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The power is on in Wallingford...with low rates and dependability

July 17, 2014 - Connecticut

Wallingford has long been known for its low utility rates and, in fact, has the lowest electric rates in Connecticut. The town's forefathers were steadfast in their belief that since utilities are essential to sustaining life, municipal utility ownership positions the town to act and serve in the best interests of its businesses and residents.

Wallingford is one of only a few communities in the state that own their electric utility. "We exist solely to serve our customers," said George Adair, director of public utilities. The Wallingford electric division follows a disciplined approach to maintaining its infrastructure. The electric division adheres to a four-year cycle for tree trimming, according to Rick Hendershot, electric division general manager. "Power is only good when it's on," said Hendershot. "We're very proud of our track record when it comes to our low rates but every bit as proud of our dependability." In 2011 and 2012 major weather events created significant outages in our state. Outages in Wallingford were not only limited but in each case services were restored more quickly than was possible in many other areas of Connecticut. The Wallingford electric division has invested over many years in critical assets that provide its customers ample substation and circuit capacity. These investments, along with the division's maintenance activities, have produced a resilient distribution system that delivers very reliable service.

EDC Launches new "Powerfully Dependable" Advertising Campaign

"Low electric rates are vitally important to all of our businesses and residents," according to Tom Collette, chairman of the Economic Development Commission marketing committee. "However, we have not been as aggressive in touting our dependability. After Super Storm Sandy plowed through our state many of our local businesses were assisting small companies from other communities because we had power."

"Our businesses don't operate in a vacuum," said Mark Gingras, member of the EDC marketing committee. "Our manufacturers have orders to fill and schedules to keep...none of which happens if the power is out."

Both Collette and Gingras own businesses in Wallingford and are beneficiaries of the town's low electric rates and the dependability of the grid, thus are champions of promoting both.

As the largest producer of steel in the United States, Nucor Steel depends on reliable low cost energy to support their 24/7 operation. "Wallingford electric has never let us down," said Nucor controller Corey Allain. "Our customers and our team can trust that the electricity we need to produce our steel will be there, even in times of severe weather and regional outages. We have not experienced a single electrical outage since Nucor began producing steel in Wallingford in 2006."

"Profit margins are narrow given the state of the economy and the very competitive nature of business today," according to Ron Hansen Jr., owner and CEO of Component Engineers. "Having

no down time in our 24/6 operation is essential to maximizing efficiency thus allowing our 109 employees to satisfy the needs of our customers. I've operated in Wallingford for 28 years without any power disruptions. Business presents many other challenges these days, not needing to worry about power dependability or backup power generation is not only comforting but positively impacts my bottom line."

Wallingford's sixteen-term mayor, the honorable William Dickinson, has been steadfast in continuing the municipally owned utilities path blazed by his predecessors. The high occupancy rates of the town's five industrial parks are a testament to the many benefits of operating a business within Town boundaries.

Public utilities director George Adair, very proud of his team's track record, is quick to add that they can't control natural disasters. "What we can do is build and maintain a resilient system and be ready to respond quickly when Mother Nature puts us to the test. We continually improve our emergency response plan and try to include all of the lessons learned from each event."

"Today's economy is driven by technology and technology is driven by clean dependable and affordable power," said Adair. "We've been building our infrastructure for decades and are very proud of our track record."

Adair says that, "Data centers are a natural fit for our town since their power consumption is typically high and our low rates and exceptional dependability are essential to the core of their business."

Adair adds that Wallingford owns its water and sewer utilities as well; but that's a story for another day.

Tim Ryan is economic development specialist for the Town of Wallingford EDC.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540