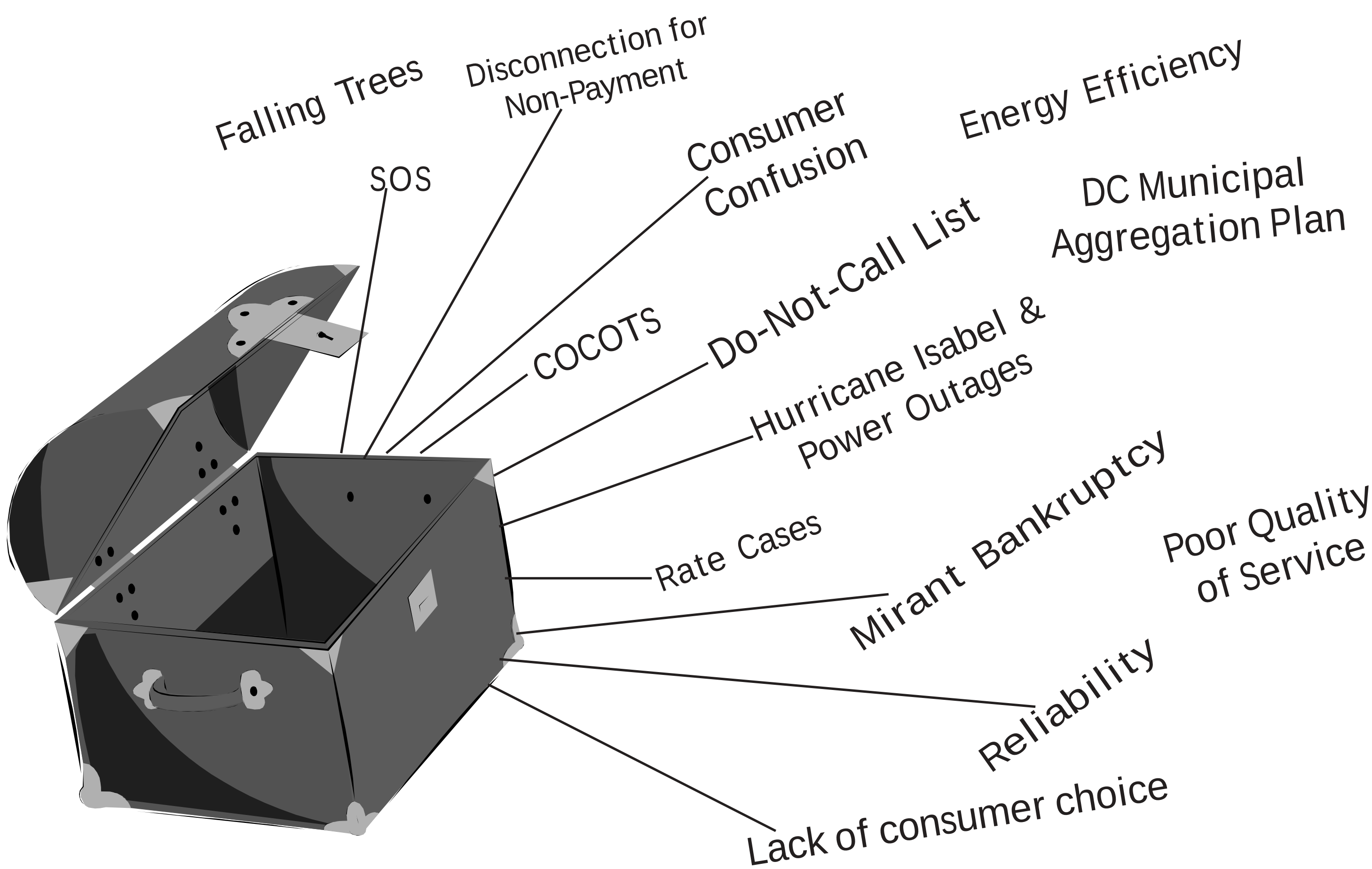

RESPONDING TO A SLOWLY EVOLVING UTILITY MARKETPLACE

Protecting, Empowering and Educating D.C. Consumers

Office of the People's Counsel
for the District of Columbia
2003 Annual Report

Anthony A. Williams
Mayor

Dear District Residents:

It is my pleasure to present the 2003 Annual Report of the Office of the People's Counsel.

In the District, the Office of the People's Counsel is an independent agency within our government advocating for and educating consumers on utility issues affecting rates, quality of service, consumer choice, and consumer safeguards. These issues also impact the District's economic development, neighborhood stability and the quality of life.

As you know, the public utility industry is undergoing perhaps the most significant transformation in its history. The District of Columbia is experiencing this change in the move toward full retail competition. For example, an important milestone is January 1, 2005, when all D.C. consumers must choose their electric service provider. OPC will continue to educate consumers in making economic and efficient choices.

Should you have questions or require additional information about this or other matters before the People's Counsel, please feel free to contact them at (202) 727-3071.

Sincerely,

Anthony A. Williams

At left: People's Counsel Elizabeth Noel being sworn-in.

At right: Mrs. Noel pictured with husband Judge Harold Cushenberry and Ronald R. Collins, Director of the Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions.

Dear Constituents:

On September 17, 2003, I was nominated by Mayor Anthony Williams to serve an unprecedented fifth term as People's Counsel. On November 4, 2003, the District of Columbia Council unanimously approved my reappointment.

I am the fourth People's Counsel in a line of distinguished lawyers and public servants to represent the ratepayers and consumers of the District of Columbia. The Honorable Annice Wagner, who served from 1975 to 1977, was the first People's Counsel appointed after the Office was reconstituted by Congress in 1975. She is now the Chief Judge for the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

The second People's Counsel was Attorney Brian Lederer, who served from 1977 to 1984, and is now engaged in the private practice of law.

My immediate predecessor, the Honorable Frederick D. Dorsey, served as People's Counsel from 1984 to 1990. He is now a Senior Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court.

This is an interesting time in the field of public utility regulation, retail competition, regulatory economics, and consumer advocacy. As People's Counsel, I remain committed to zealously and professionally advocating on behalf of DC utility consumers.

Above: People's Counsel pictured with OPC staff and Ronald Collins

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Noel
People's Counsel

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OPC's Top 10 Wins for Consumers

★ Initiated PSC investigation into Pepco's lackluster performance after August 2003 storms and Hurricane Isabel

★ TKO'ed Washington Gas' proposed rate increase of $18.8 million

★ Protected D.C. electric ratepayers from economic impact of Mirant's bankruptcy on Pepco's rates

★ Rescued Anacostia Payment Center from Washington Gas' threat to close

★ Handled 7,909 consumer complaints and inquiries

★ Sponsored programs for senior citizen consumers

★ Expanded consumer education and outreach to Hispanic and Asian communities

★ Advocated development of "user friendly" utility bills and supported redesign of Verizon DC telephone bill

★ Supported national and local DO NOT CALL telemarketing registry

★ Developed consumer friendly manual to "Unlock the Box" for COCOT consumers

What Is the Office of the People's Counsel?

Background

Established in 1975, the Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia is an independent agency of the District of Columbia government. By law, OPC is the advocate for consumers of natural gas, electric and telephone services in the District.

The Office is headed by the People's Counsel, an attorney appointed to a three-year term by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the D.C. City Counsel. Elizabeth A. Noël is the fourth lawyer appointed to serve as the People's Counsel. OPC is a party to all utility-related proceedings before the Public Service Commission. The Office also represents the interests of District ratepayers before federal regulatory agencies and commissions and has the right to appeal Public Service Commission decisions directly to the D.C. Court of Appeals. Also, the Office is empowered to represent no-fault automobile insurance consumers if the Commissioner of Insurance holds a rate hearing.

Budget and Finance

OPC's appropriated budget (operating expenses) is entirely revenue neutral to the District. The monies for the Office's operation are reimbursed to the District government. This means the District advances the necessary funds, and the utilities reimburse the government on a quarterly basis. The expenses, though paid by the utilities doing business in D.C., are in fact "recovered" as these costs are passed through to consumers in their utility rates.

By law, OPC is permitted to assess an affected utility for litigation expenses for the Office's representation of ratepayers before the Public Service Commission. These expenses are separate from OPC's operating budget. As with the appropriated budget, these expenses are ultimately borne by ratepayers alone. This means utility shareholders pay none of OPC's operating or litigation expenses. (D.C. Code, 2001 Ed. § 34-912)

Organizational Structure

The Office is organized into five divisions. *Directorate, Litigation, Consumer Services, Operations, and Management Information Systems*.

The **Directorate** comprises the People's Counsel, her Staff Assistant, Jean Gross-Bethel, and the management team of Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Esq., Deputy People's Counsel; Derryl Stewart King, Associate People's Counsel for Operations; Herbert Jones, Manager, Consumer Services Division; and Darlene Wms-Wake, Management Information Systems. The Directorate also provides legislative analysis and assistance on relevant matters to the Executive and the Council of the District of Columbia.

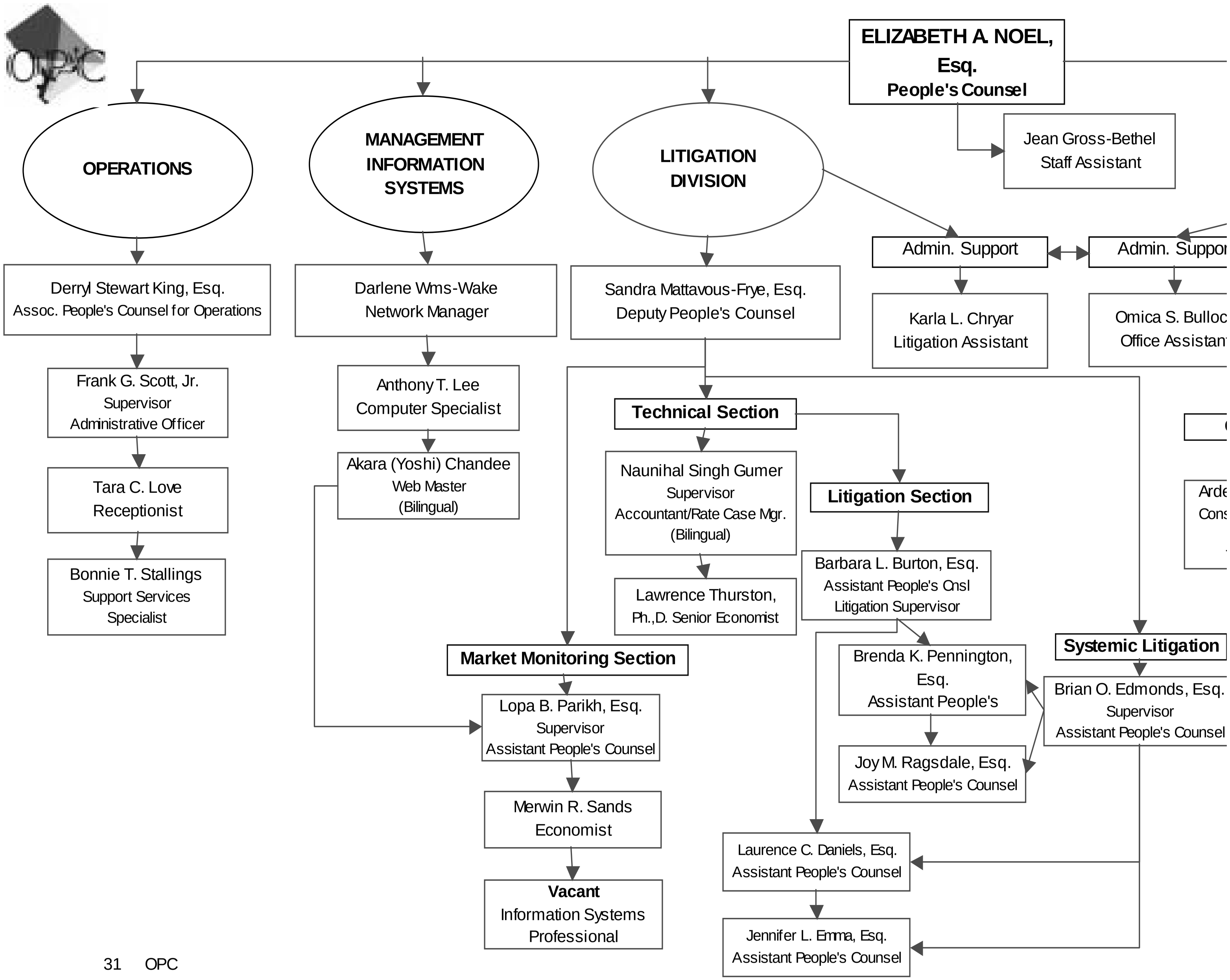
The **Litigation Services Division,** headed by Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Esq., consists of the Energy, Telecommunications and Technical Sections. There is also a Market Monitoring Section created pursuant to the District's electric retail restructuring law to monitor the market for market abuses. The Division manages and presents cases involving utility companies before the Public Service Commission, federal regulatory agencies, and the D.C. Court of Appeals. This work includes developing overall litigation strategies to be pursued, preparing aspects of each case, coordinating outside counsel, and marshaling various expert technical witnesses.

The **Consumer Services Division,** headed by Herbert Jones, provides education and outreach to District consumers, responds to numerous information queries and requests for speaking engagements, and provides assistance and representation for individual consumer utility complaints, as well as complaints about public pay telephones. The Division also provides assistance and resources to the Consumer Utility Board and community civic and consumer organizations.

A Litigation Division staff attorney supervises and advises CSD's consumer complaint staff to ensure continuity and to determine whether legal action or policy should be developed to address recurring issues or anti-consumer patterns. This function is critical to OPC's ability to fashion and argue a strong case for matters repeatedly raised through individual complaints requiring a policy shift or legal change.

The **Operations Division,** headed by Derryl Stewart King, is responsible for fiscal management, editorial functions, assessments, space acquisition and management, materials and non-IT equipment, procurement, human resources, staff development, benefits administration, and legal matters related to OPC's daily operations.

The **Management Information Systems Division,** headed by Darlene Wms-Wake, is responsible for computer systems management. MIS routinely assesses and upgrades the Office's computer infrastructure to assure hardware and software compatibility and readiness. The Division has primary responsibility for maintaining and upgrading OPC's web site, www.opc-dc.gov.



31 OPC
02 OCFO
33 FTEs

* Pursuant to D. C. Code, 2001 Ed. § 34-804

OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
FY 2003

as of 12.31.03

The Office of the People's Counsel is an independent agency of the District of Columbia government created by an act of Congress to serve as the District's legal advocate for utility consumers.

The Office is headed by the People's Counsel, an attorney appointed to a three-year term by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the D.C. Council. OPC is party to all utility-related proceedings before the Public Service Commission (PSC). The Office also represents the interests of District ratepayers before federal regulatory agencies and commissions and has the right to appeal PSC decisions directly to the District Court of Appeals. OPC is empowered to represent no-fault automobile insurance consumers if the Commissioner of Insurance holds rate hearings.

The Office of the People's Counsel's mandate is to advocate the provision of quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory to District ratepayers; to assist individual consumers in disputers with utility companies about billing or services; and to provide technical assistance and consumer education to the Consumer Utility Board and other community groups. The Office also actively participates in proceedings before the PSC regarding the installation and removal of public pay telephones throughout the city. D.C. Code, 2001 Ed. § 34-804.

Above: OPC's Silvia Garrick confers with a consumer during Joint Utility Discount Day (JUDD).

At right: Winifred Freeman, on behalf of her community, testifies in favor of keeping WG's Anacostia Payment Center open in February 2003. OPC provided the Ward 8 residents with technical assistance and support.

2003 was another stellar year for the Litigation Services Division in its continuing endeavors to address the issues popping out of Pandora's box. Events and consequences, both unintended and foreseen, occured in 2003 affecting the public utility industry restructuring, quality of utility service, "consumer choice" and retail competition.

Indeed, OPC and D.C. consumers have faced myriad issues: a utility bankruptcy, a pancake rate case, a utility's threatened closing of a customer payment center and pronouncement it would no longer accept cash payments at its headquarters, the emergence of "bad actors" in the energy supplier industry, and citizen concern over the proliferation of pay phones in high crime areas, just to name a few. Not only has OPC been responsive to these issues, more important, it has been proactive in proposing appropriate remedies and solutions to ensure the interests of D.C. consumers are protected. Further, in concert with the Consumer Services Division, OPC's Litigation Division has empowered the D.C. community and better equipped District citizens with the necessary tools and information to make critical decisions as they navigate new waters.

OPC's energy activities have included, for example, **Mirant's bankruptcy** filing and its threat to reject its energy supply contract with Pepco under which electricity is provided to D.C. customers. OPC is the only D.C. entity representing District consumers in this matter. In 2003, in real terms the Mirant case consumed a substantial portion of OPC's resources and attention as we attempted to ensure reasonable rates for electricity ratepayers as promised under the terms of the divestiture order.

The potential impact of the threatened rejection of the agreement is estimated at $541 million. In the District of Columbia, the burden is estimated at $227 million. A conservative estimate of the financial impact suggests the average increase per ratepayer per month would be $26 for customers who currently pay an average of $60 per month. If a customer's average monthly bill is higher, the increase would be greater.

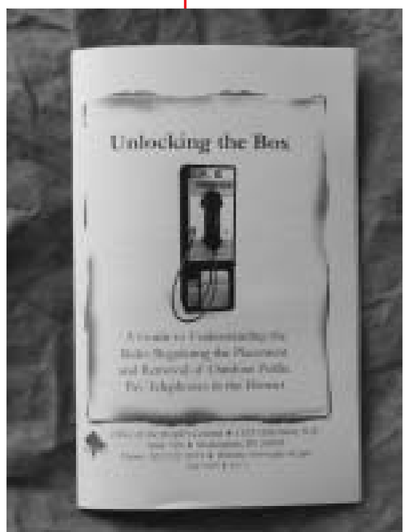
OPC submitted comments in **Formal Case No. 1017**, a proceeding to determine the manner in which Standard Offer Service ("SOS") will be provided to the District of Columbia after price caps for generation end in February 2005. OPC's advocacy ensured the process chosen has the best chance of providing residential ratepayers with reliable service at reasonable rates as the District enters the competitive marketplace. "Deregulation" and restructuring in the electric industry have motivated OPC to increase its involvement and participation at the regional and federal levels through the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Regional Transmission Organization ("PJM") and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC").

For natural gas consumers, industry restructuring has not ended rate increase requests from Washington Gas. In 2003, OPC vigorously fought WG's request for an increase filed in February 2003, fewer than six months after the Commission ordered a rate reduction in October 2002. Fortunately, due to OPC's advocacy and representation, Washington Gas' request was TKO'd. Also, the Office drafted proposed legislation to codify the requirements for the PSC to license natural gas suppliers, institute consumer protections, and establish a consumer education program.

In telecommunications, OPC addressed and supported a Do-Not-Call Registry and requested the creation of a public record on the deployment of broadband over electric power lines in the District. After 10 years of OPC requesting a change, Verizon DC finally issued an easier to read "consumer friendly" telephone bill to residential telephone customers.

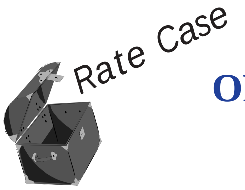
OPC DEVELOPED CONSUMER FRIENDLY MANUAL TO "UNLOCK THE BOX" TO COCOT CONSUMERS

Educating consumers is a primary responsibility of the Office. Consumers are entitled to be informed about the changes affecting their utility service in plain, simple and understandable terms. In 2003, the Office completed a consumer pay telephone manual, ***"Unlocking the Box: A Guide To Understanding the Rules Regulating the Placement and Removal of Outdoor Public Pay Telephones in the District."*** The manual was a direct response to a challenge from the District Council to create a "consumer friendly" document to help consumers navigate the seemingly arduous process the removal of pay telephones. The manual was disseminated to the public and first appeared on OPC's website (www.opc-dc.gov) on July 11, 2003.



The key features of the 40-page color manual include the rules for pay telephone registration, certification, installation and the required services. Additionally, there is a complete set of instructions on how to file a complaint against either an existing pay telephone or a proposed pay telephone installation. Included in the manual are a complaint form, a list of frequently asked questions, a glossary, an explanation of the Commission's informal and formal hearing processes, an explanation of the complainant's burden of proof, a definition of both testimonial and documentary evidence, an evidentiary checklist, an agency contact list, and a graphical depiction of the time line of the entire complaint process.

OPC is available to conduct consumer seminars on this topic.



OPC TKO'D WG'S PROPOSED RATE INCREASE OF $18.8 MILLION

For the second year in a row, OPC saved D.C. gas customers millions of dollars on their gas bills. On November 10, 2003, the D.C. Public Service Commission soundly rejected two-thirds of Washington Gas' ("WG") latest proposed rate increase of $18.8 million. In spite of OPC's 2002 meritorious victory of a $6 million rate decrease in Formal Case No. 989, in 2003, the Company filed a "pancake" rate application (filing a rate application on the heels of a previous filing for a rate increase) in an effort to undercut OPC's protection of natural gas consumers from inflated rates.

WG pursued an approximate 9% rate increase and a host of other exorbitant customer charges. Rather than receive such a windfall, with OPC's dogged pursuit, the Commission granted only a $5.38 million increase (approximately 2.6 percent overall increase), rejected a proposed Incentive Rate Plan entirely, and refused to increase customer charges by 20-30 percent, but rather increased them at a more modest rate.

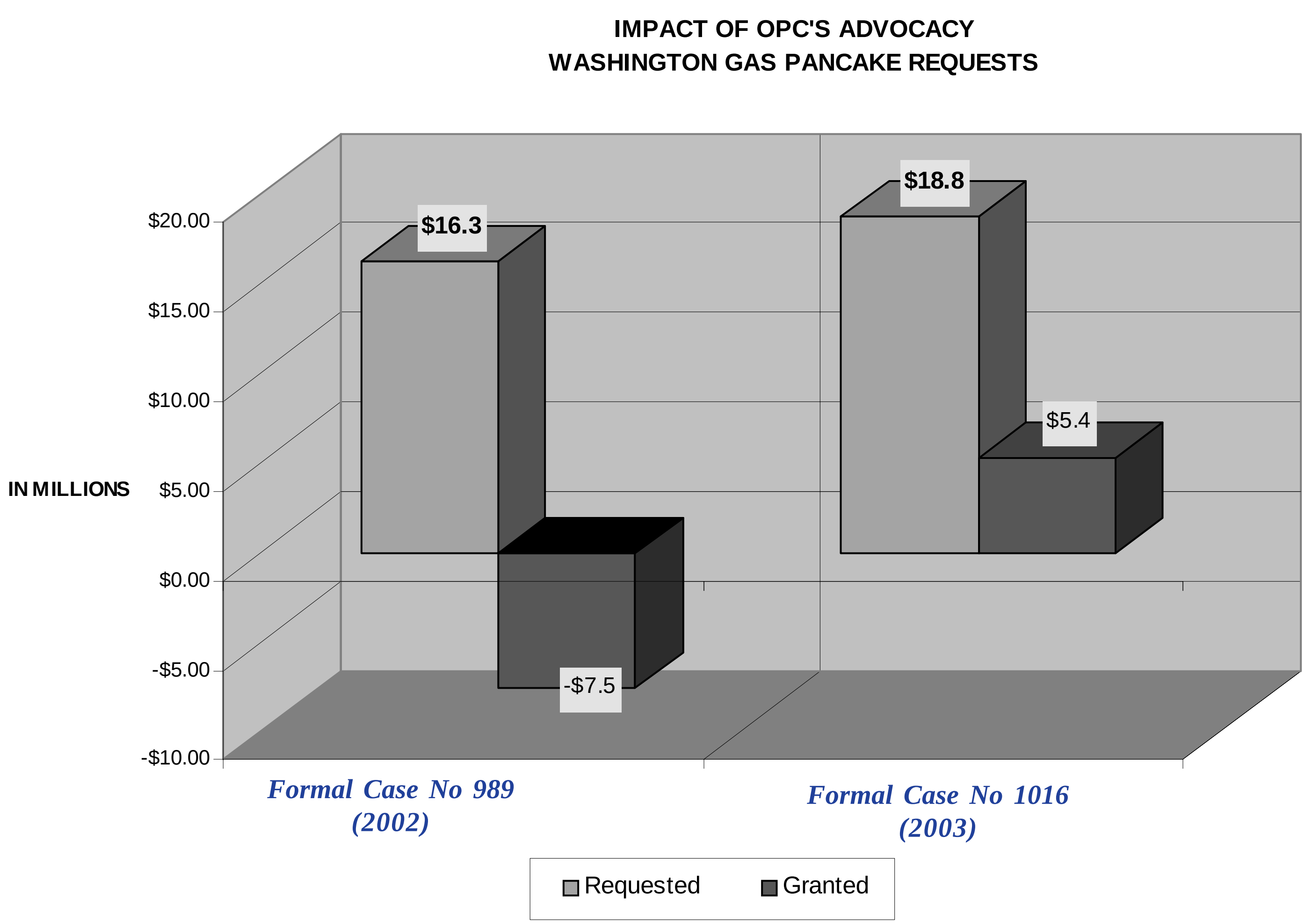
OPC vehemently opposed WG's proposal, particularly in light of the Commission's holding in March 2003, in Formal Case No. 989 that WG's rates were excessive and had to be reduced by approximately $6 million. This recent rejection, coupled with the Company reporting increased profits in the third quarter of 2003, reinforced OPC's sound and reasoned rejection of the latest rate proposal.

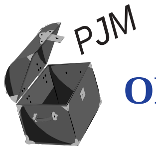
OPC, again, rejected WG's proposed Incentive Rate Plan because it was a guaranteed earnings adjustment clause for the Company and could have lead to widely fluctuating rates for consumers. Further, in the current financial climate when cost of capital and interest rates are going down, WG was still seeking a 12.25 percent return on equity, which the PSC had rejected in 2002 in Formal Case No. 989. OPC's analysis indicated the cost of equity should be 9 percent and WG's overall rate of return 7.93 percent.

> *"The education and empowerment of the community in such cases is vital to the legal process of investigating such utility cases."*

Finally, OPC rejected WG's numerous proposed increases in customer service charges as unreasonable, noting many of these charges were clearly contrary to the interests of ratepayers in the preceding rate case. OPC's efforts to hold WG to its rates were reinforced by the community's involvement in three public comment hearings and in the November 6, 2003 community brief filed with the PSC.

The education and empowerment of the community is vital to the legal process of investigating utilities. The results of a rate case have an enormous impact on OPC's clients and the PSC must understand that impact to fully comprehend the potential benefits and/or harm of a rate proposal. Knowledgeable consumers taking the time to present their views in public hearings is one way in which OPC can ensure that impact is conveyed to the PSC.





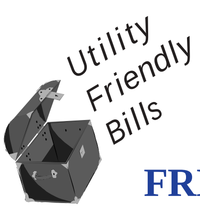
OPC EXPANDED D.C. CONSUMER PRESENCE AT PJM AND FERC

Federal and national mandates have fundamentally changed the electric utility landscape, and new emphasis is being placed on actions at the wholesale level. For OPC, as it seeks to protect residential consumers, it has meant increased involvement and participation at the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Regional Transmission Organization ("PJM") and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC").

PJM coordinates the movement of electricity at the wholesale level in the Mid-Atlantic Region. PJM is also responsible for maintaining the reliability of the transmission system at the wholesale level.

PJM has a stakeholder process in which OPC is a voting member and an active participant. Decisions made at PJM affect the reliability of the system and the procurement of electricity at the wholesale level, which in turn affect District consumers at the retail level. The importance of PJM's reliability function hit home on August 14, 2003, when a blackout occurred in the Midwest and the Northeast.

FERC is the regulatory agency at the wholesale level. Among other functions, it establishes transmission rates, and all PJM policies must be approved by FERC. OPC has been very active at FERC and intervened in a number of cases involving reliability issues and rates paid to generators, the costs of which are ultimately borne by retail consumers. A link to all OPC's filings at FERC is available at the OPC website, www.opc-dc.gov.

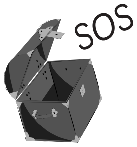


OPC ADVOCATED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF "USER FRIENDLY" UTILITY BILLS AND SUPPORTED THE DECISION TO REDESIGN THE VERIZON DC TELEPHONE BILL

For the past 10 years, the Office of the People's Counsel has advocated for a "consumer-friendly" telephone bill for residential customers, particularly senior citizens who need a phone bill with larger typeface and paper, clearly showing all charges and taxes in one section of the bill. Responding to consumer requests, on May 5, 2003, Verizon DC issued a new format to make its monthly telephone bill easier to read and understand.

Beginning August 2003, D.C. customers began receiving the redesigned telephone bills printed on larger paper. The new design explains line item charges, surcharges and taxes and provides a table of contents where other information can be found in the bill.

New enhancements include a list of phone numbers for various Verizon DC centers, hours of operation, website addresses, new services available in the District and discount coupons. Bill design enhancements will continue to be added throughout 2004.



OPC PROTECTED CONSUMERS FROM EXCESSIVE STANDARD OFFER SERVICE RATES IN FORMAL CASE NO. 1017

OPC continued its efforts to advocate the interests of D.C. utility consumers and to deal with the fall out of monumental changes in the electric market.

The greatest impact of "deregulation" for residential ratepayers in the District of Columbia will occur on February 7, 2005, when the generation price caps end and Pepco exits the business of electricity generation. Pepco will, however, continue to provide distribution and transmission service.

A D.C. statute requires the D.C. Public Service Commission to set up a process for providing Standard Offer Service ("SOS") in the District after February 2005, for customers who are not served by an alternative supplier. In a "deregulated" market, with competition, the SOS provider would serve customers who are between alternate suppliers, those who have trouble paying their bills and those who, for whatever reason, opt not to choose. In a market with no effective choice alternative, however, the SOS supplier will serve most customers. In February 2003, the Commission opened Formal Case No. 1017 to address the manner in which SOS will be provided in the District in the future.

Retail competition has not brought effective competition or choice or lower prices for the vast majority of D.C. residential consumers. More than likely, most consumers will be served by "standard offer service" in the near future. OPC has been active in this case to ensure the process chosen by the PSC has the greatest chance of providing residential ratepayers with reliable service at reasonable rates as the District enters the competitive marketplace.

In 2003, OPC advocated *retail* SOS as the model that would provide the lowest rates for District ratepayers. The Commission issued and requested comments on rules for both wholesale and retail SOS.

The case will continue into 2004, and OPC, regardless of the SOS process chosen, will continue to advocate for residential consumers and for rules providing the best protection for consumers.

OPC ADVOCATED FOR "OPT-OUT" MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION PLAN

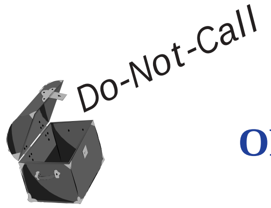
As the statutory advocate mandated to represent the interests of D.C. consumers, an overriding goal of the Office is to ensure consumers' bills are reasonable and affordable. OPC has consistently advocated an *opt-out* municipal aggregation program, the combining of electrical usage in an attempt to obtain better rates as the best way to provide consumers with at least one competitive choice and to empower customers in the competitive retail marketplace.

Despite OPC's efforts, the D.C. statute that created municipal aggregation suggests authority for the government to conduct an *opt-in* aggregation program. The difference in the two models lies in whether a consumer must act to join the program (*opt--in*) or to leave the program (*opt-out*) once the rates, terms and conditions are communicated to the consumer and before the consumer's generation supplier is changed. *Opt-out* aggregation is a more attractive and economic program to potential suppliers as it provides them with a way to estimate their customer load and avoid financial risks. Opt-out, does not require "wet signatures." Thus marketing costs are lower, in turn making rates lower.

In municipal aggregation, the government serves as an intermediary in creating the group and in soliciting suppliers for the group. The contract is between the supplier and the individual customer. The District of Columbia Municipal Aggregation Program ("D.C. MAP") is the program being run by D.C. government with input from other stakeholders — WASA, some independent agencies, some small commercial entities, some universities and hospitals, and residential customers. Participation by any of the customers, except D.C. government, was on an *opt-in* basis.

D.C. MAP issued its second request for proposal ("RFP") for opt-in municipal aggregation in April 2003, after receiving non-conforming bids to the first RFP earlier in the year. Once again, D.C. MAP's opt-in program did not receive any conforming bids.

Based on these results, the future of municipal aggregation as an avenue for creating choice for residential consumers is in doubt until the D.C. statute is amended and aggregation is tried.



OPC ADVOCATED IN SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL AND LOCAL DO NOT CALL TELEMARKETING REGISTRY

OPC remains committed to providing consumers with the necessary tools and education to make informed decisions in a changing regulatory environment. In state and federal telecommunications proceedings, OPC has filed comments supporting the creation of a Do-Not-Call registry as a proper mechanism to balance consumer privacy interests with the continued development of competition in the telecommunications market. The national registry allows consumers to *opt-out* of receiving unwanted telemarketing calls in their home.

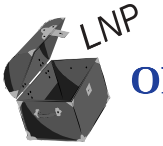
In February 2003, D.C. Council Chair Linda Cropp reintroduced Do-Not-Call legislation as Bill 15-0140, the "*Establishment of Do-Not-Call and Telemarketer Registry Act of 2003.*" The new bill would give the Public Service Commission authority to establish and maintain the District-wide registry or the authority to hire a third-party vendor to administer the registry. The proposed legislation is pending, and OPC continues to monitor its progress.

In March 2003, Congress signed into law H.R. authorizing the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") to establish a $16 million fund to collect fees, administer and enforce a national Do-Not-Call registry created under the FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rule.

Telemarketing calls exempted under the FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rules include calls made by non-profit organizations, survey calls made on behalf of politicians, and businesses with whom a consumer has an established business relationship. To give consumers additional protections, in June 2003, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") revised its telemarketing rules to cover calls made by airlines, banks, and telecommunication industries. These calls, which are exempt under the FTC's rules, are now covered by the FCC.

In October 2003, the FCC and FTC began enforcing the new rules. Telemarketers who call registered phone numbers can be fined as much as $11,000 for each violation.

Despite continued litigation in the federal courts, OPC anticipates District residents will benefit from the protections granted under the new rules adopted by these federal agencies.



OPC ADVOCATED TO ADVANCE D.C. CONSUMERS INTEREST IN LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY (LNP)

Local Number Portability ("LNP") gives consumers the ability to keep their existing phone numbers -when switching from one local service provider to another. The charge for LNP appears on monthly telephone bills.

Effective November 24, 2003, under the Federal Communications Commission's wireless LNP rules, cellular phone subscribers can switch wireless carriers within the same geographic area and keep their existing cellular phone numbers.

In most cases, consumers will be able to switch from a telephone service provider to a wireless carrier or from a wireless carrier to a telephone service provider. *(Note, however, LNP does not allow customers to keep the same phone number when they move to a neighborhood using a different three-digit exchange number.)*

Congress allows telephone and cellular phone companies to pass on the costs of telephone and cellular system upgrades through the LNP surcharge on consumers' monthly telephone bills with the exception of Lifeline subscribers.

LNP is an important tool for enabling District of Columbia telephone and cellular phone customers to exercise "choice" and for improving area code conservation measures.

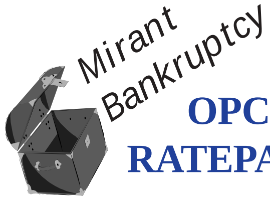
OPC ADVOCATED FOR THE EQUITABLE DEPLOYMENT OF INNOVATIVE HIGH SPEED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Sweeping changes in the regulatory environment and the convergence of technology require policy makers and OPC to shift paradigms to look for new and creative ways in which D.C. residents can access advanced telecommunications services. In 2000, the Office petitioned the PSC requesting it develop a public record on Verizon DC's deployment of a high speed internet service, **Digital Subscriber Line** ("DSL"), in the District of Columbia. Public community and industry hearings were held at which witnesses testified about the benefits and inherent technical limitations associated with DSL technology. Since those hearings were held, OPC has learned accessing broadband Internet services over electric power lines may overcome the technical problems associated with the deployment of DSL. This service is referred to as Broadband Over Power Lines (Access BPL).

In July 2003, OPC filed a petition requesting the Public Service Commission develop a comprehensive record on the deployment of BPL in the District. In addition, OPC filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission supporting the amendment of the Agency's rules to facilitate the deployment of BPL (*In the Matter of Inquiry Regarding Carrier Current Systems, Including Broadband Over PowerLine Systems, ET 03-104*).

BPL technology uses the existing electrical power line system to deliver high-speed voice and data communications to residential and small business consumers. With this technology, because power lines reach virtually every D.C. home, BPL users can access high-speed telecommunications services from any electrical outlet (with an adaptor) in their home. Accessing high speed Internet services over electric power lines can potentially close the technological "digital divide" currently existing in D.C.

Although in its infancy, OPC anticipates providing residential consumers BPL technology over the electrical grid will increase competition and provide D.C. consumers with additional options for advanced telecommunications services. Moreover, an increased competitive environment may encourage traditional telecommunications service providers to improve their networks and quality of service.



OPC PROTECTED THE INTERESTS OF D.C. ELECTRIC RATEPAYERS FROM THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIRANT'S BANKRUPTCY

Protecting consumers in the face of Mirant's bankruptcy has required the Office to break new ground, enter new forums, and make new friends. OPC must advocate as vigorously at the national level as it does at the local level. The Mirant Corporation (*formerly Southern Energy, Inc*.) filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas in Fort Worth in July 2003. Mirant's filing was of particular interest to OPC because in 1999, against OPC-DC's objection, the D.C. Public Service Commission authorized Pepco to sell off most of its generation assets and exit the energy sales business. Pepco remains obligated to provide standard offer service (SOS) in D.C. through January 1, 2005. In 2000, Pepco sold its generating units to Mirant, pursuant to the terms of the Asset and Purchase Sale Agreement (APSA). Under the APSA, Pepco sold five of its generating stations and entered into (1) a "Back to Back" Agreement and (2) Transition Power Agreements (TPAs) in D.C. and Maryland.

Pepco's capacity and energy requirements for SOS are met by the TPAs. When Pepco sold its generation, however, it had long-term contracts under which it *purchases* capacity and energy from Ohio Edison Company (now FirstEnergy) through December 2005, and Panda-Brandywine, L.P. through 2021. The rates paid under the Ohio Edison and Panda contracts are higher than market prices. Under the "Back-to-Back" Agreements, Mirant would purchase from Pepco the capacity and energy Pepco contracted to pay under the terms of Pepco's purchase power contracts with FirstEnergy and Panda-Brandywine.

Pepco estimates the value of the "Back to Back" Agreements to be $700,000,000 which includes:

❏ $160,000,000 — Pepco's estimated cost to replace the two TPAs by which Pepco purchases the full capacity and energy necessary to meets its SOS obligations in the District and Maryland contracts

❏ $540,000,000 — Pepco's estimated value of the Back-to-Back Agreements

If Mirant successfully rejects its energy supply agreement, Pepco will very likely ask the PSC to authorize the Company to pass on to District ratepayers $227 million in additional power costs! These are costs Mirant agreed to bear when it bought Pepco's generating facilities in 2000. If this happens, the average increase per ratepayer per month will be $26 for customers who currently pay an average of $60 per month. If a customer's average monthly bill is higher, the increase will be greater.

OPC intervened at FERC and the U.S. District Court to protect the interests of D.C. ratepayers.

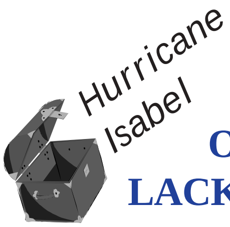
On **December 23, 2003**, the U.S. District Court denied Mirant's request to reject the Back-to-Back Agreements and denied Mirant's request for injunctive relief against FERC, finding FERC has exclusive authority over the pricing features of the "Back-to-Back" Agreement that are not otherwise preempted by the Bankruptcy Code.

The court's decision demonstrates that OPC's involvement made a significant difference and substantial contribution to this hard-fought victory. In its November 7, 2003 brief filed with the U.S. District Court, the Office discussed the potential adverse impact on all District ratepayers if the "Back-to-Back" Agreement was rejected; the exclusive jurisdiction of FERC to address this issue, and the need for FERC's expertise in evaluating the public interest. The U.S. District Court relied on OPC's arguments at length, and the court's legal analysis is wholly consistent with the analysis OPC presented.

These are tremendous victories for District ratepayers. The December 23 FERC Order affirms the Back-to-Back Agreement cannot be terminated without a determination that such termination is in the public interest. In his order, Judge McBryde quotes OPC-DC's arguments, affirming that OPC's actions in this matter did indeed make a difference. OPC was the only District agency to participate in this matter before the U.S. District Court.

OPC made a tremendous difference by filing its amicus brief, which addressed the public interest impact on D.C. ratepayers.

Mirant has signaled it will appeal the U.S. District Court's decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The Office remains committed to representing the interests of District ratepayers in that forum, even if that means OPC-DC is alone in this effort.



OPC INITIATED PSC INVESTIGATION INTO PEPCO'S LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE AFTER AUGUST 2003 STORMS AND HURRICANE ISABEL

Now, more than ever, protecting consumers requires OPC to be proactive. In the summer of 2003, the Washington area experienced a series of storms and a hurricane that left thousands of customers without electric power for several days. Between August 26 and 30, D.C. was hit by a series of severe storms knocking down trees, power lines and equipment, which resulted in as many as 18,023 District of Columbia customers being without power. The longest duration of power outages in the District was five days.

Pepco attributed the causes of the system-wide outages to fallen trees or tree limbs, fallen or broken poles, lightening damage, wind, accident, animals, fire and unknown causes. However, it is not clear which of these other causes decimated the reliable delivery of electricity in D.C.

> *"to establish precisely what happened, what was done, and what, if anything, should be done differently in the future."*

Less than a month after the severe storms, between September 18 and 19, the District suffered the most cataclysmic outage in its history which was caused by Hurricane Isabel. The hurricane caused outages due to downed trees and tree limbs and feeder damage that affected as many as 135,138 of Pepco's D.C. customers. While Pepco reported power to over 70 percent of affected customers was restored within 72 hours, full restoration was not made until September 28, ten days after Hurricane Isabel assaulted the District.

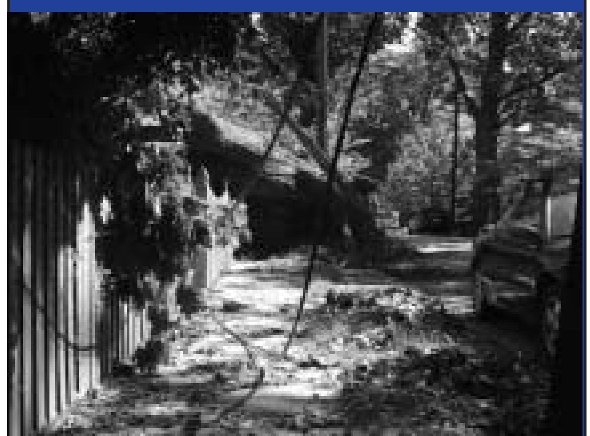
On September 2, in response to the storms, OPC filed a petition for the Commission to convene: (1) a public hearing in the nature of a "roundtable discussion" with Pepco and relevant District agencies to discuss strategies for improving the means by which power is restored to consumers and communities affected by natural disasters and (2) a community hearing to allow public input on this issue.

On September 24, the Office filed another petition with the PSC (1) renewing its earlier petition; and (2) requesting the investigation be broadened to include Pepco's actions in response to Hurricane Isabel. The Office made it clear it was not prejudging the issue, but rather that it wanted a full and fair investigation.

OPC specifically requested that in addition to the public hearings and roundtable discussions, the Commission institute a formal investigation into Pepco's response to Hurricane Isabel that would be a public, on-the-record proceeding with public hearings "to establish precisely what happened, what was done, and what, if anything, should be done differently in the future."

Three different D.C. Council Committees held oversight hearings in September and October on, among other things, OPC's response and Pepco's response to the power outages caused by the August storms and Hurricane Isabel, trees, and tree limb removal. The Commission later convened a community hearing and an informational hearing in November.

To ensure the collective and individual voices of the community would indeed be heard, on December 9, OPC sponsored a Consumer Forum. OPC's community outreach experience has shown there are many consumers with expertise who have excellent ideas and are willing to share them for the betterment of all. The Office views this Community Forum as a means to further the Commission's interest in fully exploring ways to improve preparedness and responsiveness in future occurrences while also restoring public confidence despite the inconveniences suffered following the storms and Hurricane Isabel. OPC will file with the Commission a community brief highlighting comments from consumers at the Consumer Forum.



“It’s the trees ...stupid!”

Example of mangled wires

OPC INITIATES CONSUMER COMPLAINT PETITION REGARDING OVERHEAD HANGING UTILITY WIRES

As a result of the changing competitive utility market in D.C., OPC received several consumer complaints about the safety conditions and appearance of overhead hanging utility wires in residential communities. Residents complained the electric, telephone and cable wires hung alarmingly low, enticing children to play with them. In addition, the complainants were concerned the mangled appearance of the wires decreased the value of their homes and of surrounding property. Low hanging overhead cables are susceptible to damage by falling tree limbs, high winds and heavy rain.

In August 2003, responding to consumers' concerns for their safety and general welfare, OPC filed a joint motion requesting the Public Service Commission order Verizon DC and Pepco to make repairs, as well as to update and improve the conditions of the utility wires and equipment in accordance with current industry practices.

Because the PSC does not regulate cable television, OPC collaborated with the D.C. Office of Cable and Television to resolve complaints about the condition of cable wires.

In December 2003, responding to OPC's motion, the PSC directing the PSC staff to conduct an immediate investigation of the alleged safety problems within 30 days. The Commission also requested its staff recommend what corrective action, if any, should be taken by the utility companies. The investigation is pending.

OPC hopes the PSC will use the breadth of its authority to have Pepco take any and all amerliorative means to ensure it is better prepared for the next hurricane season.

OPC will continue to represent the interests of D.C. ratepayers in this matter and advocate for a coordinated government agency collaborative.

As the utility marketplace dealt with drastic changes in 2003, including "customer choice," differing rates, and different billing strategies, OPC's Consumer Services Division (CSD) continued its concerted efforts to reach community groups and individuals to provide utility updates, as well as to educate consumers on their rights and responsibilities regarding utility services.

In 2003, CSD staff made presentations to and provided written information at 180 ANC, civic, and consumer meetings, such as the Federation of Civic and Citizens Associations, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Mayor's Office of Constituent Services, the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, the Asian Services Center, the Petey Greene Center, the French Street Neighborhood Association, D.C. Elderfest and the S.E. Collaborative Forum. Throughout the year, CSD set up information booths at various citywide fairs, festivals and summits to be present and responsive to questions and concerns about utility services to a broad spectrum of consumers.

CSD coordinated a comprehensive Energy Expo at the Model Cities Senior Center and brought community leaders and social service professionals into the Office to update them on issues and to inform them about consumers' rights and choices. This gave consumers knowledge and understanding to share with their clients and constituents.

Payment Center

OPC'S ADVOCACY RESCUED ANACOSTIA PAYMENT CENTER

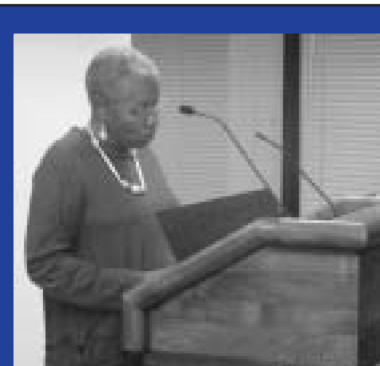
> *"Throughout this process it was impressive to see consumers tackle every aspect of this case."*
> *-Elizabeth Noël*

OPC firmly believes one of its roles is to educate consumers so they can speak out and voice their views on matters affecting their interests. Educated and empowered consumers are in the best position to articulate their needs and concerns. Citizens of Southeast Washington were galvanized in opposing Washington Gas' ("WG") unilateral decision to close its Anacostia Payment Center. In December 2002, after 12 successful years of operation in Southeast Washington, WG abruptly and unilaterally decided to close its Anacostia Payment Center and no longer take cash from its constituents. Outraged and discouraged by this action, some 35 residents testified in favor of keeping the Anacostia Payment Center open at two Community Hearings held on January 29, and February 1, 2003.

OPC provided the citizens with technical assistance and support. Each speaker brought a unique perspective to the closure of the Payment Center. Many spoke of its personal value to their lives or the lives of their communities; others spoke of its overriding value to the District and others alluded to the perceived retaliation of WG choosing the Anacostia Payment Center after many Ward 8 residents objected to WG's request for a rate increase in F.C. No. 989.

Despite WG's challenge to the Public Service Commission's actions as being beyond the PSC's statutory authority, the Commission ordered the Anacostia Center to remain open. WG appealed the PSC's decision to the D.C. Court of Appeals. OPC has intervened in the appeal to protect consumers' interests in keeping the center open. The court's decision is pending.

Below from L to R: Herbert Harris, Chairman of Consumer Utility Board; Christina Alou, Director of Office of Latino Affairs; and Council Member Sandy Allen (Ward 8)



Emergency Preparedness

OPC EDUCATED CONSUMERS ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

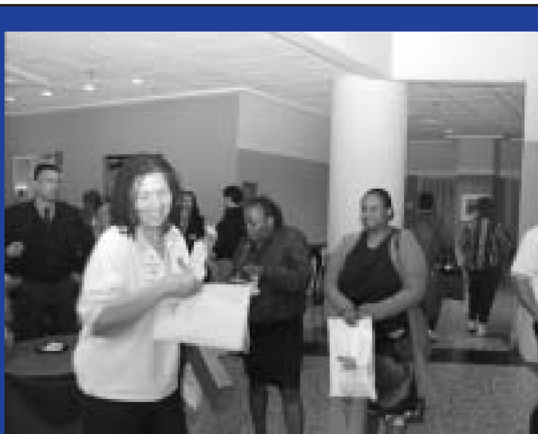
In response to what has become an experienced reality that "emergency events" can occur quickly and without warning, the Mayor directed the D.C. Office of Emergency Preparedness to hold community meetings in all wards of the City to inform citizens of the District's overall emergency plan.

The Office supported this initiative by participating in these community meetings and distributing OPC's emergency information materials such as the popular *"What to Do In Case of a Blackout..."* and safety information such as *"Protect Yourself and Your Family from 'Fake' Utility Workers,"* as well as lists of community resource groups.

Energy Expo

OPC SPONSORED 2003 6th ANNUAL ENERGY EXPO

In today's changing utility environment, consumers must implement proactive measures to make their homes more energy efficient. Efficient and effective consumption of energy can lead to lower utility bills. OPC early touted energy efficiency as a viable means for most consumers to gain control of their energy bills. OPC conducted two Energy Expo events in 2003, the first at the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center located at 800 Florida Avenue, N.E. on April 24, and the second in the fall at the Model Cities Senior Center located at 1901 Evarts Street, N.E. on November 20.



Above: OPC employee Elizabeth Brooks-Evans raffles energy efficient items at the 6th Annual Energy Expo

Energy Expo offers hands-on demonstrations to show District consumers how to make their homes more energy efficient. Companies such as Home Depot, Energy and Environmental Consultants, Inc., and many others have partnered with OPC to demonstrate to D. C. residents how to caulk around windows and weather strip their doors. Consumers are told what to consider when choosing new windows and view demonstrations on the importance and proper installation of insulation.

Along with CSD, the Office's litigation staff supports Energy Expo with substantive presentations to consumers, surveys of attendees, question and answer sessions, and taking consumer complaints. To date, the Office has held six citywide Energy Expos. A seventh is scheduled for November 2004.

OPC HANDLED 7,909 CONSUMER INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

In 2003, the Office received 6,710 consumer inquiries and 1,199 consumer complaints* for a combined total of 7,909 in 2003. Consumers lodged complaints about 15 utility service providers. Inquiry and complaint totals have been remarkably similar over the past three years. What has changed, however, is that Pepco has now supplanted Washington Gas as the utility most frequently causing of public consumers' dissatisfaction.

Consumers complained Pepco service costs took an increasingly larger share of their household budgets, and power outages were becoming more frequent and of longer duration. Expressing growing dissatisfaction, consumers complained the Company's overall quality of service was deteriorating.

For other service providers, consumers disputed accuracy of bills and complained about confusing bill formats, frequently estimated bills, delayed switchbacks between service providers, increasing surcharges and taxes, proliferation of low hanging overhead cables, slamming, and cramming.

Billing disputes and payment problems continued as the primary catalysts for consumer inquiries and complaints. Ninety six percent (96%) of the inquiries about all utility companies were about some aspect of billing. There were 3,217 inquiries about Pepco alone, many the result of prolonged power outages caused by late summer storms and Hurricane Isabel.

As in previous years, the majority of the 1,199 consumer complaints OPC received year-long centered around the three incumbent utilities. Washington Gas held the smallest share at 20%, Verizon DC was next with 34%, and Pepco garnered 40% of all complaints. Pepco's total was an increase of 12% over 2002. The increase in consumer inquiries and complaints about Pepco services is directly attributable to lengthy power outages, downed power lines, and poor emergency response by Pepco customer service representatives.

Consumer complaints about Verizon services increased significantly as well, rising from 28% of all complaints in 2002, to 34% of all complaints in 2003.

By law, the District is moving closer to less regulated, competition-driven utility markets. Yet in 2003, consumers were cautious in opening the lid of the "Pandora's Box" of retail competition. It seems they prefer to either remain with the "Big Three" or simply to renew their contracts with one of the few alternative energy service providers certified to serve District residents. Pepco Energy Services accounted for only 2% of the year's consumer complaints, down from 9% in 2002. The CLECs and "other phone companies" accounted for approximately 2% of the complaints received in 2003.

"Inquiries" are walk-ins or consumer calls to the Office, which do not require OPC staff intervention with a utility, but involve providing consumers with information about local utility programs, long distance services and other District agencies. Consumer complaints generally require negotiations between OPC staff and utility company representatives to resolve disputes, including quality of service, disconnection and re-connection, payments and billing.

The dramatic shifts in the District's public utilities markets that characterized the last two years were less evident in 2003. Complaints about WG services continued to decline from last year. Consumers slowly began to recover from "sticker shock" caused by increased wholesale natural gas costs that resulted in unprecedented natural gas service bills for more than two years. For the first time in 2002, Pepco complaints remained steady throughout the year, without the usual summer cooling season peak. In 2003, however, consumer dissatisfaction with Pepco continued as complaints surged to an all-time, year-long high.

The market share served by alternative energy suppliers peaked in late 2002. However, consumers' use of alternative suppliers began to decline in 2003. Even though the public utility market place may have appeared less volatile than last year, this may only be the calm before the storm. Perhaps anticipating more active competitive markets in the very near future, many consumers began to call for more stringent regulation of and consumer protections from energy and telecommunications service providers. With an uncertain marketplace, through OPC's outreach and education program consumers are being urged to practice energy efficiency to buffer household budgets from escalating utility costs.

Washington Gas

WG complaints, which began to decline in 2002, continued that trend in 2003. Consumer complaints about WG included dissatisfaction with wholesale natural gas rates resulting in payment issues, frequently estimated gas bills, changes in budget payment plan amounts without notice, incorrect pairing of meter and service lines causing incorrect billing, and an overall decline in WG's quality of customer service. Consumers often called OPC to obtain more detailed information about alternative energy supplier contracts, renewals and service options. Many complained the alternative natural gas suppliers did not provide enough information for them to make informed decisions about contract renewal.

Verizon DC

Consumer complaints about Verizon DC services increased from 27% of all complaints in 2002, to 34% of all complaints in 2003. Verizon DC customers called OPC to complain about complicated bill format, increased surcharges and taxes, high service and repair rates, difficulty in scheduling repairs, inadequately trained repair technicians, poorly informed customer service representatives and hidden fees associated with bundled packages. Teleco consumers frequently complained the Company's telephone response system was virtually impossible to use. Many consumers were unable or unwilling to navigate the voice mail system. Some found the menus ineffective, failing to offer a customer representative to help resolve problems. Inquiries and complaints about competitive local exchange carriers continued to decrease. Federal charges on local bills and long distance service charges continued to be significant causes for consumer dissatisfaction.

Pepco

Complaints about Pepco services accounted for 40% of all complaints OPC received in 2003. Consumers complained bill amounts increased despite no corresponding change in their usage pattern, such as adding high-energy demand appliances. Pepco customers called the Office to complain about frequent estimated meter readings and to challenge billing accuracy. Complaints about unbundled billing format decreased as consumers began to adjust to having separate charges for generation, transmission and distribution. Quality of service complaints, however, increased as consumers expressed frustration about inadequate responses, whether using Pepco's phone response system or talking with a customer service representative.

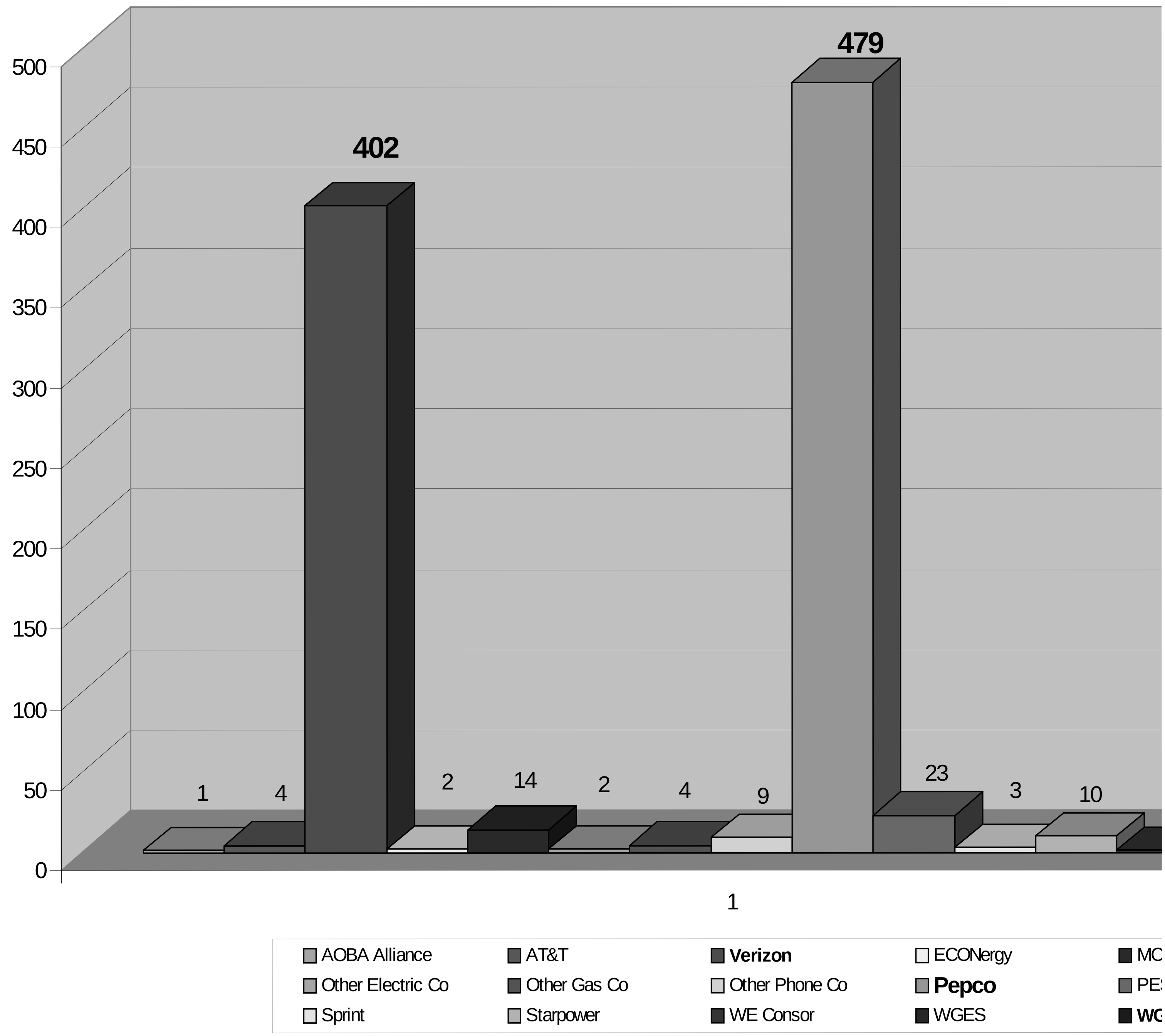
These chronic problems were compounded by late summer and early fall storms, the most damaging being Hurricane Isabel in September 2003. Complaints about Pepco surged as consumers reported outages from every quadrant of the City. OPC received 100 consumer complaints about Pepco in September. Many called to report power outages and downed trees and electric lines and to ask when service would be restored.

OPC reported information to Pepco's Power Outage Hotline staff as complaints and updates were received from residents. OPC staff took a photographic survey of hurricane damage throughout the City. It was included as part of Formal Case 982, the investigation into interruption of electric service in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel. CSD staff met with various community organizations to learn more about their experiences during the power outage emergencies. Many consumers reported outages in their neighborhoods were a matter of course, with loss of power often occurring during normal seasonal rains or high winds.

The 2003 consumer complaints trends show high consumer dissatisfaction with Pepco and Verizon DC services. Consumers continued to question whether competition in energy markets would really mean cost savings with safe reliable service. Pepco's power outages coupled with rising service costs and poor quality of customer service contributed to the loss of consumer confidence.

Both WG and Pepco consumers continued to complain about the frequency of estimated bills. Verizon customers expressed dissatisfaction with repair costs, bill format, taxes, fees and surcharges, and overall quality of customer service. With the Pepco rate cap scheduled to be lifted in January 2005, alternative energy suppliers may be attracted to the District's residential marketplace. In this new environment consumers must continue to have safe, affordable and reliable public utility service. The new, emerging competitive marketplace increases the demand for updated, comprehensive consumer protection regulations.

Consumer Complaints, 2003



OPC SPONSORED PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR CITIZEN CONSUMERS

OPC's Consumer Services Division is dedicated to delivering the highest quality service and care to the District's senior population. The Office has developed and participates in events catering specifically to seniors such as the annual Elderfest, Senior Day, the Caregivers for Seniors Conference, and the Senior Connection Expo sponsored by the D.C. Office on Aging.

OPC distributes materials and brochures published in large type covering key utility issues such as how utility service is being marketed, competitive service availability, energy conservation options, level payment plans, and security and safety issues. These activities are further supported through individual presentations to senior groups throughout the City in cooperation with the D.C. Office on Aging, the Washington Urban League, Barney Senior Programs, and others.

OPC CO-SPONSORED JOINT UTILITY DISCOUNT DAY (JUDD)

JUDD 2003 was co-sponsored by OPC, Pepco, Washington Gas, Verizon DC, the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority, and the D.C. Energy Office. It was held for the first time at the new Washington Convention Center. More than 6,900 District residents applied for discounts for their electric, natural gas, telephone and water services.

OPC continued to expand community outreach opportunities at JUDD with a program the Office initiated several years ago to include social services agencies and other District of Columbia agencies.

Last year the Office invited Healthy Babies, Barney Neighborhood House, Neighborhood Legal Services, Washington Scholarship Fund, Hermanos y Hermnanos, EOFULA and others. JUDD applicants benefit from OPC's outreach program by exploring opportunities in health care, employment, legal and family services. With additional government agency and nonprofit organization participation, JUDD has grown in its ability to provide even more "one-stop" services to D.C. consumers.

OPC PARTICIPATED IN MAYOR'S CITIZEN SUMMIT III

OPC Consumer Services staff, led by People's Counsel Elizabeth A. Noël, participated in the Mayor's 3rd Annual Citizen Summit III. More than 2,800 D.C. residents gathered on November 15, at the new Washington Convention Center to help plan the future of the city. Over the course of the day-long forum, participants in Citizen Summit III discussed their long-term vision for the future of the District and weighed trade-offs between policy options to address critical challenges facing the city.

Consumer Services Division staff setup a consumer education booth and shared consumer information about the services of the Office with thousands of D.C. residents in attendance.

The results of Citizen Summit III will be used by Mayor Williams to develop the citywide Strategic Plan, which will set out the programs and services to be put in place by government agencies. Results will shape budget priorities for the 2005 City budget.

OPC HOSTED ENERGY REGULATORY DELEGATION FROM JAPAN

Several members of a Japanese energy delegation met with OPC in January to gain an understanding of the role of the Office in a "deregulated" utility environment. The Delegation hoped to apply what they learned to their own energy deregulation efforts. The Delegation was briefed in numerous areas, including the structure of OPC, rule making and rate proceedings, consumer education and outreach activities, budget process, and fostering policy through relationships with consumer advocates in other states.

Top left: OPC briefs delegation from Japan

Bottom left: Nick Gumer, Accountant/Rate Case Manager, answers utility question from Delegation member

OPC SPONSORED CONSUMER EDUCATION FAIR TO UPDATE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Because many social service organizations in the District of Columbia interact on a daily basis with consumers of electricity, gas, and telephone services, it is crucial for them to be kept abreast of utility consumers' rights and choices so they can share information with their clients. OPC's Consumer Services Division sponsored a utility update designed specifically to focus on incremental changes in the utility market.

Herb Jones, Manager of CSD, and Jennifer Emma, Assistant People's Counsel, update various social agencies

OPC invited 25 agencies to the meeting held on July 10, 2003. The participants included the Near N.E. Collaborative, East of the River Collaborative, Georgia Avenue Collaborative, Change, Inc., Petey Greene Center, UPO Anacostia, and the Collaboratives of Southwest Near N.E., East River, and Georgia Avenue.

OPC OUTREACHED TO HISPANIC AND ASIAN COMMUNITIES FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION

The Consumer Services Division increased OPC's presence in the Hispanic and Asian American communities by focusing special attention on the provision of utility issues education to churches and social services agencies catering to low-income families or offering family counseling and rehabilitation to its clients. CSD highlighted its availability to help educate their constituent community through presentations, participation at community fairs, and on an individual basis.

The 2003 Hispanic & Asian American outreach included:

- Conducting a special briefing for the Latino Community Education Grantees Meeting sponsored by the Office on Latino Affairs (OLA).

- Disseminating OPC bilingual educational materials at the Mayor's Latino Cultural Fair & Town Hall Meeting. This event, hosted by Mayor Williams and OLA at Cardozo High School, was held during National Hispanic Heritage Month.

- Attending the Executive Summary of the State of Latinos in the District of Columbia and Unveiling of the First-Report of the State of Latino Kids in the District of Columbia held at the Council of Latino Agencies (CLA).

- Joining the Carlos Rosario International Career Center and Public Charter School staff, students, family members, friends, and agencies' representatives in annual celebrations of Black History Month and Asian Spring Festival and Recognition Ceremony to the School's Outstanding Staff and Students.

Also, CSD was present at the Greater Washington Ibero American Chamber of Commerce (GWIACC) and the Maryland/ District of Columbia Minority Supplier Development Council Procurement Fair 2003. CSD was able to meet and provide information about the Office to the corporate sector and Hispanic-owned businesses in the District to share and place in their businesses for their walk-ins clients. The Chamber continues to support CSD's outreach efforts to educate all District residents.

The Office also reached out to the Hispanic media by interviewing with alternative language newspapers and radio stations, as well as contributing to Spanish language papers. CSD staff effectively supported members of the Hispanic and Asian communities by providing technical assistance to those wishing to participate in the regulatory process in testifying before the Public Service Commission. OPC assisted consumers in expressing their concerns in matters such as the proposed closing of the Anacostia Payment center, during Washington Gas' rate increase request, FC No. 1016, and before the public hearings on PEPCO's Hurricane Isabel power outages.

OPC's Consumer Services Division held and participated in various bilingual presentations during the year as well.

- The Energy Services Roundtable Discussion held by the District of Columbia Energy Office to discuss all energy assistance programs and services available to residents in the District;

- Participated in presentation at the Spanish Catholic Center *(Centro Católico Hispano)* and provided an update on utility issues to seniors at the Spanish Senior Center *(EOFULA)*

- Participated in the bilingual "Annual Community Health & Resource Fair" at the Rosemount Center, working directly with parents in the surrounding multicultural community to educate them on current utility issues

- Attended the D.C. Housing Finance Agency's monthly workshops, and educating first time home buyers in the District of Columbia on the importance of utility issues and how to address disputes.

- Kept the Aging Services Center director abreast of current utility issues to be shared with the Asian community, their news media contacts for publication in the Asian community newspapers and walk-ins. The Asian Services Center as well as the Latino based-organizations leaders and agencies dealing with a multicultural community were opportunities for CSD to reach, educate and jointly serve the diverse community they represent

- "Language Line," which provides interpretation and translation services in more than 140 languages, continues to assist OPC in serving walk-ins and callers to facilitate consumers' abilities to address their utility issues with OPC in their own languages

Press releases, public service announcements and brochures translated and distributed to the Hispanic media included the following:

- *La OPC Recurre Nuevamente a la Comisión de Servicios Públicos de D.C. para Iniciar una Investigación sobre los Cortes de Servicios de PEPCO Durante el Año 2003* - OPC Again Calls on the D.C. Public Service Commission to Initiate an Investigation into PEPCO's "2003 Strom Outages" **(public service announcement)**

- *Mirant Demanda a OPC para que Cese de Representar los Intereses de los Consumidores de D.C.* - Mirant Sues to Stop OPC from Representing the Interests of D.C. Ratepayers **(public service announcement)**

- People's Counsel Elizabeth A. Noel filed a "fast track" complaint before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) asking the Commission to use its authority to require Mirant L.P., to honor the power contracts it holds with PEPCO **(press release)**

- *La OPC Convoca a una Reunión Pública y Audiencia Comunitaria para Mejorar la Respuesta de PEPCO a los Corte de Electricidad* - OPC Calls for Public/Roundtable & Community Hearings to Improve PEPCO's Response to Power Outages **(public service announcement)**

- ¡*La OPC Rechaza el Alza de Tarifas, Busca Una Reducción de $9,5 millones en las tarifas de la Washington Gas!* OPC Rejects Rate Hike, Seeks $9.5 Million Washington Gas Rate Reduction! **(press release)**

- *Los Consumidores de Washington Salen Ganando! La Washington Gas Recibe Orden de Mantener Abierto el Centro de Atención al Cliente de la Zona de SE!* - DC Consumers Win! Washington Gas Ordered to Keep SE Customer Service Center Open! **(public service announcement)**

- *Un Tanto a Favor de los Consumidores de Gas Natural de Washington! La OPC ha Logrado Rebatir el Incremento de la Tarifa del Gas* - Natural Gas Ratepayers Slam Dunk Washington Gas! OPC Successful in Turning Back Washington Gas' Rate Increase **(public service announcement)**

- *Washington Propose el Alza de las Tarifas!* - Washington Gas Proposes to Raise Your Rates! **(consumer alert)**

- *Como Leer su Medidor de Energía* - How to Read Your Electric Meter **(brochure)**

The Management Information Systems (MIS) Division of the Office is responsible for providing technological tools for effective service delivery and enhancing community education and outreach capabilities. The Office's computer network and information systems services provide technological tools to support a host of options in producing litigation and educational outreach materials.

MIS services give OPC the IT resources to analyze and present data, to exchange information, to conduct research, to link with national groups, and to provide computer support to the staff of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer assigned to OPC. MIS maintains all computer system network operations and all connections to remote telecommunications sites, including the Internet and the Wide Area Network (WAN) of District government.

Each year, the Office evaluates and reviews its technological systems to plan and effectively implement new enhancements. In 2003, the MIS Division completed computer hardware and software upgrades for all OPC staff. Primarily, Windows 95 and Windows 98 operating systems were replaced with Windows XP Professional on all-in-one workstations. The addition of more capable equipment permits the Office to take advantage of more capable software.

Data transfer, workstation configuration and operating system upgrades were completed by MIS staff. New workstations offer marked improvements over the outdated systems. The new flat screen monitors and wireless mouse and keyboard additions provide workspace comfort and ergonomic protection.

The current OPC software configuration includes a host of database, spreadsheet, and desktop publishing applications. Upgrades to e-mail, anti-virus, Web browser, fax, security network monitoring and remote telecommunications applications were a welcome addition. The current 10/100 cabling specifications support high-speed Internet and data transfer protocols on the Office's T1 line. In-house staff training, specific to new software, made the transition smooth and uneventful.

In 2003, OPC also stepped up its activity and use of its website for education and outreach. Revised web formats have reduced page load time for consumers and the addition of materials in specific interest areas allows browsers to access tips and emergency information with ease. OPC often uses website documents as a backdrop to slide show presentations, workshops, conferences, community meetings, and other relevant educational and outreach forums. These documents are available upon request from the Office by telephone or by submitting an online website request.

The customized Consumer Information Database (CID) is another valuable technological tool. With MIS support, the Consumer Services Division uses the CID to recognize and analyze consumer complaints filed with the Office. Consumers' inquiries and concerns are recorded in the CID, which offers a basis for trends analysis and the expansion of OPC's focus on areas of concern.

OPC will continue to use technology to create legal and educational documents, analyze reports, compare data pools, complete inventories, schedule community activities, enhance charts and graphs, create online business forms, incorporate digital information, including photos, into documents and its website, and take advantage of available professional management tools. Use of OPC's technological resources in protecting, educating and advocating for consumers remains a vital and integral part of the Office's work.

Operations Division

The Operations Division handles matters relating to human resources, procurement, facility management and other day-to-day activities of the Office. Operations also is the link to the staff of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer assigned to OPC.

Source of Funds

The Office's funding is entirely revenue neutral to the District's gross budget.

Like other D.C. government agencies, OPC's budget is a part of the District's annual budget process. The Office's request is submitted to the District Office of the Budget, which transmits the entire District budget to the Council for approval. This request, once approved by the Council, is sent to Congress, which must approve the District's annual budget.

No portion of the monies, however, approved by Congress or expended by the Office come from general revenues. Rather, each of the public utilities doing business in the District pays a pro rata share of OPC's annual budget based on a reimbursement formula prescribed by law. This formula is tied to the jurisdictional valuation or rate base (the value of plant and equipment in a utility service area) of each company. As a practical matter, the Office functions with two budgets: the annual (appropriated) budget for day-to-day operations and the assessment budget for expenses related to specific cases.

Annual Budget

The annual budget provides office expenses such as staff salaries, fringe benefits, rent, professional contracts, utilities, supplies, printing, equipment and maintenance, training, and periodicals. The underlying theory for OPC's annual budget being reimbursed by the utility companies is that the cost of regulating public utilities should be imposed on the regulated companies. In practice, however, these costs are included in the rates charged to ratepayers. Thus, neither the utilities' shareholders nor District taxpayers pay these costs. Rather, ratepayers alone bear these costs as a part of utility rates.

Unused funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year, if greater than 5 percent of that year's budget, must be refunded to the utilities on the same pro rata basis used for assessing them.

Assessment Process

Even with the slow advent of retail competition and restructuring in the District there have been and may continue to be fewer rate cases. This, however, does not mean there will be less litigation. While the nature of formal cases heard by the Commission may have changed, there is much to do in the Office's litigation efforts. In fact, the issues in the cases before the PSC have proven to be increasingly complex with far ranging effects, both potentially and in fact.

OPC funds its litigation efforts by what is known as a special franchise fee tax which is levied against the affected utility to fund any costs associated with litigating matters before the PSC. These monies are used to pay legal advisors, expert witnesses and technical consultants, as well as the Office's administrative expenses associated with a particular case.

If the Office determines to participate in a proceeding before the PSC, decisions are made about consulting services needed, if any. Proposals are solicited and contracts are ultimately executed. OPC's Agency Administrator (Associate People's Counsel for Operations) drafts a Notice of Agency Fund Requirements (NOAFR). This document outlines the resources needed and includes the copies of the contracts.

The NOAFR is served on the affected utility, which has five days to object. Objections can only be based on 1) the reasonableness of the contract amount; 2) the work to be performed is not reasonably connected to the proceeding; or 3) the requested amount exceeds the statutory millage limit. (See Appendix) If there is no objection, the People's Counsel files the NOAFR with the PSC, which must within ten days issue an order directing the company to make the requested deposit to the Office's Agency Fund.

If the affected utility objects to the NOAFR, it must do so in writing. The Agency Administrator must respond in writing. The objection and the response are then made part of the official record and are included in the NOAFR filed by the People's Counsel with the Commission.

Assessment Formulas

This section provides comprehensive information about the assessment process, including the basis for assessing the public utilities for the Office's participation before the Commission and reimbursements of unexpended funds.

Current rate bases for each utility and amounts available for assessments

Potomac Electric Power Company	
Rate base:	$1,639,127,000
Maximum assessment for a rate case:	$ 4,097,818
Maximum assessment for an investigation	$ 819,564
Washington Gas	
Rate base:	$242,262,145
Maximum assessment for a rate case:	$ 605,655
Maximum assessment for an investigation	$ 121,131
Verizon DC	
Rate base:	$402,456,000
Maximum assessment for a rate case:	$ 1,006,140
Maximum assessment for an investigation	$ 201,228

Assessment Calculations

To determine the maximum amount the Office can assess in a rate case, using Verizon DC as an example, assume the Office determines it needs five consultants for a total of $300,000 in addition to $20,000 for administrative expenses. Verizon DC's current rate base is $402,456,000. The $320,000 figure cannot be greater than one-quarter of one percent of $402,456,000, which is calculated below.

$402,456,000 x .0025 = $1,006,140

The request of $320,000 does not exceed the statutory millage limit of $1,006,140 and is therefore permissible.

The amounts assessed against the millage limit for rate cases are not cumulative unless there are several requests in the same proceeding. If one rate case required several assessments, i.e., the case required additional unexpected services necessitating additional funds, then the total amount requested in all the NOAFRs for that proceeding could not exceed the statutory millage limit. For example, if there were a rate case in which a NOAFR requested $250,000 and two subsequent NOAFRs requested $10,000, and $30,000, the total request for the three NOAFRs, $290,000, does not exceed the millage limit and would be permissible. If, however, three rate cases were filed by the same utility in one year, using the Verizon DC example, the Office could assess up to the maximum amount of $1,006,140 for <u>each</u> case.

In all other cases (those not involving the setting of rates), the requested amount cannot exceed one-twentieth of one percent of the utility's jurisdictional valuation. Using Verizon DC as the example, assume the Office determines it needs $47,000 for consulting fees and $2,500 for administrative expenses in an investigation docketed by the Commission. The $49,500 cannot and does not exceed one-twentieth of one percent of $402,456,000 as calculated below.

$402,456,000 x .0005 = $201,228

The request of $49,500 does not exceed the statutory millage limit of $201,228.

Unlike rate cases, the amounts assessed against the millage limit for investigations are cumulative. If 12 investigations were filed by the same utility in one year, using the Verizon DC example, the Office could assess for a maximum of $201,228 cumulatively. In other words, the costs of litigating <u>all</u> 12 cases could not exceed $201,228.

Staffing Levels

As can be seen from the following charts, over the past 9 years the Office has experienced significant changes in staffing levels. OPC's budget requests for this same period have been careful and measured. Because District ratepayers alone bear the costs of OPC's operations, the Office recognizes the absolute need to spend wisely. As a result, OPC makes every effort to ensure annual budget requests "hold the line" to previous requests.

The drop in staff began in FY 1996 when the staff level decreased from 38 to 30, the result of D.C. Council mandates to make sweeping reductions throughout District government. Further Council-mandated reductions came in FY 1997, bringing the staff to 24. OPC's budget is considered "below the line," i.e., not counted as a portion of the District's annual budget request. It should be noted that neither the staff cuts nor the budget reductions had any impact on the District's budget or the size of its workforce.

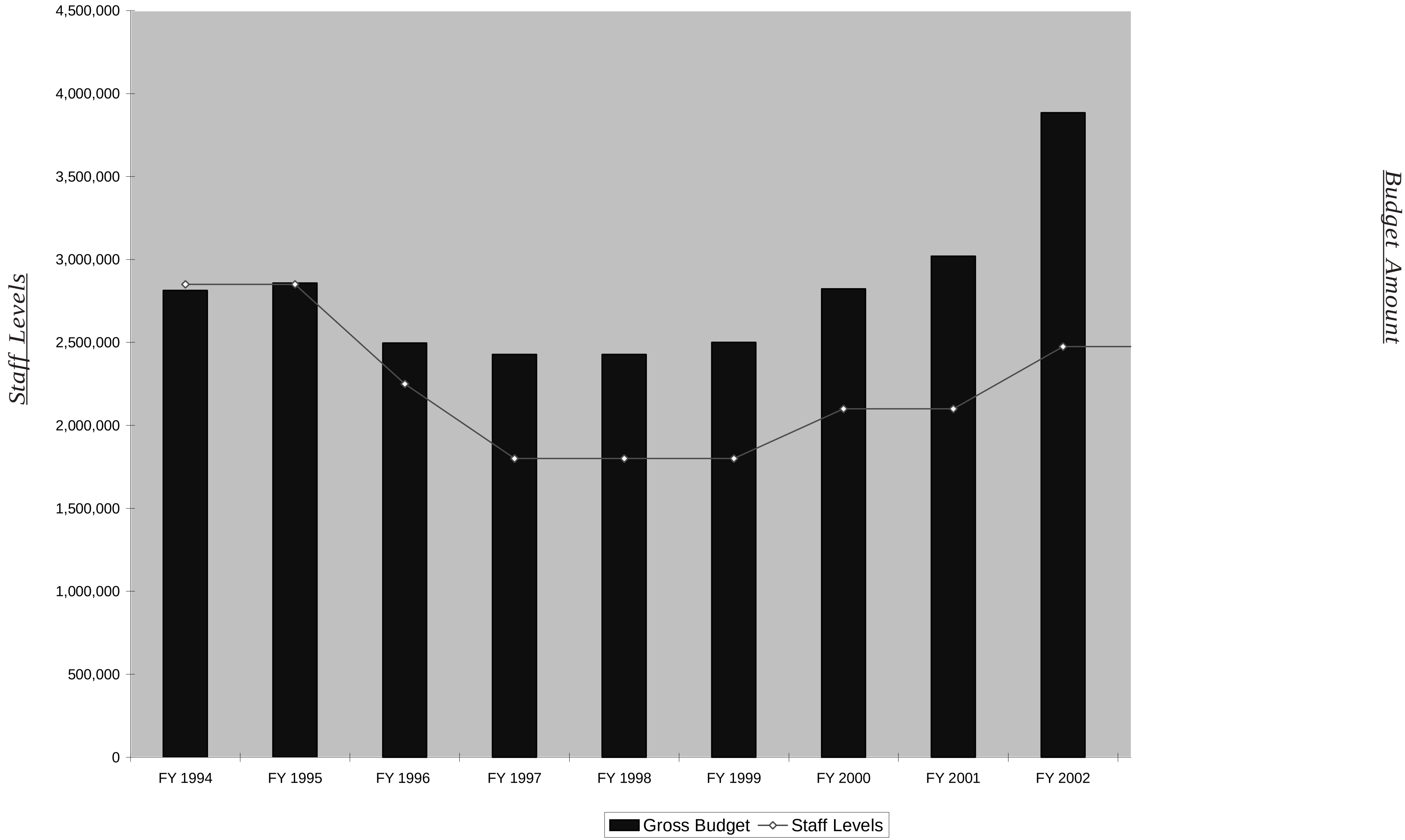
In FY 2000, due to the increased responsibilities imposed on OPC arising out of the District's "Telecommunications Competition Act of 1996" and the "Retail Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 1999," the Council approved an increase in OPC's staffing by 4, from 24 to 28. **Two of these positions, however, are staff of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, not OPC employees**. In FY 2002, the Council again recognized the new mandates imposed warranted an additional increase of staff by 5, from 28 to 33. This staffing level persists through FY 2004.

In short, <u>OPC has 5 fewer staff persons</u> in FY 2003 than it had in FY 1994 and 1995, notwithstanding the fact the Agency's mandates and responsibilities have been increased substantially as a result of legislation enacted in the District of Columbia. Despite a smaller staff, OPC has demonstrated its ability to effectively and efficiently operate maximizing outreach and litigation.

Evolution of the Office of the People's Counsel's Budget and Staff Levels

Year	Gross Budget	*Incr./Decr. Change* (+/-)	Percentage of +/-	Staff Levels	Staff (+/-)	*Staff* Percentage
FY 1994	2,814,000	0	100.00%	38	0	0.00%
FY 1995	2,859,000	45,000	1.60%	38	0	0.00%
FY 1996	2,497,000	(317,000)	-11.30%	30	(8)	-21.10%
FY 1997	2,428,000	(386,000)	-13.70%	24	(14)	-36.80%
FY 1998	2,428,000	(386,000)	-13.70%	24	(14)	-36.80%
FY 1999	2,501,000	(313,000)	11.10%	24	(14)	-36.80%
FY 2000	2,823,000	9,000	0.30%	28	(10)	-26.30%
FY 2001	3,020,020	206,020	7.30%	28	(10)	-26.30%
FY 2002	3,884,000	1,070,000	38.00%	33	(5)	-13.20%
FY 2003	3,978,000	1,164,000	41.40%	33	(5)	-13.20%
FY 2004	4,178,000	1,364,000	48.50%	33	(5)	-13.20%

Evolution of the Office of the People's Counsel's Budget and Staff Levels



Where Does Your Money Go?

OPC'S MANDATE

OPC's funding mechanisms allow it to fulfill its statutory mandate to represent the interests of D.C. consumers and to ensure that D.C. utility rates are just, reasonable and affordable.

CONSUMERS' BILLS

Consumers, through rates, pay all costs for the operation of the Office of the People's Counsel.

OPC'S COSTS

These costs include OPC's overhead costs, and expenses for legal representation and consumer outreach.

OPERATING BUDGET

All costs associated with OPC's day-to-day operations, community outreach, and advocacy are paid through appropriated funding. On an annual basis, D.C. utilities pay a fixed percentage of OPC's costs to the District of Columbia government. In turn, the utilities recover the costs from consumers in rates.

ASSESSMENT BUDGET

OPC's participation in legal cases is also paid by consumers through rates. The utilities are assessed for OPC's costs in their cases on a case-by-case basis.

OPC's Budget Includes Two Types of Funds

APPROPRIATED FUNDS

Provide money for day-to-day operations of the Office, including rent, employee salaries, equipment, etc. unused funds are returned at the end of the year. If the remainder is 5% or more of OPC's total budget, these funds are returned to the utilities.

ASSESSED FUNDS

Pay for the expenses needed to conduct hearings and investigations, including expert witnesses, technical consultants and legal assistance. A utility is required to pay these expenses in each case for which it is responsible.

Did You Know?

Less than half a penny of each dollar you pay a utility goes to OPC!

STAFF LISTING FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL*

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Jean Gross-Bethel
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Assistant People's Counsel

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Economist

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Senior Economist

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Community Education & Outreach Specialist

Omica Bullock
Office Assistant

Kami Corbett
Consumer Education Specialist

Silvia Garrick
Community Education & Outreach Specialist

Phillip Harmon
Public Policy Analyst

Herbert Jones
Manager, Consumer Services Division

Laurence Jones
Public Policy Analyst

Pamela Nelson
Community Education & Outreach Specialist

Ardella Newman
Consumer Complaints Specialist

Operations

Tara Love
Receptionist

Derryl Stewart King
Associate People's Counsel for Operations

Frank Scott, Jr.
Administative Officer

Bonnie Stallings
Support Service Specialist

Management Information Systems

Akara "Yoshi" Chandee
Webmaster

Anthony Lee
Computer Specialist

Darlene Wms-Wake
Network Administrator

**As of December 31, 2003.*

Over the years, people have asked OPC questions about matters other than advocacy, education, and outreach. Frequently, their questions have been more about the operational side of the Office.

One of OPC's guiding philosophies is that as public servants, we are here to serve you, District of Columbia ratepayers and consumers. Moreover, we believe much of what we do is a matter of public record. Also, because D.C. ratepayers alone fund the Office and its activities, OPC is always mindful of its expenditures, making wise and careful choices about how our funds are spent. In that vein, here are some of those questions and OPC's responses.

Why doesn't OPC look like a typical government office? Everything in the suite must be new and expensive.

OPC has been in its current space since November 1990, and is in the fourth year of its second ten-year lease. Prior to moving in the current space, OPC took advantage of the landlord's buildout allowance (the dollars per sq. ft. paid by a commercial landlord to customize space) to design and execute the physical layout.

Some of the furniture has been in the Office for more than 18 years. Much of what is in the space has been here since 1990. Some of what was purchased was used, but in excellent condition. New furniture was always bought at negotiated prices. Much of the artwork either was free or reduced drastically when bargaining with a furniture vendor.

The carpet and the upholstery are usually cleaned every 18-24 months, and individual offices are painted when an employee leaves the Agency. Staff are encouraged to take care of their individual space and the furniture in it. OPC employees even clean the staff lounge. (The refrigerator and the microwave are almost 20 years old. All the utensils are donations by staff.)

How can OPC afford all the equipment it has?

All OPC equipment, copiers, computers, fax machines, printers, postage meter, telephones, etc. are used in every aspect of the Office's advocacy, education and outreach. The copiers and the computer equipment in particular are integral components of the Office's ability to litigate and prepare brochures, fact sheets, and other educational material, including the Annual Report.

OPC presently has three copiers. The Xerox 1090 was purchased in 1993; the Xerox 5100, the heavy duty copier was purchased in 1993; and the color copier was purchased in 1998.

All the copiers were bought through shrewd and careful negotiations and purchased under "lease-to-purchase agreements." The Agency bought the copiers over a three-year period, making each payment annually rather than monthly. At the end of the three years, OPC owned the copier. This purchase method affords the most cost savings when compared to an outright purchase or a monthly payment purchase.

Given the ages of some of the equipment, how does OPC keep all its equipment running reliably?

The answer is simply maintenance agreements. When equipment is under warranty, the price of repairs is not a factor. When the warranty expires, price is a factor. In OPC's experience the cost for frequent repairs of heavily used equipment such as the copiers is always much higher than the cost of a maintenance agreement.

With three copiers, the ages of this equipment, and the constant use by 30 people, repairs are frequently needed. The per trip cost to repair equipment far exceeds what the Office pays for maintenance agreements. Moreover, without maintenance agreements, OPC would not have any priority on service calls.

What is the process and what are the standards for review in determining refunds to affected utilities for assessments in OPC's Miscellaneous Trust Fund?

With respect to refunds, District law invests the following responsibility on the People's Counsel. *"The balance of any sums deposited in each fund remaining after the final disposition of the proceeding or any litigation arising therefrom shall be returned to the utility which made the deposit and shall be credited to the account of the utility from which the deposit was made."*[1]

The Agency has a well-established process for reviewing the Office's Miscellaneous Trust Fund to determine when and in what cases it is necessary and appropriate to make a refund to an affected utility.

Upon submission by OPC's Chief Financial Officer of the draft of the annual *"D.C. Code, 2001 Ed. Section 34-912(a)(7) Report of the Office of the People's Counsel of the District of Columbia's Agency Fund Deposits, Disbursements & Contracts in Compliance"* a review of the Report is made to consider what monies, if any, should be refunded to an affected utility.

To make an informed decision, the People's Counsel meets with the Deputy People's Counsel, the Associate People's Counsel for Operations, and the staff attorneys assigned to the cases before the PSC and pending before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The status of ongoing cases, including required participation in task force or working group efforts, is taken into account. Based on these considerations, the People's Counsel, determines what refunds, if any, are to be made.

The People's Counsel then asks the OPC Chief Financial Officer to effectuate the refunds as soon as practicable. Letters are sent to the presidents of the affected utilities advising them of the impending refunds.

1 D.C. Code, 2001 Ed. § 34-912(a)(2) (emphasis added).

Media Appearances in 2003

The Office employed many methods of public outreach with the fundamental goals of protecting consumer rights and educating and empowering D.C. ratepayers. OPC used press releases, as well as submissions to print and appearances, broadcast television, radio and cable TV to inform and educate District consumers on critical issues. The People's Counsel responded to dozens of media requests leading to coverage on issues as diverse as the effect of the Mirant bankruptcy on local ratepayers to the closing of the Washington Gas Payment Center to the hazards of the tree canopy to the electric infrastructure of the District. Turn the page to view a sampling of the press releases and media articles prepared by OPC or articles quoting the Office as a source, as well as media appearances.

September 2, 2003: OPC calls for Public/Roundtable & Community Hearings to improve PEPCO's Response to Power Outages

September 7, 2003: More Power to the People: Outlook Section article; Washington Post Page B-8, PEPCO-Mirant Bankruptcy–recoving costs associated with Business ventures is supposed to be a risk for investors–not ratepayers

September 8, 2003: OPC seeks FERC Ruling on PEPCO-Mirant Contacts

September 9, 2003: WPFW-FM Radio: with Gloria Minott: People's Counsel interview with Minott explaining the need for investigation of the August 2003 storm outages OPC has filed before the Public Service Commission

September 16, 2003: Mirant Sues to Stop OPC from Representing the Interests for D.C. Ratepayers

September 23, 2003: USA Tonight with Derek McGinty: WUSA-TV 7pm Interview with People's Counsel Elizabeth A. Noël, re: OPC's call for PEPCO outage investigation

September 24, 2003: OPC Again Calls on the D.C. Public Service Commission to initiate an Investigation into PEPCO's "2003 Storm Outages"

September 24, 2003: Despite second storm, power restoration efforts continue: Electric Power Daily, Page 1. Piggyback storm knocks out service to thousands during Isabel restoration, in D.C., "It's the trees, stupid!"

September 24, 2003: Storm Deals Another Knockout Punch: Washington Post: Metro, Page B-1 Power Utilities Report 100,000 New Outages

September 24, 2003: WMAL-AM Radio 9:20am with Sam Donaldson: People's Counsel Noël interviews with Sam Donaldson discussing the problems with trees crashing PEPCO's power distribution system and the need for a comprehensive inter-jurisdictional effort to address this problem

September 25, 2003: OPC Files for Investigation to Remove Graffiti from Public Pay Telephones: Tell Owners to Clean Up or Remove Graffiti Marred Phones

September 27, 2003: Blaming PEPCO; Editorial Page, Washington Post, Page A-24, Post editorial writer questions whether PEPCO could have done more

September 29, 2003: Most Utilities Finish Isabel Recovery: Electric Utility Week; Page B2 As utilities throughout the path of Hurricane Isabel wind down repairs, opinions, criticism and questions remain about restoration efforts

September 30, 2003: Diagnosing our Power Problems: Letter to the Editor, Washington Post Page A-18, addressing PEPCO's back to back August and September power outages

October 12, 2003: Pepco Customers Will Pay Price for Power Play: Columnist Marc Fisher parallels the effect of divestiture in California to the financial peril PEPCO and local ratepayers now face

October 18, 2003: U.S. Asked To Review Electric Companies: Area lawmakers have called on the U.S. Department of Energy to investigate the condition of Maryland's electricity system and determine why local power companies saw so many customers lose service, for so long, during Hurricane Isabel

October 19, 2003: Once in a Century? Following the power outages caused by Hurricane Floyd in 1999, Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. told its customers not to worry, since Floyd was a "once-in-40-years storm"

October 22, 2003: Utilities grilled over response to Isabel Area utility companies did not plan adequately for Hurricane Isabel last month and failed to communicate with many customers left without power, officials from Maryland and the District of Columbia charged yesterday

Press Releases

January 23, 2004: OPC Proposes Sweeping Amendments to Update the Utility Consumer Bill of Rights

March 25, 2003: DC Consumers Win! Washington Gas Ordered to Keep SE Customer Service Center Open!

June 27, 2003: OPC Rejects Rate Hike, Seeks $9.5 Million Washington Gas Rate Reduction!

September 2, 2003: OPC Calls for Public Roundtable & Commu nity Hearings to Improve PEPCO's Response to Power Outages

September 8, 2003: OPC Seeks FERC Ruling on PEPCO-Mirant Contracts

September 16, 2003: Mirant Sues to Stop OPC from Representing the Interests of D.C. Ratepayers

September 25, 2003: OPC Files for Investigation to Remove Graffiti from Public Pay Telephones: Tell Owners To Clean Up or Remove Graffiti Marred Phones

September 25, 2003: OPC AGAIN CALLS ON THE D.C. PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION INTO PEPCO'S "2003 STORM OUTAGES

November 10, 2003: Public Service Commission Rejects most of Washington Gas' Rate Hike: Smaller 2.6% Increase to be in effect for 2003 Winter Heating Season

The purpose of this resource list is to provide DC consumers with information about other resources available to them.

Resource List

Complaints about gas, electric, & local phone service in DC

DC Office of the People's Counsel
(202) 727-3071
www.opc-dc.gov

DC Public Service Commission
(202) 626-5100
www.dcpsc.org

Customer Choice Gas Program
1-877-924-6673
www.washingtongas.com

To Purchase Discount Heating Oil

Buyers Up
(202) 588-1000
(202) 546-4996
www.buyersup.com

Complaints about cable bills or service

DC Office of Cable Television
(202) 671-0066
www.octt.dc.gov

Landlord/Tenant Issues

DC Tenants Rights Office
(202) 442-4610

Complaints about utility service in Maryland

MD Public Service Commission
(410) 767-8026
www.psc.state.md.us/psc

MD Office of the People's Counsel
(410) 767-8150
www.opc.state.md.us

Complaints about long-distance telephone service
(i.e.: services you did not order, etc.)

Federal Communications Commission
(888) 225-5322
www.fcc.gov

To verify your long distance provider
(free service)
(700) 555-4141

Complaints about utility service in VA

VA State Corporation Commission
(804) 371-9611
www.state.va.us/scc

VA Office of Attorney General, Insurance & Utilities Regulatory Section
(804) 786-3433
www.oag.state.va.us

Legal information, legal services & dispute resolution programs

AARP, Legal Counsel for the Elderly
(clients 60 & up)
(202) 434-2170
www.aarp.org/states/dc

Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Washington
(202) 393-8000
www.dc.bbb.org

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Washington
(800) 747-4222

DC Bar Legal Information Help Line
(202) 626-3499
http://www.dcbar.org

DC Law Students In Court
(202) 638-4798
www.law.georgetown.edu/clinics/lsic

DC Superior Court Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Program
(202) 879-1549

George Washington University Consumer Mediation Clinic
(202) 994-7463

The Legal Aid Society of DC
(202) 628-1161
www.legalaiddc.org

Neighborhood Legal Services Program
(202) 682-2700
For Maryland: (301) 927-6800
www.neighborhoodlaw.org

Energy Assistance & Social Service Agencies

DC Energy Office Hotline
(202) 673-6750
www.dcenergy.org

Salvation Army
Washington Area Fuel Fund
(202) 332-5000

United Planning Organization
(202) 610-0466

Catholic Charities
(202) 526-4100

Lutheran Social Services
(202) 723-3000

Change Inc.
(202) 387-3725

Anacostia Community Outreach
(202) 889-5607

Iona House (for Seniors)
(202) 966-1055

Community Family Life Services
(202) 347-0511

Complaints about water & sewer bills

DC Water & Sewer Administration
(202) 354-3600
www.dcwasa.com

Credit Reporting Agencies

Equifax
(800) 685-1111
www.equifax.com

Experian
(888) 397-3742
www.experian.com

TransUnion
(800) 916-8800
www.transunion.com

One-Time Assistance for Mortgage & Rent Payments

Ward 1:	Change, Inc.	(202) 387-3725
	Latino Agencies (English/Spanish)	(202) 328-9451
Ward 2:	Columbia Heights	(202) 483-4547
	North Capitol Collaborative	202) 898-1800
	Latino Agencies (English/Spanish)	(202) 328-9451
Ward 3:	Latino Agencies (English/Spanish)	(202) 328-9451
Ward 4:	Gorgia Avenue /Rock Creek	202) 722-1815
	Near Northeast Community Corporation	(202) 399-6941
Ward 5:	Catholic Charities Assistance Program *(call after 11am)*	(202) 723-2542
	Near Northeast Community Corporation	(202) 399-6941
	Plymouth Congregational Church	(202) 723-5330
Ward 6:	Capitol Hill Group Ministries	(202) 547-0190
	Community Family Life Services	(202) 347-0511
	South West Community House	(202) 488-7210
Ward 7:	Marshall Heights Community Development	(202) 396-1201 ext 140
	United Planning Organization (UPO)	(202) 610-0466
Ward 8:	Catholic Charities	(202) 544-3442
	United Planning Organization (UPO)	(202) 562-3800
	Petey Green Center	(202) 562-2937

Complaints about telemarketing

To register your home phone, fax, pager, and cell phone numbers free of charge on the National Do-Not-Call Registry:

Go to the web at www.donotcall.gov or by calling toll-free: 1-888-382-1222.

To report telemarketing or other telephone related fraud:

National Fraud Information Center
(800) 876-7060

To request that your name not be sold to mailing list companies, write to:

STOP THE MAIL
PO Box 9008
Farmington, NY 11735

Contact us at:

Office of the People's Counsel
1133 15th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202.727.3071
Fax: 202.727.1014
TTY/TDD: 202.727.2876
Email: ccceo@opc-dc.gov
Website: www.opc-dc.gov

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