What we do!

The Interfaith Coalition on Energy (ICE) works with 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. See our website 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 facilities and makes recommendations to lower your energy cost. The cost of a survey varies. We don't charge congregations for gathering data and submitting a proposal.
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PECO Rate Caps May Come Off January 2011

On September 10, 2008 PECO Energy announced that the rate caps that began in 1997 will be removed on January 1, 2011. This will increase the price of electricity, but it is not at all clear how much the increase will be. The rate case is before Pennsylvania's Public Utility Commission. Gov. Rendell, Mayor Nutter and consumer advocates anticipate a 20 percent or more increase in electricity bills. The Governor is trying to postpone the cap removal. When they are removed, we can expect competitive electricity suppliers to return to the market. Stay tuned! ICE

Historic Preservation's Essential Role in Fighting Climate Change

On December 13, 2007, Richard Moe, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation, delivered a speech on the value of older buildings in the effort to prevent or mitigate global warming. Here are some of his points:

- Buildings are vast repositories of energy. It takes energy to manufacture or extract building materials, more energy to transport them to a construction site, still more energy to assemble them into a building. If the structure is demolished and landfilled, the energy locked up in it is totally wasted.
- Once the old building is gone, putting up a new one in its place takes more energy
- Some people argue that all the energy used in demolishing an older building and replacing it is quickly recovered through the increased energy efficiency of the new building – but that's simply not true. Recent research indicates that even if 40% of the materials are recycled, it takes approximately 65 years for a green, energy-efficient new office building to recover the energy lost in demolishing an existing building.
- We can't build our way out of the global warming crisis. We have to conserve our way out. That means we have to make better, wiser use of what we've already built. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency suggests that buildings constructed before 1920 are actually more energy-efficient than buildings built at any time afterwards – except for those built after 2000. Furthermore, in 1999, the General Services Administration (GSA) examined its buildings inventory and found that utility costs for historic buildings were 27% less than for more modern buildings.

- It's not hard to figure out why. Many historic buildings have thick, solid walls, resulting in greater thermal mass and reducing the amount of energy needed for heating and cooling. Buildings designed before the widespread use of electricity feature transoms, high ceilings, and large windows for natural light and ventilation, as well as shaded porches and other features to reduce solar gain. Architects and builders paid close attention to siting and landscaping as tools for maximizing sun exposure during the winter months and minimizing it during warmer months.

Richard Moe's whole speech is at
http://press.nationaltrust.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=69 ICE

Energy Star and LEED Programs Have Lost Some Luster

The October 2008 issue of *Consumer Reports* evaluates the Energy Star program, which was started in 1992 as an energy rating program by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. *Consumer Reports*, using tests that are more stringent than those of the DOE and EPA, found that some refrigerators use more than the rated amount of electricity. Actually, the manufacturers test their own appliances following the DOE/EPA guidelines. For example, DOE requires that a refrigerator ice machine be turned off during the test, hardly a real home condition. The ice machine may double the electric consumption of the refrigerator. In addition to the conflict of interest in manufacturers testing their own products, *Consumer Reports* said that qualifying standards are lax, and the tests are out of date.

In December 2007, a mechanical systems designer in New York City named Henry Gifford published an article analyzing the actual performance of newly constructed buildings that were certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). While LEED claimed that its certified buildings were 20% to 30% more energy efficient than the national average, Gifford used data from DOE surveys of commercial building energy use to show that LEED buildings were, on average, 29% less efficient. The debate goes on.

LEED buildings qualify by a point system. It is possible for a building to be certified by getting points on bike racks, recycled and locally produced building materials, and other non-energy items. The resulting building could use above average energy but still be certified.
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Tankless Water Heaters May Be More Efficient, But Not Economical

Consumer Reports October 2008 issue also suggests that gas-fired tankless water heaters were about 22 percent more energy efficient on average than the gas-fired storage-tank models, saving about $70 to $80 per year at current costs. "But because they cost much more than storage water heaters, it can take up to 22 years to break even—longer than the 20-year life of many models. Moreover, our online poll of 1,200 readers revealed wide variations in installation costs, energy savings, and satisfaction," the article says.

Consumer Reports also found that tankless models:

- Produced heated water with inconsistent temperatures,
- won't work during a power outage because the controls require electricity, and
- may have to be serviced yearly to prevent build-up of scale ICE

Third Party Electric Suppliers Are More Expensive

During deregulation, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission forced electric utilities to randomly make a number of their customers purchase electricity from other suppliers. It is called the MST program, for Market Share Threshold. Our estimate is that there are still 24,000 PECO Energy small commercial customers in this program today because they did not choose to return to PECO, down from 62,000 in 2004. At the time MST was ordered, the cost of electricity for the first year may have been lower from some suppliers compared to PECO prices, but that changed. Those suppliers are now charging as much as three times as much as PECO would charge.

ICE Board member Larry Spielvogel asked PECO if they have any responsibility to tell the MST customers they are paying more than necessary. To date, PECO says no. Ask ICE to determine if your PECO accounts are among the 24,000 paying too much.

One of the lower cost suppliers was Electric America, now called Commerce Energy, claims that high prices for residential customers are justified by claiming they are selling 'green' electricity... electricity from renewable resources to residential customers. This electricity costs more.

The September 18, 2008 issue of Business Week magazine described how electric utilities were offering renewable electricity for a higher price, but that most of the additional revenue was going into marketing. For many utilities, very little money can be traced back to the generation of additional renewable energy.

Wouldn't it be a shame if PECO Energy's more expensive wind-generated electricity were just a bunch of hot air? ICE

Philadelphia Water Department Increases Rates

This past summer, large water users and consumer advocacy groups (including ICE) testified against the PWD rate increases. While we were able to trim about $10 million from the rate increase, water rates will increase over the next four years, starting November 1, 2008. Overall, monthly meter charges will increase about 6% to 7% each year from 2010 through 2012. In 2009 the change in meter charges will be negligible. Water and sewer charges, however, will increase about 12% in 2009 and about 7% for each of the following three years. ICE

Aqua-PA got their rate increase this past summer

Aqua-PA has been soliciting their customers to pay them to install backflow preventers, and using resources from the regulated entity to do the work. The Plumbing Contractors Association intervened in their rate case and was successful in getting them to do this work in the future by an unregulated entity, thus leveling the playing field.

We asked them about their intervention and received this response from Mike McGraw, the president of PA-PHCC. "ALL commercial establishments must have a backflow device installed. This regulation is from the Federal Clean Water Act. Each device must be tested annually and a report of the test submitted to the water authority by a certified tester. The type of device installed varies with the use of the building and the degree of cross connection hazard. We recommend you contact a certified tester to get complete details of the regulations. Residentially all water services that are upgraded must have a non-testable device installed at the meter. All devices regardless of application require a thermal expansion tank upon installation. This is mandated by the State Plumbing Code."

"As an additional fact. Aqua is sending out to all its residential customers a solicitation for a home warranty on plumbing. Most homeowners believe the agreement is with Aqua. This agreement is with a company called Home Services, which is one of the largest insurance companies in Britain. They in turn subcontract the repairs to others who do not necessarily do a satisfactory job or leave the house and property a mess. We have documented several cases in the area."

We would appreciate any feedback about backflow preventers from congregations. ICE

Recycling compact fluorescent lamps

1) Save them until your municipality's hazardous waste collection day, and drop them (and your other toxics) there,
2) Bring them to IKEA
3) Ship them to a recycler (find one through www.earth911.org) ICE

From an ICE supporter:

Thanks for taking time for my request, Andy. I did log on to the supplier and sent an inquiry in their email for questions. Hopefully, I'll receive an answer. Will let you know how it goes. God Bless You for all your kind help and patience with my requests. If we order on line via Grainger, it will be cheaper (seems like $2.00 each cheaper) than the prices a sales rep quoted me, with less time for delivery. Unless you have other suggestions, pray for me and wish me luck!

Sister M. A. ICE

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.
- Maybe you like ICE; maybe one of our articles or a phone conversation saved your congregation money.
- Your contribution is tax-deductible.

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

ICE, 7217 Oak Avenue, Melrose Park, PA 19027

Thanks. ICE