

Duke Power seeks 19 percent rate hike

By DEBORAH GOODSON
DTH Staff Writer

If Duke Power Company's request for a 19.7-percent rate increase is approved, students could be paying as much as 30 cents more a day for electricity by the end of the year, a Duke spokesman said Thursday.

Duke Power official Palmer Holt said the utility told the North Carolina Utilities Commission Wednesday that it must have a 19.7-percent increase to meet consumer demand.

"If a person pays \$1.53 a day for electricity, his bill would rise to \$1.83 a day with the increase," Holt said.

Holt said Duke Power needed \$211 million a year for operation and another \$110 million to bring Unit 1 of the McGuire nuclear plant into service by the end of October. McGuire is 17 miles northwest of Charlotte on Lake Norman.

"Our operation costs have also increased due to inflation and government regulations," Holt said.

"Since 1976, our rate increase has only been 6.8 percent a year. The inflation rate during this time has been 7.2 percent a year," he said. "We have to keep going back to the commission for increases, because we rarely get what we originally ask for."

Holt added that the costs of labor and materials — as well as double-digit inflation rates and interest rates on borrowing — had figured in the rate increase.

Yielding a 25 percent increase in profits for shareholders, the revenue would let the utility earn a competitive return on invested capital. More money would be available to continue the construction of six nuclear units, Holt said.

"Duke Power has the cheapest rates on the East Coast and will continue to have them even after an increase," said John Kinkaid, district manager in the Chapel Hill office.

"Even though people are conserving energy by turning their thermostats down in the summer and up in the winter, we are expecting a 3.8 percent growth in demand in the next 15 years," he said.

Kinkaid said it took 12 years to bring the McGuire plant to operation, and that if funds were not acquired, demand might exceed supply in 1995.

"We also have to keep in mind that our governor is trying to bring new industries and businesses into the state to provide new jobs. More plants and businesses will create more demand for energy in the future," he said.

The Utilities Commission's public staff, an advocacy agency, has recommended a 12.4-percent increase — \$138 million a year — in response to Duke Power's request.

David Creasy, an engineer in the electric division, said the public staff had reviewed the Duke Power rate increase since it was submitted in March. After each department reviewed the application, the 12.4-percent increase was then alternately submitted.

Public hearings now being conducted should result in a final decision by the Utilities Commission in October.

"The cost of everything is increasing, and our power rates are no exception," Creasy said.

"Customers just have to realize that an across-the-board increase is more involved than it appears. Rates might increase more for commercial users than for residential users."

Creasy added that consumers were encouraged to attend all the public hearings and voice their support or opposition to the increase.

The state Supreme Court is scheduled next Tuesday to hear Duke's appeal of a rate increase approved in 1980 by the Utilities Commission. In that case, Duke received about two-thirds of what it requested.

On UNC building

Work progresses

Construction of a \$1.45-million addition to the University of North Carolina General Administration Building is almost on schedule, and the building is expected to open in the spring of 1982, Allen Waters, assistant vice president of finance, said Thursday.

The 22,000-square-foot structure will provide offices, conference rooms and space for the administration's data processing division. Construction began last October.

Waters said construction of the building was moving along nicely. "The building

is generally on schedule. It may be two or three weeks behind because there were some foundation problems and wet weather that gave the contractors trouble earlier," Waters said.

But the trouble has not created additional costs, he said. "We planned for a certain amount of construction contingency ... a little bit set aside for problems."

The addition will be a light-colored masonry block structure connected to the original building by a covered walkway.

— LYNN WORTH

towing

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but we have been very strict concerning violations in fire lanes and hydrant zones," Stone said.

Andrew Hager, coordinator of parking and traffic control for the University, said there had been relatively little towing on campus so far.

"We've had to tow a few for parking in fire lanes or handicapped places, but since we generally allow people to accumulate three tickets before we tow them, there won't be much action for a couple of weeks," Hager said.

parking

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Hillgrove filed an appeal with the property office to get the University to pay for the new windshield.

Another SRC resident, Susan Chitty, had a stereo stolen out of her car.

"I think it's pretty bad. My car got vandalized between Sunday and last night (Wednesday), and with my car being so

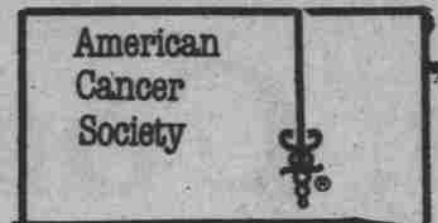
far away I can't keep an eye on it," Chitty said.

"We're the ones that live here, we're the ones that have to use our car at night. Commuters are here during the day; they don't have to worry as much about vandalism."

Students also complained about the

amount of use of the spaces. "You come home from class, and there are so many spaces in front of Parker and Avery, it's just unreal," said Karen Long, the president of Parker Residence Hall.

Morgan said she had counted only six spaces being used Wednesday morning, when there usually would have been no spaces to park at all.



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BIRTH DEFECTS FOUNDATION

Student store starts new book checks

By TED AVERY
DTH Staff Writer

Students buying books in the Student Stores textbook department are now able to keep their belongings safe with a check system begun by the store this semester.

Required to keep their things off the sales floor to avoid suspicion of shoplifting, students are now able to leave their stuff in cubicles guarded by two store employees.

Before this system was started, students had to leave their things unguarded on the floor outside the textbook department.

Rutledge Tufts, assistant general manager of the store, said the check system was created because the book store was responsible for giving students a safe place to keep their belongings.

The system began as a table where employees kept a list of what was being stored. The demand became so great though, that the manager had to devise the new system, Tufts said.

"Right now, it'll be there for the height of the book rush. Once rush ends, we'll attempt to provide the same service on a smaller scale," Tufts said.

Several students interviewed by *The Daily Tar Heel* said they were pleased with the new system.

"I think it's a pretty good idea," junior David Spillane said. "It helps keep your valuables safe."

Terri Campbell, a senior from Newton, said, "It probably cuts down on people stealing stuff. It's a good idea. I'd rather take them (books) in with me, though."

Brennan Hussey, a sophomore from Shreveport, La., said, "Last year, we would have to leave our backpacks over there (the floor); there was a chance of their getting stolen. It's well worth the trouble."

Toby Stevens, a checker, said the response had been positive. "One guy told me it was the greatest thing since drop-add," he said.

Stevens said he had checked such things as crutches, wet bathing suits, field-hockey sticks, lunches, golf clubs, desk blotters, suitcases, umbrellas and plastic Carolina cups.

"I get to meet a lot of people. When we're not busy, people call us lazy and say, 'It must be nice to get paid to watch girls,'" Stevens said.

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