt hours a year and water sales exceed 31 billion gallons a year. As a result, OUC is now the second largest locally owned electric utility in Florida and the 16th largest in the nation.

To keep pace with this unprecedented growth, OUC has built and expanded four power plants and eight water plants over the years, all financed with bonds covered by our own revenues.

Today, we continue to keep an eye on new technology, looking for ways to improve both our community and our environment, while continuing to invest in renewable technologies like solar and biomass—creating natural gas from landfills.

This focus on performance and commitment to our customers has paid off. PA Consulting Group has twice honored OUC as the most reliable electric utility in the Southeastern United States, and our drinking water has been repeatedly named the best drinking water in the state by the Florida section of the American Water Works Association.

# and the Community

Good business is more than strong customer service and a solid bottom line. . . it's also being a good neighbor. Every day OUC employees lend a helping hand to charities and civic organizations across Central Florida, donating more than 25,000 volunteer hours each year.

A proud and energetic bunch, our employees routinely donate their off-hours to organizations, including Heart of Florida United Way, Second Harvest Food Bank, March of Dimes, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Junior Achievement, Orlando/UCF Shakespeare Festival, Foundation for Osceola Education, St. Cloud Main Street and more.





# How To Read Your Bill .....

Your monthly OUC bill offers much more than just payment information — it is also a great source for useful facts ranging from your personal usage history to customer service locations to money saving tips. Your bill also includes vital information regarding sewer and garbage services provided by the City of St. Cloud.

**1 Account Number**  
Use this number whenever you contact us about your account.

**2 Consumption History**  
Provides a record of your energy and water usage over the past 13 months.

**3 OUC Meter Reading**  
Arranged vertically to make it easier to calculate total usage, this area shows your current and past month's readings as well as the number of days billed.

**4 OUC Electric Charges**  
This is based on the number of kilowatt hours (KWH) used during the billing cycle multiplied by an energy charge and fuel charge, plus a fixed monthly customer charge.

**5 City of St. Cloud Water Charges**  
This is based on a fixed usage charge per each 1,000 gallons (KGAL) of water used during the present billing cycle multiplied by the corresponding consumption charge, plus a fixed monthly customer charge.

**6 Other Agencies' Charges**  
Your OUC statement also contains the bill for certain fees and taxes charged by the City of St. Cloud, Osceola County and other state and local government agencies. Please contact these agencies for information about their charges. The Gross Receipt Tax applies to electric charges only.

**7 The Bottom Line**  
Easy to read monthly total payment information...the total charges due, including any credits or past due amounts.

**8 Due Date Reminder**  
Payment is due in our office on or before this date.

**9 For Your Records**  
Helps you keep track of your bill payments.

**10 Optional Account Items**  
Billing information about optional OUC programs.

**11 Useful Information**  
Information about programs and services OUC offers for convenience and to help save you money.

Account# 11111-2222

Service Address: 123 YOUR ST

**2** Consumption History

**Residential Electric**  
May 2007: 1012 KWH  
May 2008: 1089 KWH

**Residential Water**  
May 2007: 4 TGAL  
May 2008: 3 TGAL

**11** Starting  
January 1, 2008,  
accounts with  
past due balances  
will be subject to  
1.5% late charge,  
or a minimum  
fee of \$3.00.

**9**

Residential Electric Meter # 12345678  
Electric Service Charge  
04/02/08 Reading 56372.00  
05/02/08 Reading 57461.00  
Consumption for 30 Days 1089.00 KWH  
**Current OUC Electric Charges**

Residential Water Meter # WA123456  
04/02/08 Reading 615.00  
05/02/08 Reading 618.00  
Consumption for 30 Days 3.00 TGAL  
Current City Sewer Charge  
Current City Garbage Charge  
Current City Emergency Medical  
Current City Utility Tax  
**Current City of St. Cloud Charges**

Gross Receipts Tax  
**Current State of Florida Charges**

Late Payment Fee

**10**

Itemized Charges Total Charges

7.28	<b>3</b>	
90.06		<b>4</b>
		97.34
9.55		
12.99		
16.00		
2.00		<b>5</b>
9.09		49.63
3.96		<b>6</b>
		3.96
		3.00

**For Your Records**

Date Paid	Amount Paid	Check Number

Avoid a 1.5% (or a minimum of \$3) late charge  
by always paying your bill by the due date below

**8**

**Current Charges Due 5/17/08**

**\$153.93**

**7**

**Total Account Balance**

**\$153.93**

Current Charges Due 5/17/08

**\$153.93**

Total Account Balance

**\$153.93**



# Your OUC Account

We understand that convenience is important to our customers. That's why we make it as easy as possible for you to manage your OUC account . . . in person, over the phone or online. Now you can check your current balance, review your billing history, make a payment and much more, all from a variety of locations in our area — some as close as your home.

## OUC Account Information

### By Phone

Your utility account information is only a phone call away. To speak to a service representative, simply call OUC Customer Service at **407.957.7373** (or 407.423.9119 for TDD service) from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

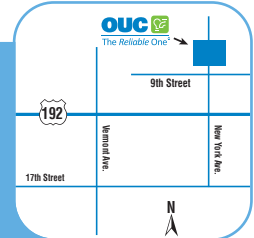
### In Person

OUC has several conveniently located Customer Service Centers where you can get detailed account information or make changes to your OUC utility service.

### St. Cloud City Hall

1300 9th St.

Monday - Friday:  
7:30 am - 5:30 pm



### Downtown Orlando

Reliable Plaza at  
100 West Anderson St.

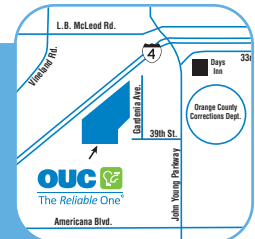
Monday - Friday:  
7:00 am – 6:00 pm  
Saturday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm



### Southwest Orlando

3800 Gardenia Ave.

Monday - Friday:  
7:00 am – 6:00 pm



## **OUConvenient Billing**

OUConvenient Billing offers an easy, paper-free way to manage your OUC account, right from your personal computer. When you enroll, you can view your detailed account history and current bill whenever you want over our secure Internet server. In combination with *Rely-A-Pay* (OUC's automatic-withdrawal payment plan), OUConvenient Billing provides you with a paper-less, worry-free account management tool.



## **Credit & Payment Information**

Based on credit and OUC payment history, some new customers may be required to pay a deposit before utility service is switched on. In addition, new customers with one late payment during the first six months of service or one forced collection attempt during any 12-month period may be billed for a new or additional deposit based on twice the customer's average monthly bill.

Deposits, however, can typically be refunded after the account is two years old and there have been no forced collection attempts or more than four delinquent payments during the past 24 months. Please also note that an account may become a cash-only account if a customer writes four or more returned checks to OUC during a 24-month period.

If you have questions about the status of your deposit or your account, contact OUC Customer Service at **407.957.7373**.



# Paying Your Bill

Paying your bill should be easy and hassle-free. At OUC we offer payment options to suit any schedule.

## From Anywhere

### Pay automatically

Pay your utility bill without checks, stamps or waiting in line. When you enroll in *Rely-A-Pay*, OUC automatically deducts your monthly bill from your bank account on your bill's due date. It's that simple — and free. Call OUC Customer Service at **407.957.7373** to sign up.

### Pay with eCheck

Visit **www.ouc.com** or call **407.957.7373** to make a one-time payment with OUC's free electronic check service. Paying by eCheck is easy, and your payment automatically will be deducted from your checking account.

### Pay by credit card

To pay your OUC bill by credit card, visit **www.ouc.com** or call **866.243.7083**. Please note that *SpeedPay*, an independent

service provider, charges a \$5.75 convenience fee for each transaction. The fee will appear on your credit card statement, not on your OUC bill.

## In Person

### OUC Customer Service Centers

Cashiers and customer service representatives are available at any of the three OUC customer service centers listed on page 6. For your convenience, secure 24-hour drop boxes are located at each center for after-hour payments. Drop box payments made by noon Monday through Friday are credited to your account within two business days.

### The Check Cashing Store

As an OUC customer, you can pay your utility bill at any The Check Cashing Store payment center. Just make sure to take your bill with you. Visit **www.ouc.com** or check the back of your OUC bill for a listing of The Check Cashing Store locations throughout Central Florida.

**We understand that many of our customers have unique or critical needs, and we have developed the Friendly Neighbor Program and Medical Alert – two programs to offer assistance.**

### **Friendly Neighbor Program**

At OUC we understand how financial hardships can impact our customers. To address this need, the City of St. Cloud established the Friendly Neighbor program, which has helped local families through difficult times. The program helps OUC customers pay their utility bills during times of emergency and financial difficulty. Through a partnership between the City of St. Cloud and 211/Community Resources, families in need are identified and donations are distributed quickly and directly to assist during tough financial times. For more information, call **407.957.7373**.

### **Medical Alert**

Customers requiring life-sustaining equipment can rely on OUC to provide special consideration for their accounts. Contact a customer service representative at **407.957.7373** for information about qualifying for this program.

### **Partnering banks or credit unions**

OUC customers can also pay their utility bills at the bank locations listed below. You must have a copy of your bill with you. Visit **www.ouc.com** for a complete list of partnering locations.

- **SunTrust Bank, 4290 13th St.**
- **Public Bank, 2500 13th St.**
- **Bank of America, 4300 West 13th St.**





# OUC Electric Services

As an OUC electric customer, you can rest assured that we will provide you with some of the best, most reliable service in the southeast. In addition to outstanding performance, we also provide other programs that can help you hire a contractor, make your home more energy efficient or even save money on some home improvements.



## Online Home Energy Audit

OUC's free Online Home Energy Audit provides residential electric users — OUC customers and non-OUC customers — with detailed tips on saving energy. Based on household information you provide, the Online Home Energy Audit will generate a customized report on your energy usage and how you can lower your utility bills. To get started, visit [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com) and be sure to have a recent copy of your OUC utility bill.



## OUC Preferred Contractor Network

Every year, OUC receives thousands of calls at our Customer Service Center from customers needing the assistance of home repair and service professionals. To better serve your home repair needs, OUC has developed our Preferred Contractor Network — a free service to help you find heating and air conditioning, electric and plumbing specialists in your area. Visit [www.oucpcn.com](http://www.oucpcn.com) for more information.



## Home Rebate Programs

Making your home more energy efficient can do more than just save money on your monthly utility bill. Qualified homeowners can even apply for rebates from OUC. For more information on how you can earn rebates on new heat pumps, insulation, caulking, weather stripping and more, visit [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com).



# Your Electric Meter



Knowing how to read your electric meter can help you keep tabs on your energy usage, saving energy - and money. Locate your electric meter (typically on the side of your house or apartment) and examine the series of dials across the face of the meter.

To read your meter in kilowatt hours (KWH), write down the smaller of the two numbers each hand falls between. The hand on the first dial above falls between 7 and 8. That would be a 7. The three dials above read 7 0 2 or 702 KWH.

If a hand is too close to read, as in the first dial above, look at the next dial to the right. If the dial on the right has passed 0, then the dial on the left reads as the higher number. In the example above, the second dial has passed 0, so the first dial should be read as a 7.

To track your energy usage, take a reading on the first of each month, and subtract the reading from the first of the previous month. For example, if your meter read 83,156 KWH on March 1 and 83,988 KWH on April 1, you used 83,988 less 83,156 or 832 KWH during March.



# OUC Energy Saving Tips

One of the most common questions OUC customers ask is “How can I lower my energy bill?” The answer is simple. . . the more energy you save around the house, the smaller your monthly bill. In fact there are dozens of easy ways to dramatically lower the energy your home uses every day.



## Check the temperature

Cooling or heating your home can account for half of your monthly power use. To keep cool during summer, set your AC thermostat at 80 degrees. When you leave your house, turn it up a few notches to 85 degrees or higher and plan on a savings of 6 to 8 percent for each degree you raise the setting. In the winter, set your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees when at home and 55 degrees when sleeping or not at home (slightly higher for infants or the elderly).

## Check your thermostat

Place an accurate thermometer next to your thermostat to verify the thermostat’s tempera-

ture reading. Also, use a level to make sure the thermostat is not tilted or crooked. Consider purchasing a programmable thermostat to automate turning up or down your settings as appropriate.



## Replace your filter

Check, change or clean heating and air-conditioning filters every month. Dirty filters put an unnecessary strain on the unit, causing it to run longer and waste money.

## Move the air

Installing ceiling fans throughout your home will help you stay comfortably cool during summer. In fact, you could raise your thermostat several degrees and not feel the difference. Be sure to turn fans off in unoccupied areas.



## Watch for leaks

Check your air handler and ductwork for leaks. Weather-strip or caulk around windows, doors, plumbing and other gaps so that heating and cooling energy won’t escape.

### **Replace inefficient bulbs**

Try replacing incandescent lights with compact fluorescent bulbs. Fluorescents give you the same light output, but for one-third to one-half the cost. They also produce less heat for your air conditioner to cool.

### **Wash on “cold”**



Most clothing can be washed on the “cold” or “warm” setting on your clothes washer. New detergents have even been formulated for cold water washing, saving you money on every load.

### **Take the next step**

For more ways to save on your monthly utility bill, including a free-online home energy audit, visit **[www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com)**.

### **Check your blinds**

During summer, keep curtains, mini-blinds and shutters closed. This keeps the sun’s heat out, helping cool your home. During winter months, open your shades again and let the warm sunshine in.



# OUC Water Saving Tips

**Demand for water in Central Florida keeps rising as our population grows. Meanwhile, rainfall levels have been lower than normal in recent years, slowing the replenishment of our region's water supply — the underground Floridan Aquifer. For ideas on how you can save money in and around your home, check out the tips below.**

## **Watch for leaks**

In a typical house, leaky toilets and faucets can waste hundreds of gallons of water each day. To check for a leak, make sure no water is running in the house and observe your water meter. If you see the meter's dial or triangle moving, you may have a leak somewhere.

## **Check your toilet**

To check toilets for silent leaks, put a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank after it has filled. If coloring shows up in the bowl without flushing, you probably have a leak in or around the flapper valve — a fairly inexpensive problem to fix.

## **Replace wasteful fixtures**

New water saving showerheads and flush valves for toilets can reduce water flows with little noticeable impact on daily use.

## **Use water only when necessary**

By simply taking short showers and turning off water while brushing your teeth or shaving, you can save hundreds of gallons a year in wasted water.

## **Water only as needed**

Only water before 10:00 am or after 4:00 pm to minimize the amount of water lost to evaporation, and water for just 30-45 minutes per session ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch of water per zone). During cooler months, water once a week, and during warmer weather, water twice a week.

## **Check for leaks**

If you have an automatic sprinkler system, check the system monthly for leaks and broken sprinkler heads. Also check for signs of broken or leaky sprinkler system pipes by looking for muddy or overgrown areas of turf.

### **Water your lawn wisely**

Irrigation accounts for more than half of Central Florida's total water consumption, so practicing water conservation in your yard is the best place to start saving water.

Remember, over-watering is not only wasteful, it also promotes shallow root growth and makes your lawn more susceptible to insects and disease.

### **Avoid wasting water**

To keep sprinklers from running during rain, install a rain sensor or shut-off device. Also, avoid watering on windy days to minimize blow off.

### **Program the timer**

Make sure your sprinkler system's timer/controller is operating correctly. . . on the right days, at the right times, for the right durations. Many homeowners may not realize their sprinkler systems are malfunctioning because the systems are programmed to operate overnight and they never observe them running.





# Hurricane Safety



**Hurricane season is always cause for concern, but recent record-breaking storm activity has increased the need for better preparation and safer response. Below are a few quick tips to keep in mind during storm season. For more information, including a comprehensive OUC Hurricane Preparedness Guide, visit [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com).**

## **Before the storm**

Your family's safety is a top priority, and OUC wants to help you get ready. You can get started by developing a family emergency plan. Your plan should include the following tasks:

- Secure emergency supplies, including medication
- Make plans for those who require life saving equipment
- Clear patio and yard of lawn furniture, toys, plants, garden supplies, tools and other debris
- Know your next step and identify the nearest public shelter in the event of an evacuation
- Secure your home and other personal property in the event of evacuation
- Establish a plan for family pets

## **During the storm**

After the flurry of preparation activity is completed, it is important to keep a battery-powered radio within your reach for accurate, minute-to-minute details of the storm's development and path. Safety is of utmost importance, so stay indoors and keep windows and doors shut and locked tightly, if not boarded. Be sure to stay aware of the most current storm warnings and advisories.

## **After the storm**

Once the storm passes, everyone is eager to inspect homes and evaluate possible damage, but remember to use caution. Severe storms and hurricanes can leave downed power lines in standing water, falling tree limbs, flooded streets and many other hidden dangers. If you are without power due to a storm, make sure the main electrical switch to your home is turned off before reentering.



## **To report a power outage**

If you experience a loss of power during a severe storm, call OUC's Emergency Outage Reporting Line at **407.892.2210**.