



CONNECTIONS

News and Information from OUC—The *Reliable One* | JANUARY 2014

INSIDE

OUC's Budget Billing
Avoid Wait When You Call
Free Ways to Pay
Stay Safe This Winter
Tax Refund You Deserve



Simplify Bills with OUC's Budget Billing

Sign up for OUC's Budget Billing program and take the surprise out of your monthly utilities bills. Budget Billing stabilizes your monthly electric payments throughout the course of the year.

This free program:

- Eliminates the seasonal ups and downs of utility bills
- Keeps your bill at a fixed monthly dollar amount
- Assists you in planning and balancing your monthly budgets

To enroll, simply log into or sign up for a [myOUC online profile](#) at www.ouc.com and complete the Budget Billing form. You can choose to un-enroll at any time.

Avoid the Wait When You Call

USE THE PRIMARY NUMBER ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACCOUNT.

With OUC's automated phone system, you can make a payment, start, stop or move service, report an outage and more. **Whether you need to check your balance or report an outage, calling from the primary phone number associated with your account helps you complete your request faster.** You can update the phone number on your account at any time over the phone or by logging into myOUC at www.ouc.com.

Advanced voice recognition, touch tone options and new menu options allow you to manage your account and services without having to speak to a customer service agent.

If you do need to contact us, our agents are available from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday by emailing customerservice@ouc.com or calling **407-423-9018 in Orlando/Orange County** and **407-957-7373 in St. Cloud/Osceola County**. For the shortest possible wait, the best time to call is before 9 a.m. All calls are answered in the order they are received.



Free Ways to Pay

OUC offers a variety of free payment options that help take the stress out of paying your monthly utility bill. Our e-Check service lets you pay your bill online with a check 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your payment is credited immediately, and best of all, the service is free.

Or sign up for our free automatic bill payment system **AutoPay** and never worry about missing your payment date again. **AutoPay** allows OUC to deduct your monthly utilities statement amount directly from your checking or savings account. For more payment options, visit www.ouc.com/waystopay.

Stay Safe This Winter

Central Florida is known for mild winters, but if the temperatures do drop, remember these important tips to keep your family and your home safe:

- Read the manufacturer's instruction manual before using any space heater. Check to make sure the heater bears the mark of a certified testing organization.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs.
- Keep space heaters away from areas with water. Check your manual to be sure the heater is intended to be used in locations such as bathrooms.
- Don't use space heaters in rooms where children are unsupervised. Children may

stick their fingers or other objects through the protective guards, causing burns or shock.

- Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Don't use them to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Plug portable space heaters directly into an outlet; do not use an extension cord.
- Make certain the circuit into which you plug a space heater can adequately and safely handle the added demand.
- Unplug and safely store portable space heaters when not in use.

Go to www.ouc.com/wintersafety for more safety and energy-saving tips.



Get the Tax Refund You Deserve – for FREE!



This year hard-working Central Floridians (and those who worked at any time in 2013) may qualify for a tax refund of up to \$6,044 through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

If you qualify, the money is easy to claim. Specialists at more than 30 FREE tax preparation sites located throughout Central Florida are ready to help. Don't spend hundreds of dollars filing your taxes when you can file for free and receive 100 percent of your refund quickly and easily – usually within 10 day or less.

To qualify for the EITC, you must meet the following requirements:

- Have earned income from employment or self-employment (at any time in 2013)
- Have a valid Social Security number
- Must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year, or a nonresident alien married to a U.S. citizen, or resident alien and filing a joint return

If you qualify and have already filed your taxes, you can re-file for this year and the past three years to claim your refund. That could result in more than \$20,000 for you.

See if you qualify for the EITC and find a FREE tax preparation site near you. Visit www.hfw.org, text "MyMoney" to 898-211 or simply dial 2-1-1.



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