



KERRVILLE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD

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KPUB APPROVES NEW CHARITY PROGRAM FOR NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

June 30, 2020—The ever-evolving COVID-19 health crisis is not close to being over, including the financial hardships that so many are experiencing across the country and in our own community. The Kerrville Public Utility Board (KPUB) took action back in March to ensure customers had uninterrupted access to utility services, suspending disconnects and late fees for customers with past due accounts. As a result, those past due bills have been accumulating each month for many of the utility’s customers.

In August, KPUB will be transitioning to return to its normal billing and collection operations for customers—but life has not resumed back to normal for our community just yet. As a community-owned, not-for-profit utility, helping our neighbors is something important to KPUB because we are your neighbors, too. In response to the growing need within our community, the KPUB Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a new program fund at its June 17, 2020, board meeting that offers a solution to residential customers struggling to pay their electric bills.

The utility will launch a new Change for Charity program over the next month where funds will be collected by automatically rounding up the change on residential customers’ monthly electric bills to the next whole dollar. For example, if your utility bill is \$87.63, it would be rounded to \$88 even. The additional \$0.37 cents would be placed into the Change for Charity program fund.

“The Public Utility Commission recently launched an electric relief program to help Texans experiencing economic hardships due to COVID-19, and KPUB wanted a program in place for us to follow suit,” said Mike Wittler, KPUB general manager & CEO. “The Change for Charity program allows neighbors to help neighbors during a time of need. Customer contributions are not expected to match up to the funding that would be produced by the PUC’s standard program, so KPUB will be providing additional funding estimated at \$4,000 to \$6,000 per month.”

The average customer contribution per program participant is just \$0.50 a month or \$6 in change a year. While that sounds like a small amount, the dollars add up quickly when many customers participate and will provide help for your neighbors in need within our community. The Change for Charity program will replace the utility’s former charity fund, Share the Light.



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The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a local nonprofit, will administer the Change for Charity program for KPUB at no additional cost and handle any requests for bill payment assistance. Eligibility will be granted exclusively for residential customers and qualified by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for income-eligible households within federal poverty-level guidelines and on a case-by-case emergency situation. Email instructions to apply can be found on their website at svdpndkerr.org/financial-aid.

The donation amount to the program fund will be shown on a residential customer's bill automatically. However, program participation is optional. If a customer does not want to participate in the program, they can opt-out by contacting KPUB's Customer Service Department at 830.257.3050, emailing custserv@kpub.com or through their online SmartHub account. Refunds will be granted upon request to any residential customers who would like their donation refunded back as a bill credit.

The KPUB Board of Trustees will evaluate the program's continuation when the City of Kerrville's emergency declaration is no longer in effect. If the KPUB Board of Trustees does choose to continue the program, any future program funds accumulated that are in excess of our community's need for electric bill assistance will be granted by a board-appointed committee to administer disbursements from the fund for charitable purposes in the KPUB service area.

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About KPUB

The Kerrville Public Utility Board (KPUB) was acquired by the City of Kerrville in 1987. KPUB serves approximately 22,750 customers throughout 146 square mile service area including Kerrville, Center Point, Ingram, Hunt, and surrounding areas in Kerr County. KPUB is overseen by a five-member board of trustees who serve without compensation and who are responsible to the City of Kerrville for the management and control of the system. KPUB is a responsive and efficient locally-owned provider of reliable, high-quality utility service at the lowest responsible price.