

Cheyenne residents face cold winter

By Gloria Loree



Photo by Gloria Loree
Cheyenne landlord Elijah Elieff

Cheyenne apartment residents may be without heat this week if Union Gas goes through with its scheduled shutdown.

Elijah Elieff, the landlord for the two buildings at 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave., is overdue on his \$5,200 bill and only a payment to Union Gas will prevent the shut-off.

Bill Haskell, manager of customer information for Union Gas, said a partial payment may

keep the gas on, but it would depend on who paid the bill and what negotiations were made with his company.

The health ministry can order Union Gas to turn the heat back on, but the company does not have to legally comply with the order unless there is a viable payee. Council is trying to pass a bylaw giving the city the power to pay outstanding utility bills for a landlord and then seek repayment through the individual's taxes.

The bylaw won't be passed in time to help the Cheyenne tenants.

Elieff could not be reached for comment, but tenants are hoping he will pay the overdue bill. They are looking into options for payment, but their money is tied up in a trust fund to go towards the over \$13,000 electricity bill which is also overdue.

London PUC (now the Hydro Electric Commission) has agreed to keep supplying electricity on the basis of the tenants' trust

fund. While the tenants' right to divert their rent for bill payments is argued in court, Elieff has served many of them eviction notices. He is technically allowed to evict them for not paying their rent until the courts rule on the legality of the trust fund.

Elieff is also currently before the Ontario Human Rights Commission on charges of making racist comments about his tenants. The final days of the hearings are scheduled for March.