

The Energy Line

From the President & CEO

Energy information for the customers of Wellsboro Electric

Good news for the New Year

Season's greetings. We've had some exciting news since I last touched base with you in the spring.

You may have heard that Wellsboro Electric was among the lucky recipients of a federal stimulus grant. Competition for these grants was stiff, and I am honored that our small company was one of just 100 utilities nationwide selected for funding.

Our grant of more than \$400,000 will allow us to complete the automated meter reading project we began several years ago. To date, nearly half of our customers have first-generation automatic meters in place at their homes. The federal grant will enable us to install more advanced two-way "smart" meters across the remainder of our system.

In a nutshell, this project will allow us to manage our grid more efficiently and will give our customers the ability to make more informed decisions regarding the way they purchase and use electricity in their homes and businesses.

We are calling this advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) initiative our Smart Choices Project. The project, which will kick off early in 2010, will allow us to monitor voltage and other power quality issues from the office, provide automatic detection of power outages and give us the capability of moving to time-of-use or hourly metering rates in the future.

With smart grid technology in place, customers with access to the internet will be able to go on-line and view their daily, even hourly, consumption of energy to help them better manage their electric use and control costs.

Your electric provider is also doing what it can to control costs for customers. We are in the process of filing a three-year default service plan with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) that outlines how we will procure generation supply on behalf of our customers.

We are attempting to modify the current plan, which expires May 31, 2010, by seeking approval to secure longer-term energy contracts than what is permitted in our current plan. By securing longer-term contracts, we expect to be able to reduce the generation price volatility that we have experienced over the past two and a half years. I would like to point out that the default service plan is not in any way a request for a rate change. It is simply an outline of how we will proceed with future power purchases.

As your default service provider, Wellsboro Electric is required to purchase generation for customers who are either unable or unwilling to choose an alternate generation supplier. As you know, we have not had any interest among alternate generation suppliers to enter our service territory since the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act was signed into law in 1996. I am convinced, however, that electric choice will finally be realized in our area after Penelec's generation rate cap expires at the end of 2010.

Best wishes to you and yours for a safe and happy holiday season.



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...In this issue

Tax credits available for
energy efficiency projects

Stimulus grant on the way

Help with home heating costs

You can help neighbors in need

In today's challenging economic climate, many local families struggle to keep up with their bills.

You can help your neighbors in need by agreeing to contribute a dollar or more each month to Wellsboro Electric's \$1 Energy Fund.

Your donations are matched by WECO, and 100 percent of the contributions are used to provide energy grants to families in our service territory. Last year, more than 30 local families received assistance through the fund.

To begin contributing to the \$1 Energy Fund, designate your contribution amount on the return stub of this month's electric bill. You may stop your donation at any time simply by notifying us in writing. If you are currently contributing to this fund and would like to increase your donation amount, please contact us at 570-724-3516.

Tax credits for efficiency projects

Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal government offers homeowners tax credits for undertaking a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Adding insulation materials to your home, replacing doors and windows, or installing air-source or geothermal heating systems are among the types of projects that may be eligible for tax credits.

For guidelines on what qualifies for federal tax credits, visit the Energy Star website at www.energystar.gov.

Customers may also be eligible for state funding through the weatherization assistance program of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. For more information, visit the DCED website at www.newpa.com.

WECO awarded Smart Grid grant

The federal government has awarded Wellsboro Electric Co. a \$431,625 grant for the deployment of "smart grid" technology aimed at promoting energy-saving choices among consumers, improving outage restoration time by the utility and setting the stage for future energy conservation initiatives such as load management and time-of-use rates.

WECO was one of just 100 utilities nationwide selected to receive federal stimulus funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The government awarded more than \$3.4 billion in smart grid grants to the successful applicants.

With the funding in place, WECO will roll out its Smart Choices Project over a two-year period beginning in early 2010. The grant will enable WECO to install advanced two-way metering devices for about half of its residential customer base and all of the utility's commercial and industrial accounts.

Smart grid technology enables utilities to determine how much and where energy is being consumed, and alerts the utility to voltage problems and power outages on the system. The system's automatic outage detection capabilities will allow for more efficient power restoration efforts.

The two-way meters also give customers the ability to obtain accurate, near real-time electric use information from a home computer or the Wellsboro office. Additionally, customers will be able to access their historic electric consumption data on an hourly basis in order to evaluate and potentially change their energy use patterns.

Need help paying your heating bills?

If you need help paying your heating bills this winter, you may be able to receive assistance through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program provides energy-assistance grants to help low-income households pay their heating bills through the winter.

LIHEAP offers both cash grants and crisis grants. Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. If you are eligible for a cash grant, the grant will be sent directly to your utility or fuel dealer, and the payment will be credited on your bill.

Crisis grants are available to help those who have emergency situations in which they are in danger of being without heat. Those situations include: having broken heating equipment or leaking fuel lines; being without fuel; having utility service terminated; or in danger of being without fuel or of having utility service terminated. The crisis portion of the program will open on Jan. 4, 2010.

If you have a heating emergency, or for more information about LIHEAP, call the Tioga County Assistance Office at 570-724-4051. Below are the income guidelines for acceptance into the program:

Household size	Maximum income (before taxes)
1	\$16,245
2	\$21,855
3	\$27,465
4	\$33,075

Add \$5,610 for each additional member of the household

Let budget billing even out payments

You can avoid monthly fluctuations in your electric bill by signing up for Wellsboro Electric's Budget Billing plan. The program allows you to level out your monthly payments throughout the year.

If you are interested in setting up a budget billing plan for your account, please contact our office at (570) 724-3516.