

# Comfort & Light



The Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia

The Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia

The American Jewish Committee Philadelphia Chapter

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia

A Newsletter from the Interfaith Coalition on Energy  
7217 Oak Avenue  
Melrose Park, PA 19027  
(215) 635-1122  
[www.interfaithenergy.com](http://www.interfaithenergy.com)  
[andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net)  
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## What we do!

The Interfaith Coalition on Energy (ICE) is a non-profit organization that started in 1980. Since then, we have served about 6,100 congregations within a 50-mile radius of Philadelphia's City Hall. ICE helps them reduce their energy use and cost through this newsletter, workshops, publications and on-site energy surveys (thousands of buildings). See our website [www.interfaithenergy.com](http://www.interfaithenergy.com) for more information.

As part of our energy surveys, we rate your use of electricity and fuel in comparison to averages from similar buildings. We measure the efficiency of your heating system, when possible. We measure the electricity used by refrigerators, freezers, ice machines, vending machines, etc. Based on what we measure and observe, we write a report that describes your facility and makes recommendations to lower your energy cost. The cost of a survey is based on our time and expenses. The cost varies according to the number of buildings and their complexity. We don't charge congregations for gathering data and submitting a fixed-price proposal.

## Workshop to Discuss Your Energy Concerns

Given the new prices for electricity and gas, PECO's rebate program, the cold weather, and the high price for fuel oil, we encourage you to attend our next energy workshop. The Interfaith Coalition on Energy will present a balanced, unbiased and free workshop on Thursday February 17, 2011 at Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA from 1pm to 4pm. There is plenty of free parking in their huge parking lot. Plus, the #55 bus between the Olney Transportation Center and the Willow Grove Mall runs right past the site. By the time we present this workshop, the PECO electricity prices should be clear.

This workshop is free, but you must pre-register, call ICE at 215-635-1122, or email [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net), or fax to 215-635-1903, or write ICE, 7217 Oak Avenue, Melrose Park, PA 19027. Our website is [www.interfaithenergy.com](http://www.interfaithenergy.com)

## PECO's New Rates

For many months, we have been waiting for the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) to decide what PECO Energy's electricity prices are going to be in 2011. They were finally published on January 4, 2011. For this newsletter, we are making the following recommendations to our readers:

- Study these changes seriously. PECO was granted a small increase in the distribution portion of the bill that everyone must pay. It is the generation (and transmission) portion of the bill that you can shop for; however, some customers will be better off staying with PECO.
- Do not do anything about picking an electric supplier until at least February, when we can see the exact way PECO will charge, what the suppliers and the electric market are doing, and how these things will affect religious building accounts, which are not the same as most residential or commercial accounts.
- Not every electric account will save money by buying from a generation supplier. Therefore, it is essential to determine which accounts will save money on an individual basis.
- Contrary to many rumors and newspaper articles, PECO has now published Phase In Prices for all customers less than 500 kW, which includes every religious electric bill we have seen. These Phase In Prices are good for 2011 and 2012, and many of which are substantially below what any generation supplier is able to offer.

(Continued on Page 2)

- Residential and commercial electric heat customers are likely better off staying with PECO, since probably no supplier can offer prices lower than PECO.
- Analyze your monthly pricing for twelve months because summer and non-summer prices differ. Each congregation on PECO's General Service rate will have a price for generation different from the published Price to Compare, which is an average and may only be for one month at a time.
- Know roughly what your savings will be. It may not be worth your time, aggravation, and risk to save, for example, only \$30 per year.
- Avoid getting generation prices from organizations that are not licensed electric suppliers by the PUC, since we are seeing too many agents, brokers, and multi-level marketers, all of whom increase the prices they get from licensed suppliers for their commission and fees. Once licensed suppliers see these agents shopping your accounts, they may tend not to compete with the people they are selling to and who are bringing them business. For much the same reason, avoid agents using reverse auctions.
- It is essential to carefully understand and evaluate the contracts required by the suppliers. Read and understand the small print.
- Make sure that you do not end up paying State and City Sales Tax. The suppliers need proof you are tax exempt.

Remember that PECO must slightly adjust their prices quarterly, while most suppliers want contracts for one or more years at a fixed price. That alone could save money initially, but could be "under water" within months. Supplier prices should be substantially below the PECO Price to Compare. Since PECO apparently will not show an annual Price to Compare on customer bills, it will be necessary to independently calculate the annual Price to Compare for each individual electric account. Each electric account will have a different Price to Compare. This is essential to be able to compare suppliers' offers with current PECO prices.

A brief review of the first few electric bills on the new rates shows that PECO is (1) prorating bills over January 1, 2011, (2) showing a Price to Compare on the first page of the bills which is only for one month and is also not correct, (3) not calculating the bill amounts correctly, (4) not always showing the correct Gross Receipts Tax, and (5) not consistent with the way it is showing and calculating electric bills for different types of electric accounts.

It appears that generation suppliers are becoming more competitive now that people are beginning to see actual PECO bills. Some very recent price quotes for electric generation from suppliers are much lower than in 2010. Indeed, some accounts worth a few thousand dollars per year are buying electricity in January 2011 at prices lower than accounts worth a few million dollars a year did in 2010. Thus, it looks favorable to wait a few more weeks for better prices than were being obtained in 2010, unless there is a major incident like a hurricane.

More details will be available at our free workshop on Thursday afternoon, February 17, 2011 and in future periodic newsletters.

## **PECO's Rebate Program**

According to a November 10, 2010 article in the Philadelphia Inquirer, PECO Energy says, "its 1.6 million customers have reduced power consumption 419 gigawatt hours, saving \$68 million. The reductions mean PECO has already met a state mandate to reduce overall demand for electricity 1 percent by May 31, 2011. The state's conservation law, called Act 129, requires utilities to reduce consumption 3 percent by 2013 or face penalties."

We hope you take advantage of their rebates and advice. Here are several tips. First, they offer a radio-controlled device that turns off your air conditioning compressor at times of peak summer loads. The fan still runs, and one ICE Advisory Board member has this Smart AC Saver installed on his system. He says he can't notice any change in comfort. PECO gives you a credit up to \$120 on your electric bill. PECO is able to enroll both residential and commercial accounts in this program.

Second, consider replacing fluorescent tubes and ballasts. Standard tubes are called T12s because they are 12/8ths (1½) inches in diameter and are powered by electromagnetic ballasts. Usually they are 34-watt tubes. The newer tubes are T8s, one inch in diameter, and are powered by electronic ballasts. Replacing a pair of T12 tubes with T8s, and replacing the ballast can save about 31 watts. The rebate

for this is \$4 per tube, or \$8 per pair. If, however, you pay a bit more for 28-watt T8 tubes, the rebate is \$7 per tube, well worth the price.

Finally, the rebate for replacing an incandescent exit sign with one lit by light emitting diodes (LEDs) is \$25. If you do the work in-house, the cost of the sign is often lower than \$20, netting \$5 for the congregation. For example, see [www.simplyexitsigns.com/](http://www.simplyexitsigns.com/)

If you have questions contact PECO at 888-573-2672 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8am-8pm and Saturday between the hours of 9am-1pm

<https://www.pecosmartideas.com/programsandrebates/residential/ac saver.html>

## Archiving Blueprints

At a facility maintenance exposition last spring, we saw two companies that can scan your blueprints into files on a CD. One is AccuScan at [www.GetAccuScan.com](http://www.GetAccuScan.com) in Edgewater Park, NJ. Phone - 609-386-6795. Email [art@GetAccuScan.com](mailto:art@GetAccuScan.com).

The other company is archSCAN in Annapolis, MD, [www.archSCAN.com](http://www.archSCAN.com), Phone - 410-974-8183. Email - [archscan@comcast.net](mailto:archscan@comcast.net).

We are not endorsing either company, but we do want you to protect your blueprints. Having a copy of them is very helpful to us when we analyze your facility.

## Jump in Energy Demand Seen by 2035

The world's scorekeeper for energy use is the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris. In their latest World Energy Outlook, they forecast a 36% increase in the demand for energy by 2035. We wonder what that will do to climate change! The energy demand in China is forecast to increase 75%. The IEA also forecasts a doubling in the price of crude oil by 2035.

## From ICE enthusiasts:

Enclosed is our check. On behalf of Deliverance Missions for Christ, thank you for your services. Hopefully, we will be part of one of your future success stories.

*Ava Wicks*

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I have read your extensive report, or rather skimmed for highlights, but will read in depth with in the next day or so. I noticed quickly that annual savings of \$9,800 could be realized with no additional investment. I can assure you that various decision-makers will study this report also. Many thanks from the Wayne United Methodist Church

*Marge Miller*

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Thanks so much for your time yesterday and the excellent advice.

**Edwin Altman,**

Executive Director, Temple Sinai

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# PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THE INTERFAITH COALITION ON ENERGY

There are a number of reasons to give money to us:

- You may have extra money lying around, and you don't know what to do with it.
- Perhaps you want to support an energy conservation organization that solely represents the interests of people of faith, working for you since 1980.
  - Maybe you like ICE; maybe one of our articles or a phone conversation saved your congregation money.
  - Your contribution is tax-deductible.
  - We are supported only by congregations and denominations, not by foundations, corporations, utilities, or governments... just you.



Whatever your reasons, please send ICE a check so that we may continue to serve you.

ICE, 7217 Oak Avenue, Melrose Park, PA 19027

Thanks. *ice*

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- PLEASE ROUTE TO:
- Building and Grounds Chairperson
  - Congregation President
  - Treasurer
  - Clergy

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Interfaith Coalition on Energy c/o AJC  
 30 South 15th Street, Suite 801  
 Philadelphia, PA 19102