

BRIGHT IDEAS

BELD
Braintree Electric
Light Department
and
BELD Broadband

A monthly newsletter for BELD customers

January 2006

When the weather outside is frightful...avoid indoor hazards while keeping warm by the fireplace

If you hate going out in a storm, you can stay warm and safe INSIDE by following the safety guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Although staying indoors will reduce the risk of automobile accidents and falls on the ice, **there are potential hazards inside as well.**

As more people rely on fireplaces and space heaters to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as does the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. If you use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating, **have your chimney or flue inspected each year.** Ask your local fire department to recommend an inspector, or find one in the yellow pages of your telephone directory under "chimney cleaning."

Install a smoke detector and a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector near the area to be heated when using a fireplace, wood stove, or kerosene heater. Test them monthly, and replace batteries twice a year. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a wood stove or space heater and **remember these safety tips:**

- Use fireplaces, wood stoves, or other combustion heaters only if they are **properly vented to the outside** and do not leak flue gas into the indoor air space.
- Do not burn paper in a fireplace.
- Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don't substitute.
- **Do not place a space heater within 3 feet of anything that may catch on fire,** such as drapes, furniture, or bedding, and never cover your space heater.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- **Make sure that the cord of an electric space heater is not a tripping hazard, but do not run the cord under carpets or rugs.**
- Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.
- Store a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher near the area to be heated.
- **Never use generators, grills, camp stoves, or similar devices indoors.**

Taking preventive action is your best defense against having to deal with extreme cold-weather conditions. By preparing your home for winter emergencies and by observing safety precautions during times of extremely cold weather, you can reduce the risk of weather-related health problems. Call BELD's Energy Advisor at 781/348-1032 if you have questions about home heating issues.

Thinking about making energy improvements?

If you're considering making energy improvements in your home, BELD's Energy Advisor can schedule a site visit to thoroughly evaluate your home's heating and hot water systems, shell insulation, appliances, windows, doors, and lighting. After conservation work is completed, we'll send an inspector to your home to make sure the job was done correctly.

Schedule a FREE energy audit and find out how you can make your home more energy efficient. Call your Energy Advisor now at 781/348-1032 to set up an appointment.

Cable customers: Time is running out on your FREE gift!

Did you get a new computer this holiday season? Well, BELD Broadband has another gift for you! **Cable customers who sign up for high-speed Internet service this month will enjoy FREE INSTALLATION—that's a \$50 savings!**

BELD Broadband's affordable high-speed Internet service offers **5 megabit downstream speeds, unlimited connection time, 6 e-mail boxes, 14 MB mail and Web space, and unlimited local-number access from locations across the country.** The service also includes state-of-the-art spam and virus blocking and access to ESPN360 and Braintree's Geographic Information System at no extra charge. **To take advantage of this offer please contact Customer Service at 781/348-BELD (2353) by January 31.**

Offer expires January 31, 2006. Offer available to new BELD Broadband Cable customers and existing cable customers only. Current BELD Broadband Internet customers are not eligible. Additional charges for equipment may apply. Service not available in all areas. Other restrictions may apply.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Special collection of computer monitors and TVs on January 28

The Friends of Thayer Public Library is conducting a special collection of CRTs, TVs, microwave ovens, small refrigerators, dehumidifiers, and cell phones on **Saturday, January 28**, in the **Town Hall parking lot**, 9 a.m.-noon. (In the event of a snow storm, the collection will take place Sunday, January 29.) This will be the only collection of these items until the May Household Hazardous Waste Day. The usual fee of \$10 for most items applies (\$15 for console TVs). **No hazardous waste will be accepted.** For more information, call 781/794-8237.

Open House at Saint Francis of Assisi School January 30 - February 3

Saint Francis of Assisi School will hold an Open House during Catholic Schools Week, **January 30 through February 3**, 9 a.m.-noon each day. Registration will be available, along with tours of the school. Those wishing to register should bring a birth certificate, a baptismal certificate (if applicable), immunization and physical records, report card/progress report, and national test scores (if applicable). There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$200. For additional information, contact Mrs. Daly at 781/848-0842, ext. 10.

B.A.S.E. 8th Annual Live Telethon/Auction

On **Sunday, February 12**, noon-5 p.m., at Braintree Town Hall, Braintree After School Enrichment (B.A.S.E.) will be holding our 8th Annual LIVE Telethon/Auction. Come on down to bid live or watch us on television and call in to bid. You can watch us on Comcast Channel 10 or BELD Broadband Channel 18. Up for auction are authentic New England Patriots, Boston Bruins, and Boston Red Sox items, along with gift certificates, gift baskets, and lots of other fun and exciting prizes for Valentines Day. Special Guest Emcee is Braintree's own Joe Amorosino from Channel 7. For more information or to

donate an auction item, please call Alysya Rynne, Meridith Duffy or Linda Merlo at 781/849-3484.

AARP Meeting February 21

Braintree AARP Chapter #4042 will hold its next meeting on **Tuesday, February 21**, 1:30 p.m., at the D.A.V. Hall, 788 Liberty Street, Braintree. The guest speaker will be Dr. Virginia Cummins, Director of Geriatrics at Milton Hospital, who will introduce to the group "10 things to help us stay healthy and be happy." Call Frank Bocchino at 781/848-4293 for more information.

"Circuit Breaker" tax credit for elders

Are you an elder with high real estate taxes and high water and sewer bills? **You may be eligible for a tax credit, the Massachusetts "Circuit Breaker" for elders.** Many who have not been required to file Massachusetts Income Taxes may qualify for a credit of up to \$840, simply by filing a state form. Eligibility requirements include:

- Homeowner or renter, not in subsidized housing
- Assessed value of home under \$600,000
- Over 65 years of age (if married, one spouse over 65)
- Income limits (including all taxable and non-taxable sources such as Social Security, Disability, Treasury Bills, etc.) as follows:
Single - under \$45,000
Head of Household - under \$56,000
Married, joint return - under \$67,000

For more information, contact the Council on Aging at 781/848-1963.

Mother's and Children's Group

The Braintree Mother's and Children's Group invites parents and their children aged 6 months through pre-school to meet weekly for adult conversation, child socialization, craft projects, and snacks. The group meets every Tuesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., September through June, in the lower level of the Emmanuel Parish Church, 519 Washington Street, Braintree. Contact Kelly McCauley-Amann at 781/356-3764.

BELD

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PAYMENT LOCATIONS

150 Potter Road
Our office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Customer Service is open until 7 p.m. on Thursday.

Drop boxes
Top of Potter Road & Town Hall.
Braintree Cooperative Bank
1010 Washington St.
372 Washington St.
Direct Payment
Call BELD at 781/348-2353.
Online payments
www.beld.com

BROADBAND HELP DESK

Mon-Fri: 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sat-Sun: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Public Meetings are usually held monthly. Call 781/348-2353 or check www.beld.com to confirm time and date.

COMMISSIONERS

Thomas Reynolds, Chair
Guy Luke, Vice Chair
Anthony Agnitti, Secretary

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Monday, January 2
New Year's Day (observed)
Monday, January 16
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, February 20
Presidents' Day



**Please keep
the path to
your meter
clear!**

**Our meter readers
need to be able to
access your meter to
make sure your
electricity usage is
read accurately.
Please be sure to
keep the way clear
of snow and
overgrown shrubs.**