

# POWER Connection

Belmont Light Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2015

## Serving Many Satisfied Customers!

We are pleased to share that the results of a customer satisfaction survey conducted in March and April 2015 indicate that Belmont Light is doing a great job of carrying out our mission to provide you with reliable electric power and superior customer service. Some of the highlights of the survey, which engaged a random sample of 400 customers via telephone, are:

- When compared to other utilities in the area that provide gas, phone, cable, and water services, Belmont Light is most highly rated.
- **91.8%** of respondents view themselves as having a favorable relationship with Belmont Light, describing themselves as either advocates of Belmont Light, or loyal and satisfied customers.
- Since our last customer survey, conducted in 2011, there were impressive improvements in Belmont Light's perception as a **progressive** (+ 14%), **reliable** (+ 13.2%) and **professional** (+ 12.9%) organization.
- Despite a 2014 rate increase, over 70% of respondents believe that Belmont Light does **all it can to keep customer rates low**. Respondents requested even more communications about the reasons behind rate changes.
- Participants have a very positive perception of our staff, describing us as **honest and possessing integrity** (90.3%); **helpful and knowledgeable** (90.7%); **effective in communicating with customers** (87.1%); and **responsive** (86.8%).
- More than **86%** of customers were satisfied with recent customer service and field visits.
- Respondents reported a solid awareness of our energy efficient lighting, appliance rebate, and no-cost home energy audit programs.

The survey also revealed opportunities for improvement. As a direct response to customer feedback, our goals over the next year will include providing more compelling reasons for you to visit our website, increasing awareness of our Green Choice Program ([www.belmontlight.com](http://www.belmontlight.com) > Energy Solutions > Residential Programs), keeping our rates stable and reasonable, and continually conveying the benefits of having of a community-owned electric utility. We will also supply you with even more tips and information on how to save on your electric bill through energy conservation.

More detailed survey results will be publicly presented at an upcoming Municipal Light Board meeting. Our website will be updated with scheduling information as soon as possible.

Belmont Light thanks all of its customers who generously allocated their time to responding to the survey. Your feedback is valuable and will be carefully considered as we continue to provide you superior service.

## Save on Home Improvements and Reduce Your Energy Bills

A limited number of grants for insulation and heat pump heating systems are still available to Belmont residents through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.

Belmont Light's Energy Efficiency Grant Program offers discounts on weatherization services and high efficiency heating and cooling systems. For a limited time, participants can take advantage of \$1,500 worth of weatherization services for a \$299 co-pay and/or save up to \$1,500 on heat pumps. Aside from these initial discounts, the Energy Efficiency Grant program also offers participants:

- **Improved comfort in your home.** When you update your home's insulation, you will see a reduction of bothersome drafts, better heat retention in winter months, and more effective cooling during summer months.
- **Reduced energy costs.** Improving the efficiency of your home is one of the best ways to reduce energy waste and save on energy bills.
- **Potential for increased home value.** Certain energy efficiency measures may raise the market value of your property.

Grants will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, require a pre-approval and will be available until all funds are awarded.

For information and visit [www.BelmontLightEnergyGrant.com](http://www.BelmontLightEnergyGrant.com) or contact **Sagewell, Inc.**, the program administrator, at 617-963-8141 or [support@sagewell.com](mailto:support@sagewell.com).

## Belmont Substation & Transmission Project



As the spring of 2015 finally melted away the last remnants of the snowiest winter in Massachusetts' history, significant progress was made on Belmont's substation and transmission line project.

Permitting for the overall project is now 95% complete, with ISO-NE having approved the construction of the transmission line and the MA DPU expected to issue approval in May. The completion of these two tasks represents the achievement of two major project milestones. The project's engineering is now 90% complete and procurement is 85% complete, meaning that the construction phase of the project is now officially underway—and already 10% complete.

The demolition of the 20 Flanders Road site, the location of the new substation, is in its final stages.

Final completion is scheduled to occur in May and June. After a competitive bidding process that wrapped up in January, the construction contract for the new substation building was awarded to Boston Building & Bridge Corporation. Construction of the new substation building will begin on Flanders Road in May.

### Project Progress

Permitting	95% Complete
Engineering	90% Complete
Procurement	85% Complete
Construction	10% Complete

While construction of the substation building begins, the project team is also busy procuring contracts and supplies for the transmission line and planning for the substation's energization. Purchase orders for major transmission line equipment were recently issued. The project team's next steps will be to award a contract for installation of transmission line piping by June 2015 and a separate contract for installation of the substation's electrical power during the fall. It is expected that construction of the new substation building and the installation of the transmission line pipe will be finished by the end of 2015. Installation of the substation electrical power and the actual 115kV cable will then occur in the first quarter of 2016, with full energization on schedule for the summer of 2016.

Overall, the project continues to go well and we look forward to reporting on even more progress next quarter!

*Belmont Light's business office will be closed on the following dates:*

**Monday, May 25th - Memorial Day**

**Friday, July 3rd - Independence Day**

*If you have an emergency, please call Belmont Light at 617-993-2800.*

**BELMONT LIGHT**  
POWERING YOUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1898

40 Prince Street  
Belmont, MA 02478  
617-993-2800  
[www.belmontlight.com](http://www.belmontlight.com)

## Belmont Energy Committee Reducing Belmont's Travel-Related Emissions

Nearly one third of Belmont's climate change emissions come from the transportation sector, mostly from single-driver car trips. To meet our Climate Action Plan goals, we need to make some changes. The good news? Many people in town are helping, and the town is benefiting in many ways!

- Parents and schools are encouraging kids to walk to school as part of the state's Safe Routes to School program. It is healthy for kids, and fewer cars means less traffic, improving safety.
- The town engineer is overseeing projects to add and improve sidewalks and bike lanes. He also secured bike racks for every school, park, and commercial center in town.
- Pedestrian advocates created a walking map of Belmont, while the Health Department continues its Golden Shoe initiative.
- The town administrator helped bring 4 Zipcars to Belmont; each one removing about 15 private vehicles off the road.

We can do much more by creating more safe, off-road community paths; advocating for more and better train and bus service; incentivizing residents to purchase electric vehicles; hosting charging stations; providing town employees with outstanding commuter benefits; coordinating with neighboring towns on regional mobility solutions; matching commuters with ridesharing opportunities via apps; and making walking, biking, and taking transit fun by sponsoring contests.

In the meantime, we can all do our part by driving less, driving cleaner vehicles, and avoiding unnecessary idling.

*Submitted by Ian Todreas, Co-Chair, Belmont Energy Committee*

## Belmont Garden Tour – Saturday, June 13th

Belmont Garden Club presents "85th Anniversary Garden Tour" on Saturday, June 13, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Included are six private Belmont gardens and a public Woodland garden maintained by the Club.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and may be purchased by calling Loretta at 617-484-4889. On the day of the tour, maps and tickets will be available for \$30 at the Flett Room in the Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Ave from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

There will refreshments at one garden and educational handouts at another. The gardens are those of Belmont Garden Club members and residents of the town.

## Be Safe...Dig Safe

Belmont residents are reminded that Massachusetts law requires that anyone who digs must notify utility companies before starting any work. Dig Safe, a communications network assists excavators, contractors and property owners by notifying the appropriate utility before any digging begins. The area of excavation must be pre-marked using white stakes, paint or flags before notifying Dig Safe at 8-1-1.

Callers should provide information about the contractor, the work to be done, the location and the scope of the project. Dig Safe assigns a permit number as a confirmation. The utilities then visit the site and identify and mark the location of their underground facilities.

Member utilities use paint, stakes or flags to identify the location of their underground lines. Color codes are used to identify the type of utility:

Red – electric	Purple – reclaimed water
Yellow – gas, oil, steam	Green – sewer/drainage
Orange – communications	Pink – survey marks
Blue – potable water	White – proposed excavation

Massachusetts state law requires advance notice of at least 72 business hours (3 days), excluding weekends and holidays.

## Belmont Farmers' Market

Opening day for the Belmont Farmers' Market's 10th season is June 11. The Market is held every Thursday, from 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., June through October, rain or shine! Located in the rear parking lot behind Belmont Center, the Market offers a variety of organic and conventionally produced food in a range of prices. Visit [www.belmontfarmersmarket.org](http://www.belmontfarmersmarket.org) for vendors and updates.

Market Music will be back this year, along with chefs' tastings, art, and more. The Market accepts SNAP benefits (food stamps) and matches up to \$25 for each snap shopper each week, thanks to generous donations to the Market. To receive our weekly e-newsletter or for more specific questions, contact: [belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com).

A few large gardens will be showcased but also small gardens, to show the creativity that can occur in less spacious areas.

This fundraiser furthers the Club's scholarship and community beautification efforts. The Club's Community Planting committee works together with the Town's DPW to maintain various sites throughout town. Locations include many traffic islands and deltas, the Town Hall, the Veteran's War Memorial and the September 11th Memorial Garden located at the Wellington Station across from the stone railroad bridge on Concord Avenue.

*Submitted by Anne Lauriat, Belmont Garden Club*

## Celebrating Energy Conservation at Wellington School

Representatives from Belmont Light recently visited fourth graders and teachers Jess Endres (back row, second from left) and Samantha McCabe (back row, third from left), at Roger Wellington School to present them with a certificate honoring their local win of the PTA/PTO Green Alliance's Green Cup Energy Challenge for 2015. The students helped to reduce the school's electricity consumption by 18.2% over a four-week period, earning them the top finishing spot in Belmont and 9th place in the country for the energy conservation challenge. This was the second consecutive Green Cup Energy Challenge win for Wellington School. Last year, students and teachers there reduced energy consumption by over 13.6% during the competition.

General Manager Jim Palmer (back row, third from right in the photo) congratulated the students for their outstanding conservation efforts, highlighting the message that seemingly small changes can produce meaningful results when reducing energy waste. When Palmer asked the students what they did to achieve such great results, they offered an impressive plethora of answers, including always turning off lights in empty rooms, unplugging electronics after they used them, and checking in at the end of the school day to make sure that anything that used energy was properly shut off.

Also in attendance to congratulate the students and teachers were Belmont Light staff Becca Keane (back row, left), Executive Assistant and Communications Coordinator; Jim Palmer (back row, third from right), General Manager; Waseem Aldabagh (back row, second from right), Engineer; and Ed Crisafi (back row, right), Operations Manager.

