

Avista profits sweet deal for chief

DOUG CLARK



Staff columnist

Hello and welcome to another installment of Ask Avista, the only forum that lets Spokane area ratepayers get straight answers regarding their power company concerns.

OK. So let's get energized.

Q: My God! Was I imagining things or did I hear it right, that the Avista Corp. profits rose 11 percent last year?

ASK AVISTA: Why, yes. That did make the news.

Q: And yet you keep asking for rate increases. How do you justify that?

ASK AVISTA: It's a lot like playing the piano. If you practice long enough, you can get really good at it.

Q: So you're saying that Avista's really good at asking for rate increases because you keep asking for rate increases?

ASK AVISTA: We're the Rachmaninoff of rate pinging.

Q: Good to have a goal, I guess. And how did the suits react to this windfall?

ASK AVISTA: With a nice party. And this very attractive sheet cake topped with a Reddy Kilowatt centerpiece.

Q: Really?

ASK AVISTA: Oh, yeah. Reddy lit up like a red lightning bolt and everything.

Q: And all because you made bank at ratepayer expense?

ASK AVISTA: Of course not. What kind of insensitive blood-suckers do you think we are?

Q: Better to not go down that pathway. So there was something else worth celebrating?

ASK AVISTA: Yes, indeed! The near-\$4.5 million that Scott Morris - Avista CEO, president, chairman and Grand Generator - raked in last year.

Q: That's outrageous!

ASK AVISTA: Not at all. The number is actually down from the \$5.5 million he made in 2014, but up from the \$3.6 million he made in 2015.

Q: What are you saying?

ASK AVISTA: He's just another middle-income earner.

Q: Middle income? We huddled around the fireplace this winter because we could barely keep up our power payments. Whataya think of that?

ASK AVISTA: Your commitment to energy saving will be reflected on your next Energy Report Card.

Q: The last one I received graded me as a 92-percent power waster compared to my more energy-efficient neighbors. Who are those jerks, anyway?

ASK AVISTA: Look, as long as we're being totally honest here. There aren't any energy-efficient neighbors. We made 'em up.

Q: I knew it! You probably fabricated those rate increases, didn't you?

ASK AVISTA: Don't be sacrilegious. But we do have a heart. Avista offers free emergency energy warming kits to any ratepayer in need.

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Q: And how do you know who's really in need?

ASK AVISTA: We look for the signs.

Q: Signs?

ASK AVISTA: Frostbite. Hyperthermia. Turning blue. You know, the usuals.

Q: And what comes in an emergency warming kit?

ASK AVISTA: Two hand warmers. A candle. And a U.S. Army pamphlet diagramming the correct way to perform squat thrusts.

Q: Squat thrusts?

ASK AVISTA: Oh, yes. Five minutes of squat thrusts will warm anybody right up.

Q: Getting back to rate increases. Just why keep asking for them when they're so unpopular?

ASK AVISTA: According to Scott Morris in a recent news story, the "annual rate increases are needed so the utility can continue to provide reliable service for customers, while allowing for a fair return for its shareholders."

Q: What does that even mean?

ASK AVISTA: I know. We don't understand it, either.

Q: Can you at least explain why Morris makes so much dough?

ASK AVISTA: It's all

spelled out in the OAPPS.

Q: Now you're talking crazy.

ASK AVISTA: The Official Avista Preliminary Proxy Statement, we mean.

Q: And?

ASK AVISTA: It clearly states that Morris' income is based on an executive compensation combined with performance-based incentives, salary, pension and other stuff.

Q: Other stuff?

ASK AVISTA: Oh, another \$1.87 million in potential future stock and \$1 million in incentive pay.

Q: Is that all?

ASK AVISTA: Plus \$400 in Fred Meyer coupons, one Starbucks gift card, five free movie passes at the River Park Square cinemas and dinner for 152 at Olive Garden.

Q: And?

ASK AVISTA: Yacht polish for life.

Q: Wow. Being the Big Cheese at Avista is a pretty sweet deal, huh?

ASK AVISTA: Well, it's not quite what Benjamin Franklin had in mind when he discovered electricity. But it sure beats patching potholes for the city.

Q: True dat.

ASK AVISTA: Double true dat!

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*This came out in the Sportsman Review,
and then Avista keeps asking for a raise
Time for this to stop*

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Farmington, WA*

*We are on
Clearwater Power,
but we have a
rental in Texas, WA
Clearwater much
cheaper*



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