

Call before you dig!

There is now one telephone number, 1-866-423-7287, available statewide that commercial excavators must call before starting an excavation project to request information on the location of underground utility lines in the area. Although not required by law, homeowners may also call.

The Hawaii One Call Center can be contacted any day of the week, 24 hours a day. Each utility that has underground lines in the planned excavation area must accurately describe or mark where its lines run within five working days of the call.

Commercial excavators will still need to obtain proper excavation permits, if applicable, prior to calling the center.



In a process called toning, HELCO's Inspector Wayne Simonson determines exactly where underground power lines are situated and marks their location with red paint.

Commercial excavators who fail to call the center are subject to penalty fines.

Calling before digging ensures that underground lines will be identified so that excavators can proceed safely. Having the utility lines identified not only helps to prevent personal injury, but also helps to prevent accidental damage

to utility lines and disruption of service.

The "One Call Center" legislation went into effect in Hawaii on January 1, 2006. Details on the program and the information that must be provided during the phone call are available online at www.callbeforeyoudig.org.

HELCO plans to seek rate increase

Proposal supports conservation and renewable energy

In December we notified the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of our intent to file this spring a request for an electric rate increase. The proposed rate increase would help pay for improvements made to boost the reliability of our island's electric service since the last rate increase six years ago.

We are still completing a detailed analysis to determine the amount of the needed increase. Preliminary estimates of the overall request are around 10%; however, we expect that by using

a proposed, tiered rate structure, most residential customers would see smaller increases in the range of 3% to 7%.

"We will be seeking approval for a new residential rate structure to minimize the increase for those using less energy," said Warren Lee, HELCO president. "This will also encourage customers to take advantage of solar water heating programs and other energy management options."

To make solar even more affordable, we are also evaluating larger incentives for solar water heating systems as well as new incentives for photovoltaic systems (which produce electricity from the sun).

In announcing the plans, Lee noted that the upcoming case marks a fundamental transition

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for HELCO's future. "With options like wind, biomass, pumped hydro, distributed generation and more geothermal available, Keahole should be the last fossil fuel power plant constructed on our island."

We also plan to ask that all residential customers pay to maintain the system even if they do not live on island all year, in other words, pay a "minimum bill." Full-time residents would be largely unaffected by this proposal.

Once the formal rate increase request is filed, it will go through an extensive review process by the PUC and the Hawaii Consumer Advocate's office before any final decision is made. The earliest any increase, if allowed, may go into effect would be in early 2007.

Stealing electricity is a crime

Stealing electricity and tampering with your electric meter are crimes. These actions are reportable to the Hawaii Police Department, and individuals participating in these activities can be prosecuted. But even worse, people who steal electricity and tamper with their electric meters put themselves in harm's way from electrical shock or electrocution.

Electricity theft can also cause damage to power distribution equipment, resulting in widespread outages and causing major inconveniences for residents and businesses in the community. Stealing electricity also increases the cost of electric service, causing customers to pay for the loss.

Electricity theft hurts everyone, so if you suspect that someone is stealing electricity or tampering with an electric meter, report it (anonymously) by calling our 24-hour emergency/dispatch number: **969-6666**. We appreciate your kokua.

Brownie Cheesecake Dessert with Fruit Topping



- 1 package (24 ounces) supreme brownie mix (box includes a packet of chocolate syrup)
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 2 packages (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 can (21 ounces) cherry pie filling
- OR
- 2 cups sliced fresh fruits such as strawberries or raspberries, mixed with 2 tablespoons sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine 1 1/2 cups of the dry brownie mix with the butter. Press into a 9 x 9 x 2-inch pan to make a crust. In large bowl of electric mixer, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Stir in remaining brownie mix, chocolate syrup, and cream. Beat until smooth, about 5 minutes. Pour over crust. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until set. Cool. Spread pie filling or fresh fruit on top. Chill several hours before serving. Recipe makes 9 servings.

Students gear up for "The Final Lap"

Teams of students representing 33 high schools across the state are preparing for the **11th Annual Hawaiian Electric Electron Marathon**, which will culminate in an exciting, one-hour endurance race of the electric vehicles they constructed. Race day festivities will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Ford Island at Pearl Harbor, on **Saturday, March 18, 2006**.

But the winners are determined by more than just the race, which measures how many laps the vehicles can complete in one hour under the power of two electric batteries. In addition to the race results, the teams will be judged on: the vehicle's design, construction, and safety; written documentation on the building process; and an oral presentation about the project.

The Electron Marathon is cosponsored by HECO, the U.S. Navy, and the Hawaii State Department of Education. HELCO's partners in the event are MECO, U.S. Department of Energy, and Young Brothers. The race is governed by the Sports Car Club of America, Hawaii Region.

This will be the last year for the Electron Marathon; hence, it bears the name "The Final Lap." For more information go to www.heco.com.



A HELCO lineman safely removes a tampering device at a residence as a Hawaii Police Department officer and a HELCO safety administrator secure the premises.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH