

news

Cap removal could mean higher electricity bills for PSH

By JENNA DENOYELLES
STAFF WRITER
JHD5035@PSU.EDU

The decision to remove rate caps on electricity by the Pennsylvania Utility Commission could mean higher electricity bills for Penn State Harrisburg. At the moment, the removal of rate caps only affects Penn State University Park.

By 2011 all rate caps in Pennsylvania will be eliminated unless a delay in cap removal is approved. It is anticipated that electricity rates will rise after the rate caps are removed.

Some rate caps have already expired for 15 percent of Pennsylvanians, according to Rose Baker and David Passmore, authors of "Your Electrifying Utility Bill A Forecast of Pennsylvania Economic and Workforce Changes Resulting from Removal of Electricity Rate Caps," which is a Penn State workforce education and development initiative.

The rate caps hold the price of electricity below the market rate. University Park is the only customer of West Penn Power to have a tariff written especially for that campus. The University

is the first customer to come off the rate caps, two years earlier than all the other Pennsylvania customers. The removal of rate caps affects University Park greatly, said Laura Miller, Office of Physical Plant senior energy program engineer.

Conserving resources is a concern for Penn State. The Energy Savings Program's goals are to reduce the consumption of water and electricity by awareness, conservation, management, monitoring, and procurement. A few ways PSH takes part in efforts to reduce the consumption of electricity is

by using more efficient lighting, buying products with the Energy Star label, as well as keeping the lights turned off to unoccupied buildings.

Penn State's Take Charge Web site informs students, faculty, and other visitors on how they can conserve energy. Students are encouraged to unplug cell phone chargers, turn off the lights, computer, TV when objects are not being used.

In 2007 PSH spent \$700,000 on electricity which was lowered two \$650,000 last year, said Bruce Smith, energy program engineer for University Park.

The consumption of electricity is a big variable in the utilities budget. When rate caps expire in 2011, as little as a 10 percent rate increase could mean PSH will pay at least \$65,000 more for electricity.

The removal of the rate caps does not only affect students, "It affects everyone," said Edward Dankanich, director of business services.

For more information on how to conserve energy use, visit <http://www.takecharge.psu.edu/ways.shtml>

PSH working to improve recycling program

By WILLS KING
STAFF WRITER
WPK5004@PSU.EDU

On campus at Penn State Harrisburg, efforts to recycle have been stepped up. A recently formed recycling committee has been working to enact a variety of changes on campus that will make the campus more efficient with waste management.

Jason Zubler, a member of the recycling committee, said they are currently gathering information to determine what can be recycled.

"Right now we're starting to collect info on the different items we recycle," said Zubler. "As a committee, we're looking to improve on areas where we can reduce waste."

They have been busy at work. This year, maintenance has been working to collect food scraps from the kitchen to make yard waste compost. They have also placed additional recycling stations throughout campus with the goal of making recycling as accessible as possible for students and faculty alike.

According to Clarence Hardaway, another committee member, expansion on campus has created a greater need to develop effective recycling

methods.

"We have more students now, we have more buildings," said Hardaway. "Everything on campus is just growing, so the program is growing as well."

Hardaway envisions the program as a way to create a unified recycling effort on campus and increase awareness for students. Both he and Zubler have been designing a recycling flyer to be placed in the student handbook in the future. Zubler said that the school should play a role in teaching students about the benefits of recycling.

"At the college and university level, campuses should be at the forefront of the movement because their responsibility is to prepare students for the real world and help make smart decisions," said Zubler. "That's why I feel the campus has an obligation to promote environmental stewardship."

"We hope that as this program moves forward, our recycling percentage will continue to increase. Right now we're somewhere between 20 and 30 percent," said Zubler. "For University Park, the last statistic I found for them was 2005, they were close to 50 percent. Other campuses have exceeded that."

The recycling percentage

is one way to measure how successful such a program is, but the committee has even higher goals. Hardaway said the team hopes to create a program that can help other campuses in the future.

"We don't have a problem sharing our recycling method with any other campus," he said. "We want to give the University a program that can be followed and edited as the years go by."

He also added that they have been working with housing to get the whole campus involved with the program.

"We don't need to be separate where this person does this, that person does that," said Hardaway. "Part of the goal is to make the whole university one effort when it comes to recycling."

As environmental matters become more and more prominent in daily life, the effort to be as resourceful as possible is important for all of us. Fortunately, proactive minded people such as Jason Zubler and Clarence Hardaway are doing their part to send the campus and society in the right direction. All of us can do so as well, one bottle, can or box at a time.

Business plan competition encourages students to think of and promote new ideas

By KIRILL SOBIN
STAFF WRITER
KVD102@PSU.EDU

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber and CREDC are hosting the Central PA College Venture Challenge, a business plan competition for college students. The competition is also a good way to sharpen business skills and improve business plans before launching a company.

Harrisburg Regional Chamber and CREDC are dedicated to help innovators share their ideas with business professionals.

According to the Harrisburg Regional Chamber website, goals of the competition are to promote new business ideas, provide much needed assistance to area business people, celebrate the spirit of entrepreneurialism, and brand the region "business friendly".

As stated on the According to the Harrisburg Regional Chamber website "the competition provides feedback from business experts and

awards cash prizes for the best business plans."

Dr. Russell, a professor at Penn State Harrisburg and program coordinator explained, "Even if you don't plan to start a company in the immediate future, you should still consider submitting your idea to the Venture Challenge. You will gain valuable experience in business plan writing, and receive feedback from professionals in the field,"

Last year, Penn State Harrisburg graduate student Maricarmen Planas-Silva took the Graduate Challenge's top prize with her idea for a new breast cancer drug. BioCells2Cure received a \$5,000 prize and is currently looking for investors.

"My door is always open," said Russell, "if you have an idea, I encourage you to try, I will help you every step of the way."

To get more information on how to apply, whom to contact, and what information is needed visit harrisburgregionalchamber.org.