



Publisher's Pen

Dear Readers,

NOW I know why I never have time to do the important things. I am saddled with exercises in futility. Ludicrous workouts over nonsense.

To what do I refer, you ask? My electric bill. Your electric bill. *Everyone's* electric bill. APS and SRP both have "Time of Day Plans." The question is: Do *you* have enough time in *your* day to figure them out and make an educated decision? Do you even *want* to devote the time to studying and digesting Electric Usage 101?

Recently I received the "Electric Service Plans – The Power of Choice" booklet from APS. I would assume that by now, no doubt, you have received yours.

The cover letter reads, "A recent rate decision by the Arizona Corporation Commission will result in changes to a few of APS's residential rate plans. As part of these changes, the Demand Advantage Rate Plan, which you are currently on, will no longer be available as of July 1, 2008."

Surprise!

"While the Demand Advantage Rate Plan will be retired, APS does offer several other rate plans that *may* work well for your household and your lifestyle. For instance, APS offers four different Time-of-Use plans

that *may* help you save money on your monthly electric bill." Saving money is a *good* thing. It's the use of the word "may" that concerns me. I read on.

"With the Time-of-Use rate plans, the amount you pay for power depends on the time of day you use electricity.

"We understand different lifestyles require different rate plans, so we encourage you to learn more and compare which plan will work best for you. Here are several ways to help you make your choice:

- Review the enclosed rate brochure that describes all of our rate plans [a daunting task]
- Go to www.aps.com/rates to perform a rate comparison and select your new rate online [more technologically appropriate considering the era – still a daunting task]
- Call an APS customer associate 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week at (602) 371-3656 in the Phoenix Area [don't even want to go there!]

"After evaluating your rate options, please use the form on the following page to choose the plan that will work best for you...If you are not able to respond to change your plan before July 1, 2008, your service will be automatically transferred to our Combined Advantage 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. Rate Plan on that date.

"Thank you for your assistance in this matter. We appreciate your business."

Cudda fooled me!

LH and I spent a considerable amount of time one rainy Sunday (a rare and coveted commodity in this desert!) reviewing the plans and comparing online to decipher which would be the best for us.

We settled on either the "Combined Advantage 9 p.m. -

9 a.m." plan or the "Combined Advantage 7 p.m. - noon" plan.

Why am *I* not seeing an *advantage* to *any* of this??

We then proceed to compare one to the other. That was the point at which we both became so hysterical laughing that we were hard pressed to see through the tears that were running down our cheeks.

Now stay with me here: The peak rate was more expensive on the plan that we chose – but the off peak was less expensive. After looking at one – and then the other and then back again, we determined that it is apparently best to do laundry at midnight and do your major cooking at 3am. I am a night owl – but this is going a bit far, methinks.

So the forecast provided by APS on their rate comparison worksheet amounted to a \$4 net difference between the two plans for the entire next 12 months. Yup. You heard it here first. We spent a couple of hours on the biblical day of rest evaluating our options for a lousy FOUR DOLLARS for the ENTIRE YEAR!!!

Some choice.

Will you tell me puh-leeze why this has to be so complicated? To require customers to earn a Ph.D. in rate calculation in order to decipher their electric billing choices? Do the members of the Corporation Commission take pleasure in wasting the time of their captive audience? This is, after all, a monopoly. One cannot choose one's electricity provider as one can choose phone or high-speed Internet providers.

I am perplexed as to why we have to "choose a plan" at all. Why are we not charged in the most economical fashion for our electric usage? They even tell us that they have a record of

our usage over the past 20-plus years. So why not plug *that* into their formula, define which is the *best* plan for us, advise us of same and be done with it? Don't these people have anything better to do with their time than waste *ours*?

We go online to choose. The form states, "Rates can only be changed once every twelve months. Once this change is complete, you will not be eligible for a rate change for one year."

Add insult to injury, why don't you?

We press "submit."

"Meter Access Requirements" pops up. We must *guarantee* that there be safe unassisted access to meter for the meter reader so that (s)he may actually "touch the meter with an instrument." This means no dogs, no gates, no night watchman with a shotgun....

We agree. We guarantee.

"Please take time to fill out our survey. Your input will help us to better serve you in the future."

They have GOT to be kidding!

The survey asks for input on their website. The website is FINE. It's this whole cockamamie requirement to study electric rates and waste a perfectly good Sunday doing it that has sent us around the bend.

Time to open a bottle of wine and forget we wasted this most precious day!

Warmest Regards,

Hope H. Ozer
Publisher

What's on your mind?
editor@CITYSunTimes.com