

# Customer Survey Results

I want to thank those who took the time to respond to our customer survey included in the July issue of Ruralite. We had an excellent response. Almost 700 people returned the survey, up from a little more than 300 respondents in both 2001 and 2003. Of those, 174 people took the time to write responses or questions on the survey.

When the survey went out, I indicated we would highlight some of the more interesting comments we received. There were 66atta boys, 57 complaints and 17 that were either suggestions or questions. There were a number of comments on how to improve the survey or such.

As I said in July, you learn a lot more from a critic than from a supporter. But we do appreciate those who took the time to write compliments. Many had to do with the great job being done by the employees who live and work in our communities.

As far as the complaints, 12 people pointed out they would love to have lower rates. This was just ahead of the 11 people who did not like compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). This was not something I expected.

Generally, my experience with CFLs has been good. Not so with many of you, who indicated poor lighting, early failures and poor fit in fixtures. My recommendation is not to give up entirely on CFLs. Go slowly, buy one at a time and see if you find a bulb you like before doing a wholesale conversion. There are places where CFLs are definitely not the best choice. There are other locations where people swear by them. For more information on CFLs, contact Miquette in the PUD's Energy Service department.

It looks like we hired a tree trimming crew just in time! Five customers had complaints about trees needing to be trimmed, and five had outage complaints. Trees are the number-one cause of preventable outages.

Our new tree-trimming crew started this summer and will appear soon in a neighborhood near you. Call the Operations Department for information, or to get on our list of customers needing trees trimmed to prevent power outages.

For my favorite question, several of you wrote to suggest we omit the return envelopes for those who are set up for automatic payments. I thought this was a good suggestion, so I asked the billing department how this could be accomplished. It turns out the payment envelopes cost about 4.3 cents each. Approximately 1,200 customers use automatic pay, so we would save about \$52 a month. We do our own bill stuffing by machine, and the automatic payment billings are mixed with all the other bills. Apparently, it would cost more to do a special sort than it is worth. But keep thinking, because we appreciate your suggestions. Throughout the years some of the best money-saving ideas have come from you, the customer.

**Tom Svendsen, General Manager**