

November 9, 2021

Subject: Gas price impact on your utility bill 2021-2022 heating season

Dear Crooks Municipal Utilities gas customer:

As the cold season is fast approaching and homes will be heated again, we wanted to inform you of recent developments in the cost for natural gas. Crooks Municipal Utilities, as well as other utility companies, has been exposed to commodity cost increases that have occurred over the course of this year. As noted by SD Public Utilities Commission Chairman, Chris Nelson, “South Dakota’s regulated natural gas utilities, including MidAmerican Energy Co., Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., and NorthWestern Energy, are currently projecting bill increases for residential customers of at least 50% to 100% compared to the bills seen between November and February of the 2020-2021 heating season.”

Crooks Municipal Utilities’ contractor locked-in 108% of average volume for the upcoming heating season, which protects customers and ensures rate price consistency. During a recent discussion with the City’s gas contractor, Crooks Municipal Utilities attempted to determine a tentative increase of natural gas for our customers. The increase projected for the upcoming heating season is estimated to be at least 50%.

Crooks Municipal Utilities is currently exploring the option to lock in additional volumes of natural gas for the 2021-2022 heating season to maintain stable rates and minimize exposure to adverse events such as the February gas spike experienced this year. Please be advised Crooks Municipal Utilities has no control nor the ability to prevent a similar scenario as had happened in February, as those extreme factors were outside of our control.

In order to mitigate the impact of increasing prices, you can do the following things:

- Reduce the temperature on the thermostat
- Conserve natural gas by using natural gas appliances sensibly
- Ensure your home is well-insulated (windows, doors, and etc.)
- Change furnace filters regularly

Below are useful links to resources and news articles (news articles are shared for informational purposes only and sharing does not constitute endorsement):

[Government-sponsored websites:](#)

[SD PUC announcement 10/05/21](#)

[Energy Information Administration - Factors affecting natural gas prices](#)

Local news media:

[Argus Leader - recent article](#)

[Keloland 10/05/2021 news story](#)

[Dakota News Now 10/13/2021 news story](#)

If you are concerned you may be unable to pay your heating bill, the following resources may be of assistance:

[Department of Social Services - Energy Assistance program](#)

[Interlakes Community Action - Emergency Utility Assistance](#)

[Minnehaha County Human Services](#)

In addition to the above referenced resources, Crooks Municipal Utilities offers budget billing and payment arrangements to its customers. If you would like to explore these options, please contact the Crooks Municipal Office at 605-543-5238 or email us at utilities@cityofcrooks.net.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Crooks Municipal Utilities

