



# CONNECTIONS

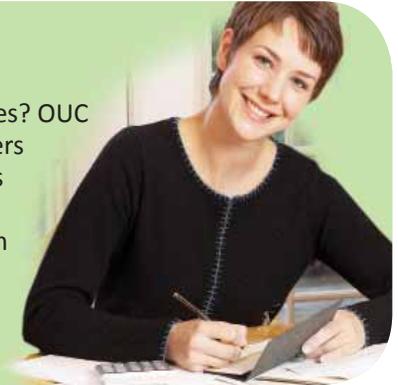
News and Information from OUC—The *Reliable One* | MAY 2009

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## Budget Billing

Wish you could predict how much you spend each month on utilities? OUC is now offering **Budget Billing**, a program designed to help customers avoid unpredictable bills by equalizing payments over the year. This free service helps you plan your monthly payments and keep your budgets balanced. To learn more about Budget Billing or to enroll in the program, please call Customer Service at **407.423.9018** in Orlando/Orange County or **407.957.7373** in St. Cloud/Osceola County or visit us online at [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com).



## Medical Alert Program



OUC's Medical Alert Program is offered to customers whose electrical service is medically essential.

Customers requiring life-sustaining equipment (such as heart monitors, oxygen concentrators, feeding pumps, dialysis machines, etc.) can rely on OUC to provide special consideration for their accounts. If you or a member of your family uses life-sustaining equipment, please call us at **407.423.9018**, prompt 2 in Orlando/Orange County or **407.957.7373** in St. Cloud/Osceola County. An OUC customer service representative will give you details about the program and how you may qualify.

## Beware of Energy Saving Scams

As consumers seek ways to save on their overall energy bills, scam artists selling energy saving devices and services are working overtime trying to convince you that they can save you big bucks on your energy bills.

OUC urges customers to beware of pitches from door-to-door salespeople or unsolicited letters and phone calls that promise unbelievable savings on your cooling bill. Contact the Better Business Bureau before purchasing anything and seek out legitimate third-party validation from sources such as Consumer Reports, university reports or government agency Web sites.

OUC's free home energy audits and conservation tips offer simple, excellent – and often free – ways for customers to reduce their energy usage and lower their bills. Visit [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com) to sign up for a free audit or to find tips on how you can start saving today.

## Update Your Contact Information

Have you changed your phone number recently? If so, make sure OUC has your correct phone number on file by calling **407.423.9018** in Orlando/Orange County or **407.957.7373** in St. Cloud/Osceola County or by visiting [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com) before hurricane season. This will ensure that you are able to use our automated system to hear estimated service restoration schedules in the event of a major storm.



# Tree Trimming Keeps Neighborhoods Safe & Beautiful

Nearly 20 percent of all power outages are caused by falling trees or limbs that come into contact with electrical lines. At OUC—The *Reliable One*, we keep trees in our service area trimmed to help ensure better, safer service.

- The shape, size and growth rate of trees affect how often they need to be trimmed. We try to create 10 feet of clearance alongside and below while clearing all branches above our lines.
- Directional pruning allows us to train the tree to grow away from power lines. By selectively trimming the tree's branches, we can retain much of the tree's natural crown.
- It may be necessary to remove an old/dead tree that has become a hazard to the public or our electrical system. You will be notified if the tree is to be removed.
- *Please note:* OUC does not trim trees that interfere with streetlights.



## LEAVE TRIMMING TO THE PROS

- OUC trims trees along our distribution lines on a regular maintenance cycle employing highly skilled professionals who use the proper tools and safety practices.
- We trim only those trees on our easements and rights-of-way or trees endangering our power lines and equipment.

- If you notice a tree interfering with power lines, please call us at **407.423.9018** in Orlando/Orange County or **407.957.7373** in St. Cloud/Osceola County.
- Never attempt to trim a tree near electrical wires yourself.

## Plant Wisely When Sprucing Up the Yard



When you're designing that dream landscape for your property, note the location of overhead and underground power, cable and utility lines. A little planning goes a long way when it comes to creating a beautiful,

low-maintenance and safe yard. For your next landscaping project:

- **Choose low-growing trees when planting near overhead lines**
- **Plant fast-growing trees at least 20 feet away from power lines**
- **Avoid planting trees, shrubs or vines close to pad-mounted transformers**

Some ideal trees for planting beneath power lines include Scrub Hickory, Weeping Bottlebrush, Crepe Myrtle and Wax Myrtle.

For more help selecting trees, contact your local nursery or garden center. Visit [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com) for more information on tree trimming and landscaping tips.

en español

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