

# Utility Needs in Bruce and Grey Counties

July 1 2015 – June 30 2016



## Introduction

This report was written and released by the United Way of Bruce Grey.

The United Way is extremely grateful to all the utility companies, energy sector regulators, social service agencies and local charities that form a unique web of support to the community.

Special thank you to:

- ♥ Grey County Social Services
- ♥ Bruce County Social Services
- ♥ Y Housing
- ♥ The Salvation Army Wiarton

We also acknowledge the patience and strength of the residents of our community that are experiencing energy poverty. They trust us to help them, they trust us with their stories and they trust us with their emotional and physical wellbeing.

### Do the grants make a significant difference to the recipient?

#### **211 Leap files for electricity\***

28% of applicants had their bills paid in full  
22% had less than \$100 to pay after Leap help  
24% had the amount owing at least cut in half  
22% had their bills reduced by 25% only  
3% were over \$5 000

#### **77 Leap files for natural gas\***

74% of applicants had their bills paid in full  
15% had less than \$100 to pay after Leap help  
11% had the amount owing at least cut in half

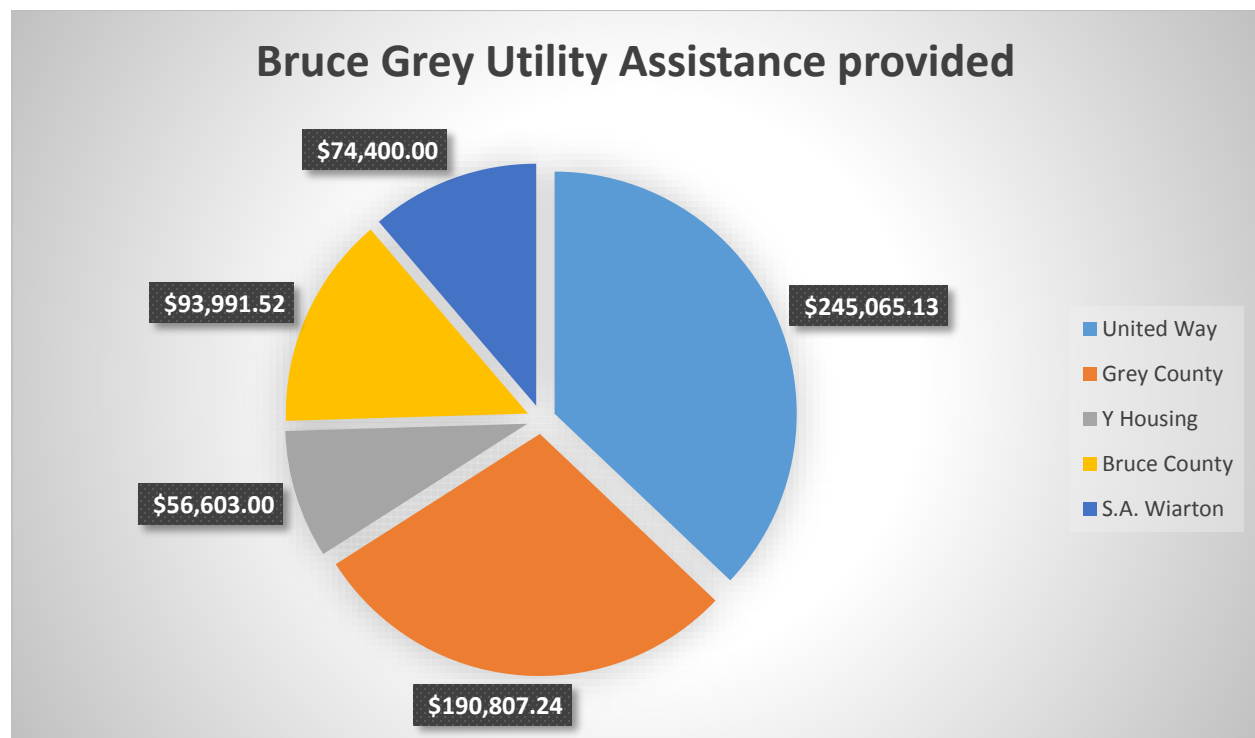
\*January to June 2016 and UWBG files only

## Utility Needs in Bruce and Grey Counties

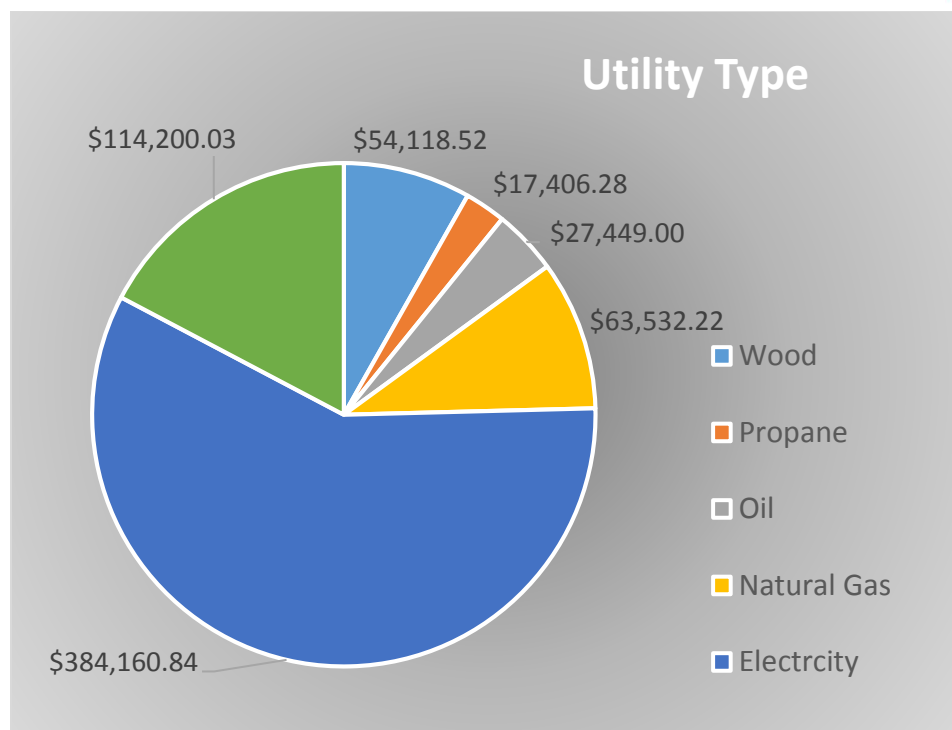
July 1 2015 – June 30 2016

Close to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million dollars was spent by area social service agencies and charities helping people stay connected to their utilities as well as providing heat in the past 12 months.

For the 2015-2016 winter (July 1-June 30) the United Way has gathered data from social services agencies and other charities who have provided support to people experiencing energy poverty. This report does not capture data of churches and friends and family members who also assisted people with their arrears.



United Way	\$ 245,065.13
Grey County	\$ 190,807.24
Y Housing	\$ 56,603.00
Bruce County	\$ 93,991.52
S.A. Wiarton	\$ 74,400.00
	\$ 660,866.89



		total
8%	Wood	\$ 54,118.52
3%	Propane	\$ 17,406.28
4%	Oil	\$ 27,449.00
10%	Natural Gas	\$ 63,532.22
58%	Electricity	\$ 384,160.84
17%	Other/undefined	\$ 114,200.03
		\$ 660,866.89

### Funding Streams:

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) – both County Social Services Departments: Sustainable Housing Benefit (Grey County) & Housing Stability Fund (Bruce County):

Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) – funded by electricity and natural gas companies as mandated by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB)

Homeless Prevention Strategy (HPS) – Federal grant awarded to the United Way of Bruce Grey to assist with utility bills

Fundraising – United Way and the Salvation Army fundraise to assist families with Wood, Other, Oil and Propane (WOOP)



## Rural pays almost double for delivery

<b>Delivery Rates</b>	<b>Urban High Density</b>	<b>Medium Density</b>	<b>Low Density</b>
Distribution service charge (\$ / month)	\$ 22.86	\$ 30.88	\$ 43.32
Distribution volume charge (metered usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 0.016	\$ 0.030	\$ 0.043
Transmission connection charge (adjusted usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 0.0049	\$ 0.0048	\$ 0.0046
Transmission network charge (adjusted usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 0.0069	\$ 0.0068	\$ 0.0065
Smart metering entity charge (\$ / month)	\$ 0.79	\$ 0.79	\$ 0.79
Adjustment Factor	1.06	1.08	1.11

<b>750 Kw monthly usage: prior to actual cost of electricity</b>	<b>\$ 44.50</b>	<b>\$ 62.72</b>	<b>\$ 84.46</b>
Distribution service charge (\$ / month)	\$ 22.86	\$ 30.88	\$ 43.32
Distribution volume charge (metered usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 12.00	\$ 22.35	\$ 32.03
Transmission connection charge (adjusted usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 3.68	\$ 3.60	\$ 3.45
Transmission network charge (adjusted usage - ¢ / kWh)	\$ 5.18	\$ 5.10	\$ 4.88
Smart metering entity charge (\$ / month)	\$ 0.79	\$ 0.79	\$ 0.79

Adjustment Factor

Source: <http://www.hydroone.com/MyHome/MyAccount/UnderstandMyBill/Pages/ResidentialDeliveryRates.aspx>

## Those that heat with electricity will continue to face significant costs.

Utilizing Hydro One's 'Smart Meter Lane' online power estimator we've made the following calculations

	Daily usage in KW	Monthly KW	Time of use factors		Est total monthly cost
			weekdays	weekends holidays	
baseboard heater	24	720	\$ 2.92	\$ 2.09	\$ 79.30
gas/propane/wood furnace	4	120	\$ 0.49	\$ 0.35	\$ 13.30

Source: Smart Meter Lane <http://www.ieso.ca/house/hydroone/default.htm>



## **Global Adjustment Rate**

Introduced in 2005 the Global Adjustment can be a credit or a charge to the customer to account for the difference between the spot price of electricity and the rates paid to various regulated and non-regulated generators across Ontario.

Via Global News: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2839995/what-is-the-global-adjustment-fee-the-mysterious-cost-ontario-hydro-customers-must-pay/>

- But for residential customers and small businesses, the fee is hidden – appearing on your electricity bill as a part of the per kilowatt hour charge.
- The difference between what the IESO pays energy producers for the electricity they produce, known as the contracted rate, and the actual fair market value of this electricity,
- Residential customers and small businesses in Ontario paid an average of 7.9 cents per kilowatt hour in Global Adjustment fees last year.

So for every \$100 in usage that appears on your electricity bill, \$77 of that is the Global Adjustment fee. Meaning the cost of electricity use is only \$23.

## **Conservation:**

VIA OEB April 14 news release – included at the end of this report

- Household consumption has been declining and successful conservation programs are a contributing factor. As a result, the OEB is now using 750 kWh per month, down from 800 kWh, to represent typical household monthly consumption for comparison purposes.
- The typical Ontario TOU (time of use) household uses about two-thirds of its power during off-peak hours, and the remainder in near equal amounts during mid-peak and on-peak times

“Ontarians consumed less electricity than expected over the recent milder winter. As a result of lower usage, Regulated Price Plan (RPP) prices did not recover the full cost of serving RPP customers. One of the main reasons prices are increasing in May is to recover this shortfall.”

Ontario Energy Board Press release April 14 2016

## **Data Insights from 2015-16 July to June**

### **United Way of Bruce Grey Utility Assistance program only**

Total files processed 2015-2016: 539 up 36 from the year before

#### **Other data points of interest**

##### **Demographics**

- Seniors assisted: 44
- Adults assisted: 752
- Children assisted: 542

Average Income: \$17 500

Average grant increased from \$414 to \$465

133 OESP (Ontario Energy Savings Program) applications were processed by the United Way

- Applicants with no computers
- Applicants who have not completed 2014 taxes
- Applicants who have had a change in income since last tax filing
- Applicants who needed troubleshoot with the application

#### **Insights from the frontline**

- Need continues to grow
- Conservation programs work, but conservation can lead to increases in cost – eg. Hydro One May 1 rate increase – which leads to greater frustration
- When a client is disconnected, all responding agencies work as quickly as they can, resulting in reconnection, but demand for the programs is overloading the system and it can take days for a utility to respond to inquiries
- Sewer and water disconnections are a concern for Owen Sound and Meaford, and where funding and criteria meet, we are able to prevent and reconnect disconnected households
- Suite metering – apartment buildings – are emerging as a challenge as current low income regulations do not affect them, as a result excessive fees could be a challenge
- Over 300 1:1 financial literacy (budgeting etc) sessions were conducted

Bayshore Broadcasting news item - [http://www.country105.ca/news\\_item.php?NewsID=86121](http://www.country105.ca/news_item.php?NewsID=86121)

Identifies a 40% jump in calls for assistance to the LEAP crisis line



## **By the utility:**

### **Hydro One:**

- Funding is provided by both Hydro One, and the United Way of Bruce Grey
- 219 files were processed up 30 from the previous winter
- Arears in 2014/15: \$169 370
- Arears in 2015/16: \$176 555
- An increase of just over \$7 000
- Grants provided: an increase of \$22 300 going from almost \$80 000 to \$101 700

### **Union Gas**

- Funding is provided by both Union Gas, and the United Way of Bruce Grey
- 124 files were processed up 18 from the previous year
- Arears in 2014/15: \$56 750
- Arears in 2015/16: \$61 400
- An increase of just over \$4 000
- Grants provided: an increase of \$2 500 going from almost \$45 000 to \$47 500

### **Wood Other Oil and Propane (WOOP)**

From 2014 to 2016 the United Way had a federally funded homelessness prevention grant to assist in paying for oil, wood, propane and other urgent utility needs such as top grants to stop disconnects or to have people reconnected. This grant ended in March of 2016, leaving the United Way challenged to meet the ongoing need.

The United Way is always on the lookout for grants and other partnerships to assist with the “unfunded” utility needs.

Total for WOOP:

2014/15 grants: \$95 200

2015/16 grants: \$95 900

### **Changes to the program**

**Westario Power** – data via Bruce County Social Services

Provided \$19 500 in support

Westario Power provided Bruce County Social Services their funding for the 2016 year. Data provided to Bruce County Council in July of 2016 is included in the report where noted.

Notes:

Westario Power data has been removed from the year to year comparison as to include it would indicate a drop in utility needs which is not reflective of the true community experience.



## Other supports and programs

211 is a terrific resource for finding different programs in our community to help with the day to day challenges. However, just to lend a little insight into what you might be missing, here is a start on some of the more vital and most used programs in Grey Bruce. THESE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLY TO HOUSEHOLDS THAT FIT THE LOW INCOME CRITERIA.

**Credit Canada:** Can assist households with arrears over \$2000 without negatively affecting credit scores 1-855-726-7385

**LEAP:** Will pay up to \$500.00 every 12 months on an electricity bill. If you *heat* with electricity, it is \$600.00. The Household Income needs to be below a certain income level to qualify. Can be done by phone directly with Simcoe County, or at an agency in Grey Bruce. Call 1-855-487-5327 to register first.

**Winter Warmth:** Will pay up to \$500.00 every 12 months against a Union Gas bill. The Household Income needs to be below a certain income level to qualify. United Way Bruce Grey administers this program. Call 211 to register first.

**Utility Assistance Program:** The United Way Bruce Grey fundraises for this program and will pay up to \$500.00 every 12 months for heating (wood, oil, propane). The Household Income needs to be below a certain income level to qualify. Call 211 to register first.

**O.E.S.P.:** Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, low income households can now receive a monthly credit on their Hydro Bill of, at least \$30.00. The credit will continue for 2, 3 or 5 years, depending on income. Call 211 to register first.

**Sustainable Housing Benefit (Grey County):** The County offers a grant to help with emergency housing needs including critical repairs, rent arrears, utility costs, moving expenses etc. Call 519-376-5744.

**Housing Stability Fund (Bruce County):** The County offers a grant to help with emergency housing needs including critical repairs, rent arrears, utility costs, moving expenses etc. Call 1-800-265-3022 or 396-3450

**Ontario Renovates:** Both Counties offer a grant to help with major critical home repairs and/or renovations such as roofing, heating, plumbing etc. Call 1-800-265-3022 or 396-3450 in Bruce or 376-2208 in Grey.

**Ecofitt (Natural Gas customers only):** If you heat with natural gas, the Ecofitt program will come into your home to assess your heating efficiency. They will insulate basement to attic if that is the cause of heat loss, draft proof doors and windows and weather strip where needed. Call 211 to register first.

**HAP/Greensaver/SaveOnEnergy:** The Home Assistance Program is focused on helping all electricity users to cut down on their usage by way of replacing old appliances such as a fridge, freezer, air conditioner and de-humidifier. Call 211 to register first.



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**For Immediate Release**

## **OEB Sets New Summer Electricity Prices for Households and Small Businesses**

**Toronto, ON** – April 14, 2016 – Today, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) announced new time-of-use (TOU) electricity prices for households and small businesses starting May 1. The price is increasing by approximately \$3.13 per month on the “Electricity” line, and about 2.5% on the total bill, for a household that consumes 750 kWh per month.

Ontarians consumed less electricity than expected over the recent milder winter. As a result of lower usage, Regulated Price Plan (RPP) prices did not recover the full cost of serving RPP customers. One of the main reasons prices are increasing in May is to recover this shortfall.

New summer TOU hours will also take effect May 1. This chart outlines TOU prices and the times they are effective as of May 1, 2016:

Category	Time(s) – Summer (May 1-Oct 31)	Price /kWh	Change
Off-peak	Weekdays 7p.m.-7a.m. All day weekends and holidays	8.7¢/kWh	0.4¢
Mid-peak	Weekdays 7-11a.m. and 5-7p.m.	13.2¢/kWh	0.4¢
On-Peak	Weekdays 11a.m.-5p.m.	18.0¢/kWh	0.5¢

The ratio between on and off-peak prices is more than 2:1 meaning that the off-peak price is less than half the cost of the on-peak. This means customers who shift use to evenings and weekends will see a reward for doing so.

The OEB reviews electricity prices twice each year based on updated cost forecasts from the Independent Electricity System Operator and prices are designed to recover the actual cost of electricity over the forecast period.



### Quick facts

- Household consumption has been declining and successful conservation programs are a contributing factor. As a result, the OEB is now using 750 kWh per month, down from 800 kWh, to represent typical household monthly consumption for comparison purposes. More information about this change is available through a Report of the Ontario Energy Board [Defining Ontario's Typical Electricity Customer](#).
- The typical Ontario TOU household uses about two-thirds of its power during off-peak hours, and the remainder in near equal amounts during mid-peak and on-peak times.
- Time-of-use prices vary based on when electricity is used. They encourage consumers to use power when electricity market prices are lower.
- These price changes only affect households and small businesses that buy their electricity from their local utility and have a smart, or interval, meter. Customers who have signed a contract with an energy company do not pay these rates.
- TOU prices for May 1 have been set so that they collectively recover the forecast cost of power and account for differences that build up over time between actual and forecast costs.
- Some customers remain on "Tiered Pricing" and summer rate information for these customers is available in the OEB's backgrounder.

The Ontario Energy Board is an independent and impartial public regulatory agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a sustainable and efficient energy sector that provides consumers with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

### Social and Resources:

[@OntEnergyBoard](http://OntarioEnergyBoard.ca)

Graphic of Time-of-Use Price chart:

[http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Documents/For+Consumers/TOU\\_prices\\_Summer.pdf](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Documents/For+Consumers/TOU_prices_Summer.pdf)

Electricity Prices Explained video: <http://youtu.be/zVdm5Bl4gU8>

Time-of-use video: <http://youtu.be/bJ04SSArI6c>

Backgrounder:

[http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/oeb/Documents/Press+Releases/bg\\_RPP-TOU\\_20160414.pdf](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/oeb/Documents/Press+Releases/bg_RPP-TOU_20160414.pdf)

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