

# UPDATE

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER for the CUSTOMERS of E. OSTERMAN INC.



## Rebates! Rebates! Rebates!

With rebates, customer credits, and tax incentives now available, if you have been considering updating your old, inefficient heating and hot water appliances now is the time! Qualifying customers will be able to combine incentives for over \$3000. Below is a list of current incentives available to Osterman Propane customers for high efficiency Propane appliances.

### Osterman Propane

We want you to enjoy the efficiency and comfort of our exceptional energy with incentives to help you upgrade your fuel oil or electric heating appliances to Propane. Below is a list of current incentives available to Osterman Propane customers.

- \$300 customer credit for conversion of electric or oil fired hot water heaters to propane.
- \$200 customer credit for conversion of electric heating system or oil fired boiler or furnace to propane.
- \$300 customer credit towards the removal of your old oil tank when converting central heating appliance to propane.

*Certain restrictions apply. Rebate amounts applied as a customer credit only. Equipment purchased or installed by others than Osterman Propane requires proof of purchase.*

*Oil tank credit requires 5 year supply agreement and proof of disposal from a licensed vendor required. Contact your local Osterman Propane customer service center for more information.*

[www.ostermangas.com/convert](http://www.ostermangas.com/convert)

### Massachusetts

The Massachusetts MassSave program is available to customers of participating electric utilities for high efficiency heating and hot water upgrades using Propane. Contact MassSave first to enroll in the program.

- MassSave program offers 0% and low interest financing for qualifying energy efficiency improvements.
- \$300 for the installation of an indirect water heater
- Rebates for the installation of Propane central heating equipment

[www.masssave.com](http://www.masssave.com)

### Rhode Island

Cash for clunker appliance rebates are available for high efficiency gas heating and hot water equipment. Rebates range from \$100 up to \$500. Rebates available only while funds last. See website below for eligibility info and program details.

Gas Tankless Water Heater	EF>=0.82	\$300
Gas Furnaces	AFUE >= 90%	\$100
Gas Boilers	AFUE >=85%	\$500

[www.energy.ri.gov](http://www.energy.ri.gov)

### New Hampshire

All EnergySTAR rated furnaces, boilers and hot water heaters will be eligible for a rebate through the NH program. Rebates range from \$100 up to \$1000. Rebates available only while funds last. See website below for eligibility info and program details.

Gas Storage Water Heater	\$100
Gas Tankless Water Heater	\$300
Gas Furnaces- (AFUE > 90%)	\$300
Gas Furnaces- (AFUE > 90% w/ ECM)	\$400
Gas Boilers- (AFUE > 85%)	\$500
Gas Boilers- (AFUE > 90%)	\$1,000

[www.nh.gov/oep/recovery](http://www.nh.gov/oep/recovery)

### Federal Tax Credits

Did you make qualifying improvements to your home last year? If not, there is still time.

- 30% of qualifying energy efficiency improvements to your principal residence up to \$1500 may be taken as a federal tax credit.
- Credits expire Dec 31, 2010

[www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org)

*Consult your tax professional for your eligibility towards federal tax credits.*

## Under our own Power with Freewatt



Osterman Propane is excited to have a new propane version of the Freewatt home cogeneration system. Called a "hybrid for the home," the unit uses every gallon of propane twice, because it makes both electricity and heat at the same time. The propane fuels a 600cc Honda generator which produces electricity. The waste heat from the engine and exhaust is passed through a heat exchanger and used to

the heat the home. When the demand for heat is too great, a backup high-efficiency furnace or boiler makes up the difference.

While the natural gas version of the Freewatt is already available, the new propane units are undergoing select field testing at various sites before being released. The propane version, known as Freewatt+, includes a transfer switch which allows the unit to product 1800 watts of emergency backup power during an electric outage. This is enough power to run the system for heat and power, some lights and appliances.

Our Freewatt is installed at our Palmer customer service center. The combination of high efficiency and the ability to make its own power is helping Osterman Propane reduce our overall carbon footprint. The Freewatt makes

electricity 60% more efficiently than a traditional power plant and because the system is at the point of use, there are no transmission losses via power lines.

The system at our Palmer CSC came online on February 9, at 9am. At time of publication, the unit has produced 568 kwh of electricity offsetting 568 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>. We expect the unit to reduce propane usage at the CSC by 15% vs. the 20 year old gas heating system it replaced. The unit is also on track to provide 25% of the electricity consumed by the CSC during the heating season.

To learn more about Freewatt technology, visit [www.freewatt.com](http://www.freewatt.com)

**freewatt.**

## Customer Spotlight

### Tower Hill Botanic Garden

The flowers are blooming, the days are getting longer and warmer. One place to experience the rebirth of spring is at the Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, Mass. The gardens were established in 1986 by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, and features over 132 acres of botanical gardens, walking trails, and spectacular views of Mt. Wachusett and the Wachusett Reservoir.

One iconic structure of the garden is the Orangerie, an 18th century style greenhouse which provides a 4,000 square foot home to subtropical plants during the winter. Because the growing season is limited in New England, the greenhouse provides the lush environment of an endless summer during the long, dormant winter months. And of course, the Orangerie features a number of citrus trees producing lemons, tangerines, limes, and oranges.

In addition to outdoor features, the gardens are home to the Stoddard Education and

Visitors Center which features meeting and classroom space for gardening programs and workshops as well as the one of the oldest horticultural libraries in the country. The Botanic Garden is also growing with new construction including a new reception center, a second greenhouse (the Limonaia), and Winter Garden.

Tower Hill Botanical Garden has been an Osterman Propane customer since 1992. To learn more visit [www.towerhillbg.org](http://www.towerhillbg.org)



## Customer Owned Tanks

Some customers may be seeing low come-on or introductory prices from discount propane retailers for customers who own their own tanks. While these discount prices may look attractive in comparison to typical market rates, there are many factors customers must weigh when considering the purchase of a propane tank for their home (*as a policy, Osterman Propane does not sell tanks*).

One of the most important factors when considering owning your own propane tank is maintenance and liability for the tank. Tanks do require periodic maintenance and some tanks must be taken out of service and recertified on a regular basis. Also, in all states we service, Propane tanks can only be serviced/repaired by licensed personnel. Will the company who sells you the tank warranty it or be able to repair it? Many discount

dealers don't have service personnel to address such issues. In addition, many homeowners insurance policies may not cover or will put certain restrictions on coverage for customer owned tanks.

While we understand that many customers are trying to stretch every dollar in their energy budget, this decision must be weighed carefully. Unfortunately, the out of pocket costs for new tanks can often outweigh the overall savings of a discount per gallon price. We have more information on our website at the address below. In addition, you will find actual repair bills for work we have performed on customer-owned tanks. In many cases, the work to repair your tank can cost more than the tank itself!

[www.ostermangas.com/customerowned](http://www.ostermangas.com/customerowned)

## EnergyLoan

Osterman Propane is pleased to be an approved contractor for the EnergyLoan program from AFCFirst. This program offers simple interest, unsecured loans ranging from \$1000 to \$20,000 or more for home energy improvements. Rates range from 9.99% to 14.99% with as little as 1 year or up to 10 year terms.

EnergyLoan Advantages include:

- Fixed Rate, Fixed Monthly Payments
- No Lien Filed on Your Home
- No Home Equity Required
- No Points, Fees or Closing Costs
- Up to 10 Years to Repay
- No Penalty for Prepayment (after year 1)

[www.ostermangas.com/energyloan](http://www.ostermangas.com/energyloan)



## Product Spotlight

### Propane Pool Heating

With springtime coming, it is also time to start getting the pool ready. Of course, for most pool owners, the water won't be warm enough to swim in until the end of May. But with a propane fueled pool heater, you could extend your swimming season early into the spring and late into the fall. A propane pool heater can get the water ready for your enjoyment when most others haven't even uncovered their pools!

### Propane vs. heat pumps

When pool owners make the decision to heat their pool, there are two options; gas fired or electric heat pumps. While heat pumps do have a high efficiency and may require less maintenance, there are significant advantages for a propane unit:

- Cost of operation – Unfortunately, New England has some of the highest electric rates in the country. Even with high efficiency, you need to carefully consider the cost to operate vs. gas on a seasonal basis.
- Capability – Heat pumps require warm, humid weather to transfer that energy from the air to the pool. Cool days and cold nights in spring and early fall hamper the ability of a heat pump to warm your pool when you want it the most.



- Temperature rise – Heat pumps raise temperatures through long run cycles, meaning slow recovery times. A properly sized gas heater is able to get up to temperature much faster than a comparable heat pump.
- Electric Demand – How large is the overall electric service to your home? Multiple air conditioners, a pool heat pump, combined with summer brownouts can possibly put a strain on your equipment.

### Cost of Operation

This is of course the biggest factor when deciding to make the investment in a pool heater. Unfortunately, it is also one of the hardest costs to predict. There are numerous factors to consider including heater size, pool size, temperature setting, weather, solar cover use, and sun exposure. To at least offer a rough guide, the typical Osterman Propane pool heat customer uses 250 gallons during the season. Contact your local customer service center for our current pool heat pricing to get an idea of your cost for the season.

### Pool heat special

Already have a propane pool heater? Osterman Propane will be once again offering our springtime pool heat tune up special. Check your mail for our offer which should be out in early April. This special is the perfect opportunity to get your heater inspected, serviced, and fired off for your swimming enjoyment.

## Mowing with Propane



Some of you may remember the line of Lehr EcoTrimmer and EcoBlower products we reported on in last year's edition of the Osterman Update. Just in time for summer, Lehr is introducing a full size push lawnmower that runs on a small disposable 16oz propane canister.

The propane-powered EcoMower emits 26% less greenhouse gases and 60% less carbon monoxide than a gasoline model. A 16oz canister provides up to 90 minutes of mowing, which

is 20-40% longer than the same amount of fuel lasts in a standard mower. The Propane fuel also provides for easier starting, cleaner carburetors and eliminates the mixing and spilling of gasoline.

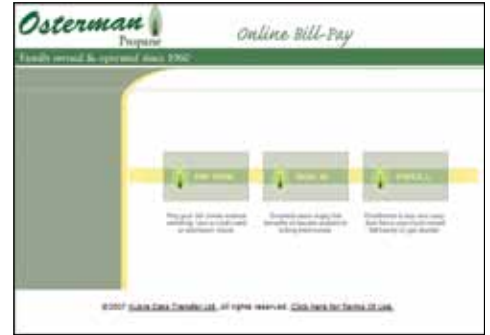
Units are also available in a self-propelled version. Prices range from \$269-399. Find more information and a retailer near you at [www.golehr.com](http://www.golehr.com).

## Online Account Access

Osterman Propane offers customers the ability to access their accounts online including options to review and pay monthly statements (credit card or e-check).

Customers may also elect to reduce the amount of mail they receive each month by selecting electronic notification and statements.

Osterman Propane uses a secure hosted site for transactions and we are compliant with the PCI (Payment Card Industry) security standard.



## Grilling Season is Here

Time to get out the gas grill and enjoy another summer of backyard barbeque. To help get your grilling going, Osterman Propane has a handy tool to guide you to the nearest Osterman supplied refilling location for your propane grill tank. Just enter your zip code and get a list of locations and one click directions. [www.ostermangas.com/refillingstations](http://www.ostermangas.com/refillingstations)