

LIGHT LINES

Newsletter of the Sterling Municipal Light Department

December 2018 Edition

General Manager: Sean Hamilton Light Board Chairman: Joe Curtin; Vice Chairman: Brian Pierce; Clerk: Eric Darlington

General Manager's Report December 2018

Solar Array and Battery Storage Projects Located in Sterling

Community Solar Plus Storage Project – We are happy to report that in November we signed up our 400th and final subscriber to the 1 MW Solar with 1MW/2 MWHRS of battery storage located on the roof top of the LKQ building on Chocksett Road. This is the first Community Solar with Storage Project in Massachusetts. This project will provide 25% of the energy needs in solar to the subscribers in the ***Community Solar Program***. To date his project also provided transmission savings of over \$141,221.00 to the ratepayers of Sterling.

DOER Community Clean Energy Resiliency Initiative Battery Storage Project - As of October 31, 2018 the Battery Storage Project has provided transmission savings and arbitrage gains to Sterling ratepayers in the amount of \$734,378.00 since it began operating in December of 2016. This project continues to be a model to reduce transmission costs and to shift energy needs to times when costs are much lower. This project has been visited by fifteen different countries, twenty-five electric utilities, representatives from Puerto Rico, Alaska and the General Accounting Office out of Washington, D.C. The project has received four major awards and has been featured in numerous news articles, including Barron's Financial, and has been presented at over twenty-five conferences and webinars along with a video that has been circulated throughout the world.

LED Floodlight Program - The SMLD has begun a new floodlight change out program (effective 10/01/2018) to replace all floodlights in the Town of Sterling with LED fixtures. This will reduce energy consumption by about 67% per fixture and will reduce the cost to the town, residents and businesses that lease them. This program started with the Town Department buildings and is expected to be complete in 2019.

Streetlight LED Upgrade Complete - In FY2013 the SMLD billed the town of Sterling \$36,643.00 for 489 streetlights. During that time the SMLD and the Town of Sterling sat down to look at ways to reduce the streetlight budget. We agreed on a plan to change out the high-pressure sodium (HPS) and mercury vapor streetlights to light emitting diode (LED) streetlight, reducing energy consumption by around 60%. We also completed a full audit of all streetlights. At the request of some customers, the Sterling Select Board agreed to take back the lights that customers adopted after being turned off many years ago. We are happy to report the LED streetlight change-out project is complete and the new FY2020 streetlight budget is \$16,595.00 for 558 lights, a savings of over \$20,000.00. The success of this project comes about by the support of the Energy Committee and the work that they did to secure a \$100,000.00 MLP grant that we received and the SMLD Board of Commissioners who pledged the SMLD labor as part of the in-kind contribution to the grant.

Energy Efficiency Program Continues - The Energy Committee, with the support of the SMLD Board of Commissioners, is continuing to change out lighting fixtures and bulbs in the municipal buildings to LED that will reduce the overall maintenance and operation cost to the taxpayers of Sterling.

Sterling Municipal Light Department, 50 Main Street, Sterling, MA 01564-2129

Telephone: 978-422-8267 Web: www.energysterling.com

Normal Business Hours: Mon– Thurs 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Friday 7:30-11:30a.m. Full 24-hour coverage for power emergencies

Please call 978-422-8267. After normal business hours Sterling Police Dispatch at 978-422-7331.

PPA - Many customers inquire as to why the Purchase Power Adjustment (PPA) charge on their bill fluctuates each month. The reason is, that each year we budget kwhrs for the upcoming year along with the expected cost. The budget numbers are then reconciled monthly. Many times, due to weather changes (especially during periods of cold weather or high humidity like this past summer) we need to purchase additional kwhrs that are outside our normal contracts at a time when the energy market prices are at their highest. This will result in a positive PPA adjustment. We also have periods where the weather may be milder than normal or excess hydro or solar production. During these times we will not need to purchase additional kwhrs and may even sell some back to the market resulting in a credit on your bill.

The SMLD will not call you to make a payment over the phone. Be aware of scammers. Hang up and call us at 978-422-8267 or after hours call Sterling Dispatch at 978-422-7331.

From Our Operations Department - Over the last few months the SMLD Line Crew has installed 13 new poles along Route 140 from North Oakdale Cutoff up to Four Sons Way. This is the start of a reconductoring project that will help in the efforts of reducing wildlife and vegetation contact outages in this area. The existing powerline cable is bare and unprotected therefore has a higher risk of incidental contact outages. The replacement cable will have a protective coating over the conductor that helps to reduce the risk of incidental contact outages. In addition to the upgrades in hardware and wildlife guards, this project will help in the efforts to greatly reduce this area's outages from wildlife and vegetation contacts. The SMLD will be working in this area along with the Sterling Police Department and other town officers on detail. We ask that you give our officers and linemen working on this project safe and adequate space when driving in this area. Thank you and Happy Holidays from everyone here at the Sterling Light Department.

From Our Customer Service Department – As our Customer Service Department continues to provide you with the best possible service, we would like to make you aware of some services that the SMLD offers.

- ***Customer Payment and Usage Portals***
- ***Budget Plan Options***
- ***Several Payment Options Including Free ACH Payments***
- ***Paperless Billing***
- ***Free Home Energy Audits – Call 888-333-7525 to schedule an appointment***
- ***REBATES: Energy Star Appliances / Wi-Fi Thermostats / Pool Pump / Central Air / Ductless Mini Split Heat Pump / Air Sources Heat Pump***
- ***Vehicle Rebates on the Chevy Bolt and the Nissan Leaf***
- ***Community Solar Program (currently taking names for waiting list)***
- ***Sponsor of the Neighbor-To-Neighbor Fund (Call us for sign up)***

Visit the customer portal @ www.energysterling.com or call our office at 978-422-8267 to update contact information on your account such as phone numbers, email address or other.

Residents who rely on life supporting medical equipment should contact our office to be put on our Power Priority List. This list is shared with our Police and Fire Departments for follow up in emergency situations.

Please stop by the office to pick up a free 2019 SMLD calendar.

We hope you are enjoying the Holiday Lights on the Town Common.

Wishing you a Happy and Safe Holiday Season,



**Sean Hamilton
General Manager**

**Public Power
“Owned by the People We Serve”**