



# CONNECTIONS

News and Information from OUC—The *Reliable One* | DECEMBER 2010

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## Deck the Halls Safely, Smartly This Holiday Season



You don't have to be Scrooge to save money during the holidays. Brighten up the season with energy efficient LED (light-emitting diode) strands instead of traditional lights to save money, reduce hassles and lessen the risk of fire.

LED light strings might cost a bit more to buy but they'll use less energy and last longer than standard incandescent holiday lights. LED bulbs are shatterproof and shock resistant and last more than 50,000 hours when used outdoors or more than 100,000 hours indoors. And since they produce almost no heat, LED lights also are safe to touch and greatly reduce the risk of fire.

For even more savings, put your lights and decorations on a timer so they turn on and off automatically. And while those giant inflatable decorations look harmless enough, they're actually "energy hogs" that can drive up your electric bills.

For more safety tips, visit [www.OUC.com](http://www.OUC.com).

## Lend a Helping Hand

This time of year can be especially difficult for families struggling to make ends meet. But with your support, OUC's Project Care can help by providing emergency assistance to those in our community who have experienced a recent personal or family crisis that has placed them in danger of losing their utility service. For every \$1 you donate to Project Care, OUC will contribute \$2 to the program.

Since its inception in December 1994, Project Care has raised nearly \$2 million and helped thousands of families and individuals. With your help, this program will continue to assist our neighbors in need.

Go to [www.ouc.com](http://www.ouc.com) to donate or call **407.957.7373**. If you are an OUC customer who needs assistance, please call United Way 2-1-1 at **211**.



## East West Shrine Game®: More Than Just a Game

For the first time in its history, the East-West Shrine Game® – the longest-running all-star college football game – comes to the Florida Citrus Bowl on Saturday, January 22, 2011. Since 1925, the game has been known for the outstanding quality of its players and coaches, as well as the excitement of great college football action.

But it's more than just a game – it benefits Shriners Hospitals for Children®, where expert medical care is provided regardless of the patients' ability to pay. Shriners Hospitals for Children® is a pediatric health care system dedicated to improving the lives of children by providing specialty care, innovative research and outstanding medical teaching programs.

Be a part of the excitement all week long with events such as the golf tournament with former NFL players, player meet-and-greets, autograph sessions and game day tailgating. Learn more at [www.shrinegame.com](http://www.shrinegame.com).



# Customer Service Holiday Hours

In observance of the holidays, OUC wants to make you aware of upcoming changes to our Customer Service schedule. On Thursday, December 23, the St. Cloud call and walk-in centers will be open from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

All OUC Customer Service call and walk-in centers will be closed:

Friday, December 24 • Saturday, December 25 • Friday, December 31 • Saturday, January 1



## Seasonal & Cold Weather Safety Tips



Stay safe this winter by following these tips from OUC:

- Don't overload extension cords or electrical outlets.
- Before stringing outdoor lights, check for overhead power lines.
- Make sure lights used to decorate the outside of the house are approved for outdoor use.
- Check all light strands for cracked or broken plugs, frayed insulation or bare wires. Worn cords can cause fires. Discard damaged sets of lights.
- Check batteries regularly to make sure smoke detectors are working.
- Keep portable heaters at least three feet away from furniture, bedding, walls, clothing and other flammable items.
- Keep candles away from trees, draperies and other flammable items; and never leave lit candles unattended.
- Make sure your chimney flue is open before using and use a safety screen for protection from flames and embers.

For more safety tips, visit [www.OUC.com](http://www.OUC.com).

## Special Reminder for Medical Alert Customers

For customers who use heart monitors, oxygen concentrators or other life-sustaining equipment, uninterrupted electrical service is critically important. By enrolling in OUC's Medical Alert Program, customers can receive special consideration for their accounts.

It's important to remember that unforeseen circumstances, such as severe weather, can result in the temporary loss of power. Customers using medically necessary devices are reminded to have an alternative plan such as relocation, backup battery power or a generator available for unexpected outages.

Call Customer Service at **407.957.7373** to learn more.



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